

Warrington Collegiate

Inspection Report 23-27 April 2007

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, care and public services, construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy, creative, media and performing arts and preparation for life and work.

Description of the provider

1. Warrington Collegiate is a general further education college with its main campus situated just to the north of Warrington, where it has recently moved into a new building. It has a town centre site and provides adult and

community education on both sites and a variety of other locations throughout the town. Although there are areas of affluence in the borough, there are also areas of high social and economic deprivation and approximately a third of learners are from these areas. The percentage of learners achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C is above 60% in Warrington; however, only 19% of 16 year olds joining the college achieved this figure. The vast majority of learners are white, but the percentage of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than that for the local population.

2. The college had 19,555 enrolments in 2005/06 and provided 1,692 part-time and full-time courses, with the majority of learners aged 19+. Courses are provided in all subject sector areas, except for area 10, and at all levels from entry to level 4. The areas with the highest numbers of enrolments are preparation for life and work; health, care and public services; arts, media and publishing; and retail and commercial enterprises. Forty percent of learners are on level 1 courses, 30% on level 2 and 20% on level 3. The college provides work-based learning in a number of vocational areas and is also subcontracted to the construction industry training board (CITB). In addition, there is a range of provision for 14-16 year olds.
3. The college has four strategic aims: being an outstanding college; creating an organisation known for its innovation and enterprise; having a vocational curriculum which is highly relevant and meets the needs of employers and individuals; and having an outstanding Business School, with its mission being 'to provide quality learning opportunities for all'.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Good: grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

Sector subject areas

Health, care and public services	Satisfactory: grade 3
Construction	Satisfactory: grade 3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Outstanding: grade 1
Creative, media and performing arts	Good: grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Good: grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

4. This is a good college. There is a strong focus on improving the quality of provision, with significant increases in success rates in 2005/06. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates for adult learners are high. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 improved markedly in 2005/06 and are above national rates at all levels except level 3, where there are fewest learners. Success rates for work-based learning are well above national rates. Key skills success rates rose markedly in 2005/06 to above national rates.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is good support for learners provided early in their programmes and the amount of inadequate teaching and learning has been reduced. However, there is still insufficient outstanding teaching and learning and limited use of new technologies in some areas. There is good management of assessment which is generally accurate.
6. The collegiate's approach to education and social inclusion is good. The curriculum offer takes good account of learners' preferred methods of learning and levels of ability and the range of provision is good. Strong links have been formed with community partners and external agencies, for example, the development of individualised programmes with the primary care trust and trade union council. The college is very responsive to local business needs, providing a number of programmes within employer premises. Whilst learners can access a good range of additional courses and extra-curricular activities, there is insufficient co-ordination and promotion of the latter across the college.
7. Support for learners is good. All full-time learners have a learning coach who acts effectively as a mentor and critical friend. Information, advice and guidance are good, with a responsive, impartial service supporting all learners in accessing the correct programme. The institution is part of the Warrington 14-19 partnership and offers a range of provision for 14-16 year old learners. However, initial assessment of 14-16 year olds is not yet fully embedded and success and progression rates are low.
8. Leadership and management are good with strong and effective leadership. Improvement strategies are effective and the move to the new building, which provides a high standard of accommodation, has been well managed. Curriculum management is satisfactory overall, but there are areas for

improvement, for example, the management of health and safety in some areas. Some cross-college initiatives also need further strategic development, such as the Skills for Life strategy. The promotion of equality and diversity is good as is governance.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

9. The college shows a good capacity to improve. Governors and senior managers have provided a strong focus on improving learners' outcomes. Managers act effectively in the areas of the college identified as needing improvement. Staff understand and are committed to the vision and mission of the college. There is a robust quality assurance system that is having an impact on improvements in success rates and in the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment report is generally accurate although some areas lack clarity.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

10. The effectiveness of steps taken by the college to promote improvement is good. The facilities are now very good with an excellent new building and satisfactory use of resources. Retention rates have improved with concomitant improvements in success rates in 2005/06. Curriculum management in some areas need further improvement. Target setting is well embedded and used effectively. Learning coaches have a key role in ensuring a greater consistency in, and the delivery of, tutorials. Initial advice and guidance has been completely overhauled and is now very good.

Key strengths

- high success rates for adult learners
- effective improvement strategies
- productive and extensive partnerships with external agencies
- successful use of learning coaches for full-time learners
- good guidance and support for learners
- strong and effective leadership
- high standard of new accommodation
- outstanding provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- success rates for 16-18 year olds at level 3
- initial assessment, achievement and progression of 14-16 year olds
- co-ordination and promotion of enrichment activities
- strategic development of Skills for Life strategies
- curriculum management in some areas.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 14-16

Unsatisfactory: grade 4

11. Inspectors agree with the college that achievements and standards are good and the self-assessment report accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Success rates for adult learners are well above national averages; significantly so at level 1, where there are most learners. For 16-18 year old learners, success rates dipped in 2004/05 and then rose markedly in 2005/06. This improvement was most significant at level 1, with the highest proportion of learners, where success rates rose by 20% to well above the national average. At level 3, for 16-18 year olds, although success rates rose by 16% they were still below national averages. The college is aware of this issue and has effective plans in place to address it.
12. Pass rates on most courses are above national rates. Retention rates, which were at or below national rates in 2004/05, improved in 2005/06 and college data to date shows that this improvement has continued in 2006/07. There are now only a small minority of courses with poor retention. Value added and distance travelled data available show that learners make at least satisfactory progress on their courses and the college is currently piloting an internal system to develop this area further. Observations of sessions and analysis of work show that the majority of learners make good progress in their studies. In most areas, learners successfully progress on to higher level courses.
13. Key skill success rates improved significantly in 2005/06 to above national rates at levels 1 and 2, which covers the vast majority of learners. Success rates for 14-16 year olds are very low on a large number of courses and progression into mainstream courses is also low at 36% for 2005/06. Provision in this area has recently been refocused to deal with this issue.
14. Work-based learning has very good success rates which have improved to significantly above the national rate for apprentices. Timely success rates have also improved significantly. Attendance is very good and progression from apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships is good.
15. Learners produce work of a high standard and develop good practical skills. They enjoy their studies and speak positively about college. There is good

provision to support learners in the development of workplace skills and to achieve economic wellbeing. Attendance is satisfactory overall and good in many areas; however, punctuality is poor for some learners. Health and safety are promoted well to learners and they are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

16. Inspectors agreed with the college's own judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Since the inspection in 2003, the college has successfully improved its additional learning support and reduced the amount of inadequate teaching and learning, which was already low at that time. Recent changes to procedures for initial assessment and for additional learning support have resulted in highly effective support being provided for learners very early in their programmes.
17. Self-assessment and other quality improvement measures have enabled the college to accurately identify areas where teaching and learning is a particular strength, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, and where it is an area for development, particularly in health and social care and, to a lesser extent, in construction. Inspectors used a wide range of evidence to conclude that the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and learning in these two areas is higher than in other areas inspected. The lesson observation system is broadly satisfactory as a means of quality improvement. The college effectively follows up inadequate teaching and learning observations by providing good support for teachers and identifying staff development needs and opportunities. However, a significant number of observers fail to provide sufficient and adequate evidence to support the grades awarded, particularly the higher grades.
18. There is still insufficient outstanding teaching and learning across the college. The college has correctly identified that, despite the improvements made since the last inspection, some of its teaching still fails to inspire learners and does not provide them with sufficient challenge or attend to their individual needs. Resources and accommodation are particularly good but too few teachers make effective use of new technology in the classroom. Curriculum sections of the virtual learning environment have very little learning material available to learners.
19. Nevertheless, inspectors observed some good learning taking place through interesting and imaginative teaching methods. The better lessons are planned thoroughly and the plans are generally well executed. Many teachers provide interesting and challenging activities that effectively engage learners and encourage them to develop their knowledge, skills and

understanding. However, in a number of lessons, teachers missed good learning opportunities by arranging sequences of learner centred activities that caught learners' attention, but did little to encourage learning or achieve lesson objectives. Assessment is generally fair, accurate and reliable. Management of assessment is good, particularly at senior management level, where changes made to policy have directly impacted on the quality of assessment for the learners.

20. The range of provision is good. The college makes good use of its wide range of partnerships with external agencies in planning a curriculum that reflects the needs of learners well. A newly established employer services department works effectively with employers, providing appropriate training within employer sites. Many good and successful initiatives to engage learners from underrepresented groups include projects with Connexions, probation service and the youth offender team. An extensive provision for 14-16 year olds includes specialist work with particularly disaffected learners who are excluded from school. Successful vocational learners have clear, well defined progression routes to higher qualifications. The community provision has very few vocational programmes and the number of community learners who progress onto mainstream vocational provision is low.
21. Working in partnership with 'Supporting People Achieving Real Choices' (SPARC) the college has been successful in finding relevant employment for its learners with learning disabilities. The college has also successfully established an employment agency specialising in employers who understand the balance between work and education to help full-time learners. Well planned curriculum programmes give learners a wide choice of additional vocationally relevant qualifications. Imaginative curriculum based activities improve confidence, motivation and increase assessment opportunities. However, enrichment events do not form a well constructed cross-college offer that is managed effectively.
22. Support, information, advice and guidance for learners are good. A collaborative partnership of cross-college staff work effectively to provide a responsive impartial service to all applicants. Prospective learners benefit from relevant information and early contact with specialist curriculum tutors, learning coaches, guidance and welfare staff. Well embedded practices identify and refer applicants to the most appropriate staff for their individual needs. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure that learners are placed on the right programme. Few learners leave programmes early.
23. Personal and academic support is good. All learners complete initial assessments and full-time learners complete diagnostic assessments.

Learners identified with additional learning needs receive good specialist support. All full-time learners have learning coaches who work with them throughout their programme setting motivational targets, acting as mentors and critical friends. There is effective tutorial provision which has a strong focus on promoting personal health. Learner progress, attendance and attitude are closely monitored, with all relevant staff communicating by a web-based discussion board. Each term there are reviews that grade the progress and attitude of learners with reports sent to parents or carers. Learners value the grades they receive and work to maintain and improve them. Part-time learner progress and attendance is sufficiently monitored. The college has recently introduced the initial assessment of its 14-16 year old learners; this is not yet fully embedded and still developing.

24. In work-based learning, there is good support for learners from their employers and the college, with effective progress reviews. Programmes are well designed to meet the needs of employers and learners and communication with employers is good.

Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

25. Leadership and management are good. Senior managers and governors set a clear vision with a self-critical culture and a drive for improvement well embedded throughout the college. Quality assurance processes are systematic in identifying the priorities for action and management actions are often timely and effective. For example, there has been a restructuring of the curriculum offer in those areas of the college that have historically underperformed. The overall success rate for 2005/06 improved by 7% over the previous year and is above the national average for all levels, except 16-18 year old learners studying at level 3.
26. Self-assessment is satisfactory; staff value the process and use it frequently through the year. The final document is generally accurate if lacking clarity in some of its judgements. Curriculum management is satisfactory. There is a strong team spirit and pride in the new facilities. Managers are supported in the development of their skills, but there is a lack of co-ordination in some areas. Some middle managers are relatively new to their posts and have not had sufficient experience in developing their curriculum area. Staff and management development is good. Advanced teaching practitioners have been appointed in the vast majority of departments and lead on an extensive programme of staff development to improve teaching and

learning. There is a very high proportion of hourly paid part-time staff. The college has identified that the quality of teaching and learning with this group of staff is not as good as for the full-time cohort. The leadership and management of work-based learning is good.

27. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. A co-ordinator ensures that policies and procedures are implemented and updated regularly, with much promotion of equality issues through a wide range of champions and curriculum deliverers. Access for those with restricted mobility has been well considered. The college is compliant with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Disability Discrimination Act (2001) and Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000). Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. There has been much training on 'Every Child Matters' themes and a governor identified as a champion. Governors and staff have received appropriate training on their responsibilities for child protection and a single central record of required checks is maintained.
28. Governance is good. Governors have had a considerable influence over the new build programme and have supported the college in decisions which have led to a restructuring of the curriculum. However, their own self-assessment is insufficiently thorough and systematic. The management information system is good and developing, being used routinely for target setting and for monitoring learners' progress. Financial management is good. The internal resource allocation model is well understood and effective. Success rates are generally high but there remain some small class sizes and no information on room utilisation, so value for money is satisfactory.

Sector subject areas

Health, care and public services

Satisfactory: grade 3

29. The college offers full-time courses in health and social care at level 1 to level 3, with public services full-time courses being offered at levels 2 and 3. There are 340 learners on full-time courses, mostly aged 16-18. 679 learners, who are mostly adults, are enrolled on part-time courses which range from level 1 to level 4 and include NVQs and short courses. Learners are able to progress to higher level courses such as foundation degrees and higher national certificates. College certificated courses are offered to 14-16 year olds.

Strengths

- high success rates on many part-time courses
- high standard of learner work
- good progression to higher level courses
- good support for learners through the use of learning coaches.

Areas for improvement

- significantly low success rates on NVQ early years level 3 and certificate in counselling skills
- low retention rates on public services courses
- inconsistent key skills development and assessment.

Achievements and standards

30. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on many part-time courses are high. However, success rates on the NVQ level 3 in early years care and education and the certificate in counselling skills and retention rates on public services courses are significantly lower than the national average. Strategies introduced to improve retention are effective and in year retention has improved significantly. Overall, although success rates are increasing, they still fall marginally below the national average.
31. Learners produce work of a high standard. They make good progress and are developing a good range of relevant practical skills. Learners have an understanding of the links between theory and practice and are developing good research and analytical skills. Attendance and punctuality during inspection was satisfactory.

32. Progression is good with 71% of health, public services and care learners progressing from level 2 to level 3 and 100% of higher national diploma public services learners progressing from the national diploma in public services.

Quality of provision

33. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the most successful lessons, learners are fully engaged and teachers effectively question learners to test and extend learning. In the less effective lessons, teachers fail to challenge the learners or manage the session adequately. The embedding of key skills in the curriculum is inconsistent across the department and the quality of feedback on key skills assessment varies. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. However, feedback on some written work is insufficiently detailed.
34. The range of provision is satisfactory. Access to, and take up of, enrichment and additional qualifications and activities are good. Support for learners through the learning coaches system is particularly good. Learners' progress, attendance and punctuality are closely monitored. Coaches support learners who experience personal and course difficulties and assist them in referral to counselling and study skills, for example.

Leadership and management

35. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory, with the separate curriculum areas working collaboratively to manage the curriculum. The self-assessment report is accurately graded although many areas highlighted as strengths are normal practice. Internal observation of teaching and learning is over graded and judgements do not match those made by the inspector. The focus of lesson observation is on teaching rather than learning. Equality and diversity issues are satisfactorily promoted and monitored. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Construction

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

36. The college offers courses in building and construction, electrical installation, plumbing, painting and decorating, trowel trades and wood occupations. Work-based learning and vocational training for 14 to 16 year olds run in many of the crafts. There are approximately 500 learners of which nearly half are adult part-time learners studying at level 2. Apprenticeship training at levels 2 and 3 is also provided, under subcontract, with construction skills.

Strengths

- high success rates across most programmes
- effective support from specialist teachers and learning coaches
- effective strategies to improve success and retention rates.

Areas for improvement

- poor 14-16 year old success rates
- limited use of information learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning
- insufficient attention given to health and safety matters
- ineffective self-assessment for improvement purposes.

Achievements and standards

37. Achievements and standards are good. There are high success and retention rates across most courses, with apprenticeship success rates significantly above national rates. However, apprenticeship timely success rates are significantly lower than national rates. Key skill success rates are low but improving. Success rates for 14-16 year olds are poor. Standards of learners' written and practical work are satisfactory. The best examples include well developed practical skills. The worst examples include learners with poorly organised portfolios and personal notes.

Quality of provision

38. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The more effective learning sessions have enthusiastic well organised teachers working with interested and well motivated learners. The less effective sessions have poor resources, unclear tutor instructions and insufficient attention to individual learning styles. The use of ILT to enhance learning is underdeveloped. Assessment and verification arrangements are satisfactory. Course advice and guidance are

effective and few learners transfer between programmes. There are insufficient arrangements to provide structured work-experience and focused work readiness training for all full-time learners.

39. The programmes meet the needs and interests of learners well. The college provides a good range of full- and part-time programmes including all levels from pre-apprenticeship to HNC. The provision for guidance and additional learning support is satisfactory overall. Specialist support is effective in promoting qualification progression for learners with literacy, numeracy or dyslexia support needs. Tutorial sessions are interesting and informative. Qualification progression monitoring for part-time learners is thorough. Enrichment activities at curriculum level are organised by tutors and include visits to trade shows and competitions.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers provide good support for new staff and they have successfully implemented a range of initiatives, including the use of learning coaches, to help improve success rates. Resources are satisfactory. However, there are significant variations in the standards of resources across the department.
41. Self-assessment is ineffective. The report fails to use the broad range of evidence available to judge the strengths, satisfactory aspects and areas for improvement across the department. There is insufficient attention given to a range of health and safety matters. For example, inappropriate use of damaged furniture, poor adherence to the safety footwear policy in workshops, ladder access that contravenes construction regulations and high levels of brick and mortar dust. Arrangements for the promotion and development of learners' understanding of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. All learners undertake an induction programme that includes equal opportunities awareness training.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Outstanding: grade 1

Context

42. An extensive range of full- and part-time hairdressing and beauty therapy courses are offered at levels 1, 2 and 3. Some 249 full-time and 535 part-time learners are currently enrolled. Provision in hairdressing is provided to school pupils aged 14-16 and apprenticeships are offered in hairdressing.

Strengths

- high success rates
- outstanding teaching and learning
- extensive range of courses
- highly effective learner support
- excellent facilities
- very effective leadership and management.

Achievements and standards

43. Achievements and standards are outstanding. Learners' achievements and the standards of their work are very high. Success rates are 9% above national average and have increased by 10% since 2004/05. There are 100% pass rates in hairdressing levels 2 and 3, and beauty therapy levels 1 and 3 full-time courses; however, retention on level 1 beauty therapy full-time running for its first year was 14% below the national average at 63%. Learners take pride in their personal appearance, representing the industry well with high standards of technical skills applied during lessons. Learners enjoy participating in national competitions and have access to extra lessons, enabling them to develop advanced skills and, as a result, win many prizes.

Quality of provision

44. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Learners stay focused throughout their lessons, showing interest and enthusiasm. Skills are developed at a fast pace, equipping learners to progress confidently into employment. Lessons are thoughtfully planned to include Skills for Life and ILT. Differentiated activities keep learners challenged and meet their individual needs. Key skills are effectively embedded and delivered in context of the curriculum. Assessment is thorough and effectively informs learners how improvements can be made. In some beauty therapy lessons, work stations are untidy.

44. An extensive range of courses promotes a wide choice. Evening and weekend courses are offered, mostly benefiting those already in employment. Learners attending full-time can broaden their skills by attending an additional part-time course. Access courses structured around basic skills with a taster of hairdressing are offered with progression to level 1.
45. Learners are supported and guided extremely well. Initial assessment is effective in identifying additional learning and social needs, placing learners on the right courses and offering support from the start. Electronic tracking systems, accessible within the salons and classrooms, enable learners, tutors and learning coaches to continually track individual progress. Weekly tutorials enable full-time learners to work well together as a group to explore various topics and access one to one support.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a clear focus on raising standards, staff are clear about their roles and use them effectively. Management initiatives have improved provision and staff are guided and supported well. Teachers benefit from a variety of staff development activities which help them to develop their classroom skills. Effective deployment of staff has raised standards through the role of the advanced teaching practitioners, ILT and key skills champions. Internal communication is effective and keeps staff informed. Facilities are excellent; learners and staff are proud of their working environment. Hair and beauty salons are modern, spacious and well equipped, which encourage learners and staff to adopt professional working standards. Equality and diversity issues are effectively promoted.

Creative, media and performing arts

Good: grade 2

Context

47. There are currently 129 full-time learners aged 16-18 and 55 adult learners. Additionally, there are over 600 part-time learners; almost all of these are adult learners. All full-time provision is based at the new campus and the community provision is at many locations within the local vicinity. There are opportunities to study two-dimensional art and design, media and multimedia and all key components of performing arts. Learners can choose from a range of levels from pre-entry to level 4 in art and design and to level 3 in performing arts. There are some links with local schools.

Strengths

- high and rising success rates on full-time courses
- good standard of learner work
- much good teaching and learning
- extensive and diverse range of provision
- excellent new accommodation.

Areas for improvement

- poor recruitment and retention on some courses
- underdeveloped target setting
- inadequate technician support for music, media and performing arts.

Achievements and standards

48. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates have risen steadily over the past three years and are above national averages on most courses, particularly at levels 1 and 2. Progression internally and to other institutions is good. Learners with severe learning difficulties make particularly good progress. Learner work is good. Musical theatre learners demonstrate sophisticated levels of attainment in dance and skills are well developed in textiles, graphics and fine art. Music learners have won a local television competition. Retention on some courses is poor and further affected by low recruitment; however, current in year retention is much improved. Attendance and punctuality during inspection were satisfactory.

Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are good. In art and design, lessons are well planned with good levels of detailed feedback. In performing arts, teaching is

challenging and demanding with much emphasis on active learning and a strong sense of identity is established. There is effective use of ILT in performing arts and multimedia. Learners are able to submit and receive assignments electronically. There is outstanding assessment in the community provision, giving learners with severe learning difficulties much sense of achievement. However, no outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. In art and design, there are no specialist facilities for 3D or photography, which limits creative learning opportunities for some learners. Support is satisfactory. Learners are not set clear achievement targets based on entry level ability, progress is not well monitored in terms of added value and learners are unaware of individual targets. The range of provision is good and meets the needs of most learners.

Leadership and management

50. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory. New-build facilities have positively impacted on teaching and learning. The new theatre is outstanding; there are well soundproofed rehearsal rooms, good ILT facilities and good multi-media resources. The new accommodation is highly valued by staff and learners. However, there is currently no lighting rig, and limited specialist 3D and photography resources in art and design. There is no permanent specialist technician provision for performing arts, music and media and currently teachers have to fulfil this role themselves. Potential curriculum and commercial development is restricted in performing arts. Self-assessment is mainly accurate though some teaching observations are over graded. Quality assurance is not always effective. Equality and diversity measures are well implemented in the area.

Preparation for life and work

Good: grade 2

Context

51. The college offers full-time courses to 14-19 year old learners on pre-vocational courses and to learners with disabilities and difficulties preparing for the workplace. Study support and key skills are given both by a central team and within individual departments. The college also offers full-time courses in the community to adults with learning difficulties and disabilities as well as some part-time discrete courses in Skills for Life, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and for a range of learners with mental health problems. 1,288 learners are on full-time courses and 588 on part-time.

Strengths

- improving success rates on key skills
- good development of skills and understanding
- much good teaching and learning
- good focus on the needs of a wide range of disadvantaged learners
- strong emphasis on employability
- good actions to improve provision.

Areas for improvement

- insufficiently well used individual learning plans
- insufficient provision for adults
- underdeveloped coordination of foundation across college.

Achievements and standards

52. Achievements and standards are good. On most other programmes, success rates are above national averages. Success rates in key skills across the college are improving, from 10% in 2004/05 to 41% in 2005/06. Success rates on the level 2 adult numeracy are good at 92% and improving on ESOL level 1 courses to 84%. Learners develop good skills in literacy, numeracy, communications skills and workplace knowledge. Young learners with a range of behavioural issues demonstrate good classroom manners, and are interested in their literacy and numeracy activities.

Quality of provision

53. Teaching and learning are good, with challenging and stimulating activities which are fun, well paced and incrementally develop skills and

understanding. Lesson preparations show a good understanding of individuals. However, while individual plans are completed, many are insufficiently used in planning real learning. The language used is often too complex for learners and many targets are not specific or measurable. Study skills support has an effective system of diagnostic testing leading to some effective planning and reviewing. The college is in the process of embedding a recognition and recording of progression and achievement system, with staff training resulting in some improved target-setting.

54. The range of provision is good with a very strong focus on disadvantaged learners. A wide range of full-time courses is offered to learners with difficulties and disabilities which focus well on meaningful life and employability skills. A coordinated focus between the college and SPARC facilitates effective pathways to employment. There is a good range of courses for learners with mental health issues in partnership with other agencies. However, the Skills for Life programme offer to adults is small and predominantly daytime, with insufficient weekend provision or anything other than weekly formats. There are insufficient employer-based programmes.
55. Support and information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Full-time learners access a range of advice and guidance, though it is limited for part-time learners. Resources are generally appropriate to the needs of learners.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are satisfactory with good management actions taken to improve provision. Key skills provision was completely reorganised to be more proactive and some underperforming sections have been effectively reorganised to ensure staff benefit from the professional practice of other successfully led sections.
57. Communication between Skills for Life staff and vocational areas is good. However, the strategic coordination of foundation programmes across college and in the wider community is underdeveloped. There is no overall action plan to ensure clarity of vision and development, and insufficient specific targets are allocated to ensure a shared cross-college approach. The college is aware of this issue and has plans to address it. Equality and diversity are well addressed. The self-assessment process is satisfactory but is not sufficiently specific for all foundation programmes.

Learner's achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03-04	299	59	60	-1	2601	74	59	15
	04-05	441	58	64	-6	2856	74	62	12
	05-06	613	78			1331	78		
GNVQs and precursors	03-04	7	57	65	-8	1	0	52	-52
	04-05								
	05-06								
NVQs	03-04	87	53	61	-8	73	56	62	-6
	04-05	130	56	67	-11	52	71	67	4
	05-06	99	76			36	75		
Other	03-04	205	62	60	2	2527	74	59	15
	04-05	311	58	64	-6	2804	74	61	13
	05-06	514	78			1295	78		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03-04	622	56	56	0	997	62	54	8
	04-05	593	52	61	-9	975	66	60	6
	05-06	651	66			868	68		
GCSEs	03-04	80	46	61	-15	121	55	59	-4
	04-05	65	46	64	-18	102	75	62	13
	05-06	74	58			103	72		
GNVQs and precursors	03-04	30	67	63	4	5	80	57	23
	04-05	11	82	67	15	1	0	70	-70
	05-06								
NVQs	03-04	142	44	52	-8	167	51	53	-2
	04-05	147	48	57	-9	164	55	60	-5
	05-06	124	70			179	65		
Other	03-04	370	61	54	7	704	66	53	13
	04-05	370	53	60	-7	708	67	59	8

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03-04	462	47	64	-17	1036	53	53	0
	04-05	479	44	67	-23	1045	54	57	-3
	05-06	405	60			964	65		
A/A2 Levels	03-04	45	51	84	-33	93	67	66	1
	04-05	27	48	86	-38	74	53	69	-16
	05-06	35	49			52	52		
AS Levels	03-04	97	41	63	-22	125	47	50	-3
	04-05	62	31	65	-34	108	36	52	-16
	05-06	11	36			45	58		
GNVQs and precursors	03-04	43	56	52	4	8	38	44	-6
	04-05	37	57	60	-3	4	25	53	-28
	05-06	11	27			4	50		
NVQs	03-04	26	65	54	11	159	38	47	-9
	04-05	38	74	62	12	195	44	54	-10
	05-06	28	89			157	64		
Other	03-04	251	45	56	-11	651	57	56	1
	04-05	315	42	60	-18	664	60	58	2
	05-06	320	60			706	67		

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning 'apprenticeship' programmes managed by the college 2004 to 2006

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	57	56%	48%	44%	31%
		timely	49	27%	30%	20%	19%
	04-05	overall	30	73%	48%	63%	34%
		timely	26	42%	31%	42%	21%
	05-06	overall	50	74%	54%	70%	44%
		timely	58	34%	34%	31%	27%
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	60	68%	47%	58%	32%
		timely	53	25%	24%	19%	16%
	04-05	overall	98	45%	50%	45%	38%
		timely	122	17%	29%	17%	22%
	05-06	overall	123	63%	58%	63%	53%
		timely	92	27%	38%	27%	33%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'