

Bournville College of Further Education

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, public services and care; science and mathematics; information and communication technology (ICT); hairdressing and beauty therapy; preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law.

Description of the provider

1. Bournville College is a large general further education (GFE) college. Its mission is "Working together to achieve success for all through the provision of education and training that meets the diverse needs of the local and wider community".
2. Bournville College is in southwest Birmingham. Just under 90% of the college's learners are from Birmingham. Most of the remainder are from neighbouring boroughs, cities and counties of the West Midlands. Birmingham has five GFE colleges including Bournville and two sixth form colleges.
3. In 2005/06, the college had 10,976 learners. Of these, 85% were adult learners, 65% were women, 72% were part-time and 37% from minority ethnic groups. The number of learners aged 14-16 was 170. Some 68% of learners were from areas of high deprivation.
4. The college offers courses in all sector and subject areas. The highest number of learners are in: health, public services and social care; preparation for life and work; ICT; business, administration and law; arts, media and publishing, and retail and commercial enterprise. The college also provides programmes which cover work-based learning, Entry into Employment, Train to Gain and Learndirect. The college is involved with partners in three Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE). These are adult care (lead partner), professional and financial services and entrepreneurial.
5. Birmingham's population is 977,087. Birmingham has a ranking of 15 out of 354 local authorities for the highest levels of deprivation in England. The unemployment rate is twice the national average. Some 30% of the local population are from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils gaining five GCSE at A*- C in Birmingham in 2006 was 58.8%, compared to a national average of 59.2%.

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, public services and care | Good: grade 2 |
| Science and mathematics | Satisfactory: grade 3 |
| Information and communication technology | Good: grade 2 |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | Satisfactory: grade 3 |
| Preparation for life and work | Good: grade 2 |
| Business, administration and law | Good: grade 2 |

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

6. Effectiveness of provision is good. Most success rates have increased significantly since the last inspection. Success rates for adults in 2005/06 were above the national average but at level 3, for learners aged 16-18, they were below. Most learners' work is of good quality and they make good progress while at college.
7. Much teaching and learning are good. Most teachers plan well and use a wide range of teaching and learning activities. Programmes for work-based and Learndirect learners are of a high standard. However, individual learning plans are not always used effectively. Full-time learners do not have enough work experience.
8. Social and educational inclusion are outstanding. The response to the needs and interests of learners, employers and local communities is good, particularly for those under-represented in education and training.
9. Guidance and support are good and highly valued by learners. Learners receive strong additional support. Good quality guidance is available to learners at the start, during and end of their time at college. Tutors use tutorials effectively to promote themes which improve learners' wellbeing. Tutors do not always monitor learners' progress effectively.
10. Leadership and management are good. All managers have an effective focus on improving provision. The quality assurance processes support the raising of standards. Most sector subject management is good. Governors monitor provision thoroughly. Equality of opportunity is good. Well managed college finances provide learners with mostly good resources.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

11. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve provision. Senior managers, managers and staff are effective at increasing success rates and improving teaching and learning for most learners to a high level. Leadership and management are good and the college has a clear strategic direction. Quality assurance mechanisms are effective in improving provision. Support for learners and responsiveness to learners' and employers' needs are good and continue to get better. Governors closely monitor the college's performance. Financial management is effective.

Managers have been less effective at ensuring the effective use of individual learning plans.

12. Self-assessment is comprehensive and the process is well managed. The self-assessment report, well supported by data, is thorough and provides generally accurate grades and judgements. It does not identify all areas for improvement. Action plans, in some areas are not sufficiently detailed or measurable.

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

13. The college has made good progress since the last inspection. It has remedied successfully most weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Success rates at the last inspection were low and most teaching and learning was satisfactory. Since then, success rates have increased and much of teaching and learning is good. Punctuality has improved although it remains a problem in some areas. Quality assurance is now effective. Management of work-based learning is improving. Success rates for 16-18 year olds at level 3 are increasing but remain below the national average.

Key strengths

- increasing success rates, particularly for learners aged 16-18
- high success rates for adult and short courses under five weeks
- good learners' work overall
- much good teaching and learning
- responsive range of courses
- outstanding education and social inclusion
- excellent partnerships with schools, public sector employers and community groups
- good support for learners
- strong strategic direction
- effective and well managed arrangements to improve standards for learners.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates for learners aged 16-18 at level 3
- insufficiently effective use of individual learning plans
- insufficient industrial updating for staff
- not enough work experience for full-time learners.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: grade 2

Contributory grade:

Learners aged 16-18

Satisfactory: grade 3

14. Achievement and standards are good overall but satisfactory for learners aged 16-18. The increase in long course success rates for learners aged 16-18 since the last inspection has been substantial; a strength recorded in the self-assessment report. Nevertheless in 2005/06, success rates at level 1 and 2 on long courses for learners aged 16-18 were at the national average and, for long courses at level 3 in 2005/06, the rate was below. For adult learners, the increase in long course success rates was marked and in 2005/06 the rates at levels 1, 2 and 3 for adults were high and above the national average.
15. Success rates for short courses (under five weeks) were very high in 2005/06 and have increased since the last inspection. For short courses of five weeks and over, the success rate has increased since last inspection to just above the national average.
16. Entry into Employment progression rates and Learndirect success rates were high in 2005/06. Success rates for the Train to Gain precursors have increased since 2003/04 and in 2005/06 were high. Apprentice and advanced apprentice success rates were very low at the last inspection and in 2005/06 remained low.
17. Overall success rates for minority ethnic groups, in 2005/06 were mostly similar to those from a White background. The success rate for women was slightly better than for males.
18. Key skills success rates have increased since the last inspection, and although low in 2005/06, were just above the national average. Learners on GCE AS and A level programmes between 2003/04 and 2005/06 achieved grades predicted by their GCSE scores at entry.
19. Learners' work overall is good but satisfactory in mathematics and science and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Most learners make good progress while at college. Many develop strong vocational skills; particularly work-based learners. Those on Learndirect programmes improve their communications, ICT and numeracy skills. Health, public services and care

learners use published research in their written work effectively. ICT adult learners are well organised and their work is attractively presented. The dress and appearance of hairdressing and beauty therapy learners are of a high standard. Learners excluded from school improve their social skills. ESOL learners' languages skills are good. In business, administration and law, learners work well in teams and show respect for the views of others. The attendance of learners is satisfactory overall.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

20. Quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good for most learners. Learning is of a high standard for apprentices, advanced apprentices, Train to Gain and Learndirect learners. In the better lessons, teachers plan well and use a wide range of good teaching and learning activities. Classroom management is good. Teachers make effective use of information learning technology (ILT), an area which was targeted for improvement in the last self-assessment report. They are good at developing learners' confidence by encouraging discussion and the generation of ideas and presenting ideas and promoting independent working. Teachers challenge poor punctuality effectively. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Assessment of learners' progress is effective, frequent and accurate. Learners comment positively on the quality and timeliness of assessment feedback.
21. When teaching and learning are less effective, teachers plan poorly, talk too much, do not involve learners adequately in learning, and take insufficient account of individual needs. Use of individual learning plans is insufficiently effective. There is little work experience for full-time learners. Teachers have not had sufficient industrial updating.
22. Since the last inspection, arrangements for lesson observations have supported significantly improved teaching and learning. Managers use the results from observations effectively for staff development and to raise standards of provision. However, managers do not always monitor thoroughly the progress of action plans from the outcomes from teaching and learning observations.
23. The response to the requirements and interests of learners, employers and local communities is good. The range of courses at levels appropriate to learners' needs and opportunities for progression is good. The college enrolls many learners from groups under-represented in education. Courses are available at the main site and community venues. Use of external funding to widen participation is good. The college has an effective programme for learners aged 14-16. The self-assessment report recognises

the college has excellent partnerships and links with schools, public sector organisations and community groups. Steps taken to improve engagement with private sector employers are effective. Employers value the Train to Gain programme. The college makes an appropriate response to local worked-based learning priorities. Through the adult care CoVE, the college is taking a lead in meeting the care sector's skills needs. The range of enrichment activities is improving but, as the self-assessment report notes, the uptake by learners is an area for development.

24. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding. The college engages very successfully with a wide range of disadvantaged groups and individuals including young offenders and pupils excluded from school. Provision for vulnerable groups, including learners with behavioural difficulties, is well established. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups significantly exceeds that for the local population. Provision for learners wanting to improve their literacy, numeracy and language skills is extensive. Excellent partnership arrangements benefit groups such as excluded school pupils. The welcoming and safe environment encourages learners to succeed and to work well with each other.
25. Guidance and support are good and highly valued by learners. Arrangements for pre enrolment and careers guidance are effective. Thorough initial assessment establishes additional support requirements for learners. Additional support for learners is good, including the assistance provided for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; a strength noted in the self-assessment report. Success rates for those receiving additional support compare favourably with other learners. Use of specialist support equipment is strong. Support staff work well with teachers in lessons to provide additional help to learners. Tutors use tutorials effectively to promote themes to improve learners' wellbeing, such as respect for others and healthy eating. Nevertheless, the food and drink selections of learners aged 16-18 are often high in fat and sugar. The range of further services the college offers learners, including counselling and mental health support, is good. Tutors do not always monitor learners' progress effectively.

Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

26. Leadership and management are good. The principal, senior managers, managers, staff and governors have a clear and effective focus on

improving provision for learners. The principal and senior managers provide strong responsive leadership, and in partnership with the governors, set a clear strategic direction for the college. Sector subject management is mostly good. Business planning is thorough.

27. Quality assurance is effective and well managed. The college has good quality improvement arrangements which raise standards for learners. Thorough and comprehensive self-assessment arrangements support quality improvement and fully involve subject sector areas and course teams. Staff development has a clear emphasis on improving provision. The annual appraisal process clearly identifies staff training needs. Managers do not always rigorously evaluate the use and impact of staff development. As the self-assessment report notes, the use of service standards is an area for improvement. Some targets and success criteria in improvement plans are not easily measured. Managers do not always evaluate effectively the impact of actions to remedy problems.
28. Monitoring of provision and the performance of learners is good, including the involvement of governors. Managers scrutinise poorly performing courses and take prompt action to resolve issues. The management information system provides a wide range of useful reports for managers and staff on learners' performance.
29. Equality of opportunity is good. The college has thorough and effective policies and procedures to promote equality of opportunity, which take account of diversity, and to ensure learners do not face discrimination, bullying and harassment. The college monitors closely the performance of different groups of learners and takes action when there are issues. The college complies with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act and Race Relations (Amendment) Act. Procedures for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are appropriate including a central register of the checks undertaken on staff. Training on child protection has taken place. However, a significant number of staff have not completed the training.
30. Well managed college finances, a strength outlined in the self-assessment report, provide learners with mostly good resources. The college effectively deploys appropriately qualified staff. Given its success rates, quality of teaching and learning, responsiveness to learners and employers and support for learners, the college provides good value for money.

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: grade 2

Context

31. The college offers provision from levels 1 to 4 to full- and part-time learners which includes health and social care, early years, health and safety, public services, counselling and work-based learning. The qualifications available include National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), BTEC national certificates and diplomas, apprenticeship frameworks and other vocational awards. The college is the lead partner in an adult care CoVE. Of the 1,449 learners, 1,264 are adults, 1,138 are part-time, 1,170 are women, 440 are from minority ethnic groups and 16 are aged 14-16.

Strengths

- high NVQ success rates
- good learners' work
- much good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses.

Areas for improvement

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- insufficiently detailed action plans from course reviews.

Achievement and standards

32. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates for most NVQ and for short courses were high in 2005/06. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 in 2005/06 were similar to the national average. Adult learners' success rates were substantially higher than for learners aged 16-18 in 2005/06.
33. Learners' work is good. Good quality written work makes effective use of published research. Learners demonstrate a good knowledge of course content. They make effective use of theory to understand practical work. Learners are fully involved in lessons, especially in discussions. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

34. Quality of provision is good. Inspectors agreed with the strength in the self-assessment that much teaching and learning is of a high standard.

Enthusiastic teachers effectively plan a wide variety of activities for learners. They take good account of learners' different learning needs. Teachers are effective at engaging learners in professional discussions and making strong use of examples from the workplace to illustrate learning. At community venues and the workplace, teachers provide lessons at times to suit learners. The college makes good use of specialist staff and external speakers to support advanced level programmes. Staff are appropriately qualified. Resources to support learning are mostly good but learners do not have sufficient relevant books for some assignments. Individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed and sometimes lack clear targets. Reviews of learners' progress are not sufficiently frequent.

35. The broad range of provision meets employers and learners' needs particularly well. In 2006/07, the college introduced public services courses. The range and levels of provision allow learners to progress effectively. Managers of the sector subject area have not fully developed or reviewed the learner enrichment programme.
36. Support for learners is good. In lessons, staff closely support learners with additional learning needs and disabilities. The use of specialist support equipment is good. Staff monitor the attendance of learners aged 14-18 closely and take action when there are issues. Individual learning plans do not record the support learners receive.

Leadership and management

37. Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection, managers have successfully increased success rates and maintained provision at a high standard. Staff share good practice and support each other well. Self-assessment provides an accurate assessment of provision. Development plans, following annual course reviews, contain insufficient detail of specific actions and targets. The minutes of team meetings do not contain sufficient information. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners have an appropriate understanding of equality and diversity. Teachers do not always sufficiently promote or reinforce equality of opportunity during lessons.

Science and mathematics

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

38. The college provides full- and part-time provision for science from entry to level 4 and in mathematics from levels 1 to 3. Programmes include GCSE, GCE AS and A level courses, BTEC national diplomas, and other science and mathematics related awards. Some 570 learners are studying science and mathematics. Of these, 298 are adults, 313 are women, 540 are full-time, 313 from minority ethnic groups and 41 are aged 14-16.

Strengths

- high success rates in managing money, GCSE mathematics and GCE A level psychology
- good responsiveness to meeting learners' needs
- very good accommodation and ILT resources
- effective monitoring of learners and courses.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates in GCE AS chemistry, psychology and GNVQ intermediate science
- low proportion of high grade outcomes
- low progression rates between GCE AS and A level subjects
- insufficient links with industry for teachers and learners
- incomplete and underdeveloped individual learning plans.

Achievement and standards

39. Achievement and standards are satisfactory; a position the self-assessment report recognises. Success rates in managing money, GCSE mathematics and GCE A-level psychology were high in 2005/06. Most learners achieve in accordance with expectations based on their prior attainment. Adult learners succeed better than those aged 16-18 and women better than men. Most learners from minority ethnic groups succeed as well as those from White backgrounds, except for Black Caribbean male learners. Success rates in GCE AS chemistry and psychology, and GNVQ intermediate science were low in 2005/06. Few learners achieve high grades, except for those studying GCSE mathematics. Progression rates between GCE AS and A level subjects are low. Learners' work is satisfactory. Attendance has not improved since the last inspection.

Quality of provision

40. Quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are adequate. In the best lessons, teachers involve learners in interesting and enjoyable learning activities at a challenging pace. They make good use of ILT. In the less effective lessons, teachers talk too much and the pace is slow. Teachers do not work with their learners or check on their progress sufficiently. Individual learning plans have insufficiently specific targets, have minimal content, are incomplete and do not motivate learners to improve. Teachers' feedback on assessed work is mostly satisfactory. It is good in psychology.
41. The responsiveness to meeting learners' needs is good. Managers have introduced more vocational provision. They reacted well to the needs of gifted and talented learners by providing GCE AS further mathematics at short notice. The college does not arrange work experience for learners.
42. Learners receive good support. The liaison between teachers and the support assistants is thorough and effective. The support for a visually impaired learner is very good. Potential learners receive helpful information, advice and guidance.

Leadership and management

43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have improved mathematics teaching and learning, a weakness at the last inspection. Success rates since the last inspection have increased markedly from a low level. The self-assessment report is mostly accurate. Systems to record learners' progress and monitor courses are effective. Accommodation and ILT resources are very good. Teachers lack relevant industrial experience and have had little recent industrial updating. Equality of opportunity for learners is good.

Information and communication technology

Good: grade 2

Context

44. Full- and part-time courses in ICT are available from entry to level 3. Learners work towards a range of awards including GCE AS and A2 level, BTEC introductory and first diplomas, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), and other practitioner and user qualifications. Courses are available in college, at community venues and through Learndirect. Of 714 learners, 530 are adults, 423 are women, 484 are part-time and 199 are from minority ethnic groups.

Strengths

- high and improving success rates
- high standards of adult learners' work
- much good teaching
- good support for learners
- good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- insufficiently precise learning targets for full-time learners
- not enough work experience and curriculum enrichment for learners aged 16-18.

Achievements and standards

45. Most success rates in 2005/06 were high and well above the national average, particularly for adult learners. Success rates have increased markedly since the last inspection when they were low. The retention rate in 2006/07 was low on the BTEC introductory diploma course. On GCE AS and A level courses, learners perform in line with prior levels of attainment.
46. Standards of adult learners' work are high. Their work is attractive, well organised and they demonstrate good ICT skills. All learners work well in groups, can talk confidently about their work and have good technical knowledge and understanding. Learners are highly motivated, contribute regularly and enjoy working together and with their teachers. Learners aged 16-18, produce satisfactory standards of work. Attendance is good overall.

Quality of provision

47. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are of a high standard. The planning of learning is good. Teachers use a wide variety of activities to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of learners to a high level. Teachers and learners use ILT effectively. Written feedback on work is comprehensive and supported by good verbal feedback. Targets in individual learning plans for full-time learners are insufficiently specific. Most learners aged 16-18 do not have sufficient work experience opportunities or additional enrichment activities to improve learning. Assessment is accurate.
48. The range of provision is flexible and responsive to community and employers' needs. It enables learners to progress to higher level courses and to employment.
49. Support and guidance for learners are good. Induction is effective. Staff provide high levels of individual support at college, through e-mails and during the holidays. All learning materials are available electronically. The range of support for learners with disabilities is strong. Effective initial assessment is in place and staff arrange effective additional support for those requiring assistance.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are good. This is a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Managers clearly identify weaknesses and take effective action to resolve them and improve provision. Success rates have increased significantly since the last inspection. Procedures for identifying and dealing with poor attendance, punctuality and progress are particularly thorough. The lesson observation scheme, and effective professional development, have successfully contributed to raising standards. ICT resources and accommodation are good. Staff teams produce extremely thorough course reviews. Managers and staff use these to produce a comprehensive and broadly accurate self-assessment report. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

51. The range of full-time and part-time programmes includes hairdressing and beauty therapy from level 1 to level 3. Learners work toward the NVQ. Of the 297 learners, 185 are adults, 238 are full-time, 258 are women and 45 are from minority ethnic groups.

Strengths

- high success rate on NVQ beauty therapy at level 1
- high standards professional image and attitude of learners
- good use of ICT in theory classes
- good practical resources in hairdressing
- good support for learners.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on NVQ hairdressing at level 2
- insufficient number of clients in hairdressing and beauty therapy
- slow assessment on beauty therapy programmes
- insufficient space in beauty salons for some large groups.

Achievement and standards

52. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. In 2005/06, success rates for NVQ beauty therapy at level 1 were high but for NVQ hairdressing at level 2, were low. Success rates for other courses were similar to the national averages. Success rates between 2004/05 and 2005/06 increased, particularly in beauty therapy.
53. All learners show high levels of professional image and attitude. Their appearance and dress, and relationships with clients are of a high standard. Hairdressing learners are progressing at a satisfactory pace but beauty therapy learners make slower progress in developing their practical skills. Learners' knowledge, understanding and practical skills are satisfactory. Attendance rates at lessons during the inspection were low.

Quality of provision

54. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan most lessons appropriately using a variety of learning activities. They provide constructive feedback on learners' work.

The number of clients is too low for learners to develop skills at a pace required by professional salons and to have the opportunity for timely assessment, particularly in beauty therapy. Assessment, internal verification and monitoring of progress are satisfactory for hairdressing. In beauty therapy, there is insufficient focus on the assessment of practical skills.

55. Teachers use ILT well in theory lessons, including quizzes and games to maintain and stimulate learners' interest. Practical resources in hairdressing are of a high standard. The main hairdressing salon is well equipped, modern, and replicates the best professional practice. Resources in beauty salons are satisfactory but are often unable to accommodate large groups of learners comfortably.
56. The college has only run hairdressing and beauty therapy provision since 2003/04; it focuses on meeting the mainstream needs of employers and learners.
57. Support for learners is good. The college provides learners with additional learning needs with good support. The range of equipment available to assist learners with a disability is good. Tutors provide good support to learners at regular tutorials.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New managers have taken action to improve provision. However, it is too early to judge effectiveness. Success rates are increasing. Arrangements for observing teaching are robust and staff development activities focus on improving provision. Self-assessment identified most strengths but did not identify some areas for improvement. Teachers are enthusiastic and are well supported and valued by managers. Managers and teachers contribute effectively to subject development. Equality of opportunity is good.

Preparation for life and work

Good: grade 2

Context

59. The college provides courses in ESOL, literacy and numeracy, supported learning, pre-vocational education, Entry into Employment, Learndirect and key skills. Most provision is available between pre entry and level 2. ESOL is the largest programme at just over 40% of total provision. Courses are taught predominantly at the main site with some community provision. Of the 3,432 learners, 1,845 are adults, 2,010 are women, 2,611 are full-time, 129 are aged 14-16 and 1,397 are from minority ethnic groups.

Strengths

- very high success rates on many courses
- good progression for pre-vocational and supported learning learners
- effective development of learners' skills
- good teaching and learning on most courses
- very broad range of provision
- very good support for learners
- highly effective management action to secure improvements.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient planning to meet individual learners' needs in supported learning, pre-vocational, key skills and some ESOL classes
- insufficient monitoring and recording of individual learners' progress in ESOL, supported learning and pre-vocational programmes.

Achievement and standards

60. Achievement and standards are good. Since the last inspection, success rates have increased substantially. In 2005/06 on many ESOL, literacy and numeracy and supported learning programmes, success rates were very high, particularly at entry and level 1. Overall, key skills success rates were increasing and, in 2005/2006, were similar to the national average. Retention rates were low in 2005/06 on a few programmes. Entry to Employment progression rates in 2005/06, were high.

61. Learners, while at college, make good progress and improve their confidence. Learners previously excluded from education or with low prior achievement, develop useful personal skills and independence and progress to vocational programmes or employment. ESOL learners develop good language skills. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

62. Teaching and learning are good in ESOL and literacy and numeracy. In the best lessons, planning is thorough and teachers meet the needs of individual learners effectively. Teachers' explanations are very clear. They motivate learners to work hard who, in turn, enjoy their lessons. Behaviour management on the pre-vocational courses is good. Since the last inspection, ILT use has improved to satisfactory.
63. Planning to meet individual learners' needs in supported learning, pre-vocational and key skills classes is unsatisfactory. The monitoring of individual learners' progress is insufficient in ESOL, supported learning and pre-vocational programmes. The recording of individual learners' progress does not systematically take place.
64. The range of provision to promote educational and social inclusion and meet learners' needs is very good. The college offers a wide range of full-time ESOL programmes from pre entry to level 2 for adults and full-time vocational programmes at level 1 for 14-19 year olds. Programmes for those with learning difficulties and disabilities include a wide range of enrichment activities.
65. Support for learners is very good; a strength noted in the self-assessment report. Staff are clearly aware of the barriers that learners face and provide very effective support. Links with external support services are good.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are good. Managers take highly effective action to secure improvements. Success rates and the quality of teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection. Sharing of good practice is very effective. Promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The comprehensive self-assessment report provides an accurate assessment of most strengths and areas for improvement.

Business, administration and law

Good: grade 2

Context

67. Full-time and part-time courses are available from entry level to level 4 and include accounts, administration, business, law, management, professional studies and work-based learning. Learners can study NVQ, apprenticeship frameworks, BTEC national certificates and diplomas, GCE AS and A level and professional qualifications. Of the 620 learners, 500 are aged 16-18, 429 are women, 470 are part-time and 239 are from minority ethnic groups. The college is a partner in two CoVEs, one in management and professional and the other in entrepreneurship.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- high standards of learners' work
- good teaching and learning
- good support for learners
- well managed sector subject area.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on some courses
- insufficient impact of actions to improve the quality of accounting provision.

Achievement and standards

68. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates in 2005/06 were outstanding on GCE A level law and NVQ business administration level 3. Most other success rates were high. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 were better than those for adults. Some learners' success rates were low, including GCE AS accounting, accounting foundation, NVQ level 2 and the certificate and diploma in management studies. The quality of learners' work is good; the demonstration of knowledge and understanding in lessons in administration, law, management, professional studies topics was of a high standard. Practical skills are well developed; learners work well in teams and show respect for the views of others. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

69. The quality of provision is good. Much teaching and learning is good. Teachers provide stimulating introductions to lessons and motivate learners

well to participate particularly effectively in learning. The use of group work is good in developing learners' ability to take responsibility for their own learning. The use of ILT is particularly effective. For example, teachers employ interactive games to provide a highly enjoyable way to learn rules for business spelling. Teachers use theory effectively to show how it underpins the application of business concepts in the work place. They use business topics effectively to teach key skills. The assessment of learners' work is thorough and accurate.

70. The wide range of courses meets the needs of employers and learners well, particularly for adults, including an innovative programme for the leadership and marketing of arts in the public sector. Courses build effectively on learners' prior levels of achievement and the college offers a good range of progression routes for learners. Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory.
71. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that support for learners is good. Arrangements for pre-enrolment and progression guidance; initial assessment are thorough and effective. Staff provide learners with high quality additional support. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of learners' individual needs and monitor their progress effectively.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are good. Sector subject area managers provide clear strategies to raise standards for learners. Most plans and actions to improve provision are effective. In a few instances, this does not happen, particularly in provision for accounts, where success rates remain low. Self-assessment is accurate and effective and with the good use of data, contributes to improving provision. Partnerships with employers are strong. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good.

Learners' 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 | 593 | 57.0 | 59.1 | -2.1 | 1,959 | 63.3 | 58.6 | 4.7 |
| | 04/05 | 779 | 58.5 | 61.7 | -3.2 | 1,251 | 64.9 | 61.0 | 3.9 |
| | 05/06 | 546 | 68.3 | * | | 1,264 | 71.1 | * | |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04 | 15 | 73.3 | 63.3 | 10 | 0 | 0 | * | |
| | 04/05 | 1 | 0 | 63.9 | -63.9 | 0 | 0 | * | |
| | 05/06 | 0 | 0 | * | | 0 | 0 | * | |
| NVQs | 03/04 | 69 | 52.2 | 60.9 | -8.7 | 77 | 48.1 | 66.1 | -18 |
| | 04/05 | 60 | 56.7 | 65.4 | -8.7 | 17 | 64.7 | 70.8 | 6.1 |
| | 05/06 | 26 | 73.0 | * | | 4 | 50.0 | * | |
| Other | 03/04 | 509 | 57.2 | 58.6 | -1.4 | 1,882 | 63.9 | 58.3 | 5.6 |
| | 04/05 | 719 | 58.7 | 61.2 | -2.5 | 1,234 | 64.9 | 60.6 | 4.3 |
| | 05/06 | 520 | 68.3 | * | | 1,260 | 71.2 | * | |

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 | <i>Diff</i> | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | <i>Diff</i> |
| 2 Long | 03/04 | 748 | 48.3 | 56.3 | -8.0 | 847 | 53.0 | 53.7 | -0.7 |
| | 04/05 | 638 | 52.5 | 60.3 | -7.8 | 874 | 58.4 | 59.3 | -0.9 |
| | 05/06 | 511 | 63.8 | * | | 1,223 | 68.4 | * | |
| GCSEs | 03/04 | 257 | 51.4 | 63.7 | -12.3 | 90 | 53.3 | 57.4 | -4.1 |
| | 04/05 | 189 | 55.6 | 65.2 | -9.6 | 93 | 68.8 | 63.3 | 5.5 |
| | 05/06 | 139 | 75.5 | * | | 70 | 80.2 | * | |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04 | 136 | 45.6 | 59.5 | 13.9 | 28 | 25.0 | 56.0 | -31 |
| | 04/05 | 79 | 75.9 | 65.6 | 10.3 | 25 | 44.0 | 61.5 | -17.5 |
| | 05/06 | 16 | 31.3 | * | | 35 | 71.4 | * | |
| NVQs | 03/04 | 70 | 54.3 | 50.5 | 3.8 | 472 | 55.3 | 54.3 | 1.0 |
| | 04/05 | 80 | 46.3 | 56.1 | -9.8 | 477 | 56.4 | 62.2 | -5.8 |
| | 05/06 | 105 | 64.7 | * | | 683 | 64.2 | * | |
| Other | 03/04 | 285 | 45.3 | 52.9 | -7.6 | 257 | 51.8 | 52.7 | 0.9 |
| | 04/05 | 209 | 45.9 | 58.3 | -12.4 | 279 | 59.5 | 57.4 | 2.1 |
| | 05/06 | 251 | 59.0 | * | | 435 | 74.6 | * | |

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 | <i>Diff</i> | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | <i>Diff</i> |
| 3 Long | 03/04 | 590 | 47.8 | 61.1 | -13.3 | 1,575 | 52.2 | 56.5 | 4.3 |
| | 04/05 | 785 | 51.0 | 64.9 | -13.9 | 1,394 | 55.5 | 56.5 | -1.0 |
| | 05/06 | 702 | 59.5 | * | | 1,398 | 66.0 | * | |
| A/A2 Levels | 03/04 | 80 | 73.8 | 83.6 | -9.8 | 101 | 59.4 | 69.3 | -9.9 |
| | 04/05 | 96 | 77.1 | 84.6 | 7.5 | 44 | 77.3 | 73.3 | 4.0 |
| | 05/06 | 130 | 85.4 | * | | 58 | 82.8 | * | |
| AS Levels | 03/04 | 331 | 42.9 | 60.0 | -17.1 | 167 | 43.1 | 49.8 | -6.7 |
| | 04/05 | 391 | 49.1 | 63.5 | 14.4 | 114 | 41.2 | 53.4 | -12.2 |
| | 05/06 | 344 | 56.1 | * | | 87 | 54.0 | * | |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04 | 108 | 52.8 | 50.3 | 2.5 | 33 | 51.5 | 42.6 | 8.9 |
| | 04/05 | 66 | 48.5 | 59.4 | -10.9 | 25 | 56.0 | 51.4 | 4.6 |
| | 05/06 | 17 | 76.4 | * | | 6 | 83.3 | * | |
| NVQs | 03/04 | 7 | 26.6 | 50.5 | -23.9 | 449 | 48.1 | 48.1 | 0.0 |
| | 04/05 | 17 | 35.3 | 53.1 | -17.8 | 389 | 56.8 | 54.1 | 2.7 |
| | 05/06 | 12 | 75.0 | * | | 482 | 66.6 | * | |
| Other | 03/04 | 64 | 34.4 | 51.3 | -16.9 | 825 | 55.4 | 53.6 | 1.8 |
| | 04/05 | 215 | 44.2 | 56.0 | -11.8 | 822 | 55.7 | 56.3 | -0.6 |
| | 05/06 | 199 | 46.2 | * | | 553 | 66.4 | * | |

* Not available

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2003/04 to 2005/06.

a) Overall success rate

| End Year | Apprenticeship Programme | Number of Learners * | College Framework rate ** | National rate ** | College NVQ rate ** | National rate ** |
|----------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 2003/04 | Apprenticeship | 3 | 0% | 32% | 0% | 47% |
| | Advanced | 5 | 0% | 31% | 100% | 48% |
| | NVQ only | 15 | *** | *** | 60% | 46% |
| 2004/05 | Apprenticeship | 22 | 32 | 39% | 36% | 50% |
| | Advanced | 11 | 0% | 34% | 0% | 48% |
| | NVQ only | 5 | *** | *** | 56% | 56% |
| 2005/06 | Apprenticeship | 41 | 34% | 53% | 39% | 53% |
| | Advanced | 7 | 29% | 44% | 29% | 58% |
| | NVQ only | 3 | *** | *** | 67% | 61% |

* 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'

*** Not applicable

b) Timely success rate

| End Year | Apprenticeship Programme | Number of Learners * | College Framework rate ** | National rate ** | College NVQ rate ** | National rate ** |
|----------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 2003/04 | Apprenticeship | 0 | 0% | 16% | 0% | 24% |
| | Advanced | 4 | 0% | 19% | 50% | 30% |
| | NVQ only | 13 | *** | *** | 31% | 33% |
| 2004/05 | Apprenticeship | 22 | 14% | 22% | 18% | 29% |
| | Advanced | 11 | 0% | 21% | 0% | 31% |
| | NVQ only | 4 | *** | *** | 50% | 39% |
| 2005/06 | Apprenticeship | 41 | 34% | 32% | 34% | 36% |
| | Advanced | 7 | 29% | 26% | 29% | 33% |
| | NVQ only | 3 | *** | *** | 67% | 41% |

* The number of learners who planned to complete their learning programme in the given year

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

*** Not applicable

Outcomes for Employer Training Pilots and National Employer Training Programmes managed by the college 2002/03 to 2005/06.

| Year | Number of starts in year | Planned learning completed * | Still in learning |
|---------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2002/03 | 78 | 62% | 0 |
| 2003/04 | 163 | 55% | 0 |
| 2004/05 | 463 | 65% | 0 |
| 2005/06 | 77 | 82% | 0 |

* These are key learning objectives identified for each learner following an ETP or NETP programme

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