

Swindon College

Inspection report

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Contents

Background information	3
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Key strengths and areas for improvement	7
Main findings	8
Sector subject reports	12

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 achievement 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
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, care and early years; construction; hairdressing and beauty therapy; art, design and media; literacy and numeracy; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Description of the provider

1. Swindon College appointed a new principal in 2006 and reviewed its mission. This is to 'deliver high quality vocational teaching and training that meets the needs of students, employers, the community, and the region while strategically contributing to the thriving local economy'.
2. One outcome of the mission review was a re-modelling of the core provision involving a move away from offering General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS and A levels. The focus of provision is vocational education and training, taking

into account local skills needs, progression to higher education, and the 14 to 19 strategy for the Borough of Swindon, Wiltshire. Over 75% of the college's students aged 16 to 18 come from within the Borough of Swindon. The attainment at GCSE of school leavers aged 16 in the borough is low.

3. College data for 2006/07 show almost 6,500 long course enrolments, or just over 4,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) learners. Of these, over half were aged 16 to 18 and most of these studied courses at either level 1 or 2. The college offers provision to substantial numbers of learners in 12 of the 15 sector subject areas (SSAs). Courses in construction, retail and commercial enterprise, and art, design and media account for around 40% of students aged 16 to 18. For adults the most popular areas are health, care and early years; construction; and art, design and media. These account for a similar proportion of adult learners.
4. The college has two centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs) in automotive manufacturing/engineering, and retail. There are around 500 learners aged 14 to 16 studying part-time at the college. Around 80 learners aged 14 to 16 are on young apprenticeship programmes. There is a Train to Gain contract that began in 2006/07 for some 500 learners. The college manages around half of this provision through specialist sub-contractors. There are around 500 work-based learners on apprenticeship programmes. Just over half of these are in construction trades and one quarter in engineering; the next largest area of apprenticeships is in hairdressing with around 60 learners. The college relocated all core provision to the North Star site before the start of the 2006/07 academic year.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Inadequate: Grade 4
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Inadequate: Grade 4
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Inadequate: Contributory grade 4</i>

Sector subject areas

Health, care and early years	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Construction	Inadequate: Grade 4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Art, design and media	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy and numeracy	Inadequate: Grade 4
ESOL	Inadequate: Grade 4

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Inadequate: Grade 4

5. This is an inadequate college but with satisfactory capacity to improve further. Learners' achievement is inadequate overall and for most of the large numbers of students aged 16 to 18, who account for over half of the college's full-time equivalent learners. Success rates for learners aged 14 to 16 and for adults in Train to Gain provision are high. Achievement for apprentices in work-based learning are satisfactory, but not enough apprentices achieve their framework within the planned timescale.
6. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall and is good for learners aged 14 to 16. Key skills provision is unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A more rigorous lesson observation process is improving the quality of lessons. However, a high proportion of lessons remain less than good. Target-setting for students is not sufficiently rigorous to enable them to make good or better progress.
7. The extent to which the range of programmes and activities meets the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. The college has taken a responsive and carefully managed approach to widening the curriculum and there are strong links with schools and employers. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. Guidance and support are satisfactory.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have brought about a well managed improvement to resources, including the successful relocation to new accommodation. They have successfully raised adult success rates in the last year, especially at level 3. As a result, these are now slightly above average at each level. There are strong aspects to the quality improvement programme, such as the regular cycle of quality improvement boards. However, the implementation of quality improvement strategies at curriculum level has been inconsistent and insufficiently effective. The use of management information in quality improvement at curriculum level is not sufficiently developed, resulting in optimistic judgements about strengths and underestimated weaknesses in self-assessment. Arrangements for sharing good practice across the college are ineffective. There has been slow and inadequate progress in the promotion of equality and diversity.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. The college demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve. It has strong and productive links with employers and local schools and has improved its resources and accommodation significantly. Adult success rates have improved over the past three years and are slightly above average. Target-setting is systematic, but targets are not sufficiently stretching. Quality improvement

processes are comprehensive with strong aspects, including a reliable lesson observation process that is helping to improve the quality of lessons. However, the inconsistent implementation of quality improvement has resulted in optimistic judgements and underestimated weaknesses in self-assessment, especially at curriculum level. Self-assessment is satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection, success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 have not improved sufficiently and key skills results remain low. There are still weaknesses in the use of management information to inform quality improvement, though staff access to data has improved.

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

10. The college has taken inadequate steps to promote improvement since the last inspection. The college has successfully undertaken a significant re-building programme and has re-shaped its curriculum and management structure. However, most of the areas for improvement from the last inspection remain. Success rates at levels 1 and 2 for learners aged 16 to 18 have not risen sufficiently and are low, but success rates for adults have improved and are slightly above average. The quality of provision in five of the six curriculum areas inspected has declined since the last inspection, and in three of these is now inadequate. Equality and diversity, which were good at the last inspection, are now inadequate.

Key strengths

- high success rates for learners aged 14 to 16 and for adults in Train to Gain programmes
- the quality of provision for learners aged 14 to 16
- responsive and carefully managed approach to widening the curriculum
- strong links with schools and employers
- rigorous and effective lesson observation process
- well managed improvements to resources.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- success rates for learners aged 16 to 18
- overall and timely success rates for apprentices in work-based learning
- the significant proportion of lessons that remain only satisfactory
- insufficiently rigorous target-setting in individual learning plans
- key skills provision
- the effectiveness of quality improvement at curriculum level
- the sharing of good practice across the college
- the use of management information in quality improvement at curriculum level
- slow progress in the promotion of equality and diversity.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Inadequate: Grade 4

Contributory grades:

Adults

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Train to Gain

Good: Grade 2

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: Grade 2

11. Learners' achievement is inadequate overall. This does not reflect the college's more optimistic self-assessment judgement. Achievement is good for learners aged 14 to 16 and in Train to Gain and it is satisfactory for adults, but for learners aged 16 to 18, who represent over half of the college's learners, it is inadequate. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory.
12. At the time of the last inspection in 2003, success rates for most learners on long courses were around the average at levels 2 and 3 but below average at level 1. Success rates for adults on long courses at levels 1 and 2 show a strong improvement trend over the past three years. However, this is not the case at level 3 where success rates did not improve substantially until 2006/07. Unvalidated college data for 2006/07 show that success rates for adults at levels 1-3 were slightly above average. For learners aged 16 to 18, success rates on long courses were very low in 2004/05 but have improved since then. However, this rate of improvement is set against a national average that is rising significantly. As a result, success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 in 2006/07 were around the average for most learners at level 3 but remained low at levels 1 and 2. Courses at levels 1 and 2 account for around 80% of learners aged 16 to 18. There is too much variation in success rates across the range of the college's work.
13. Target-setting in individual learning plans is not yet sufficiently rigorous and challenging for all students to enable them to make good or better progress, although the college has been piloting a well devised value-added system that is now in use across the college.
14. Learners' attendance is satisfactory and they generally enjoy their studies. They work safely and develop adequate practical and work-related skills to equip them for employment. Progression into employment or further study is good. Key skills success rates are low and in some cases declining. As a result learners are only adequately equipped for their future social and economic well-being. Overall success rates in work-based learning are satisfactory and in 2006/07 unvalidated college data indicate that framework completion continued to improve. However, not enough apprentices achieve their framework within the planned timescale and too many continue well beyond their expected end dates.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: Grade 2

15. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall but is good for learners aged 14 to 16. Key skills provision is inadequate. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, in agreement with the college's own judgement. The college has been slow to improve on issues raised at the last inspection. For example, planning to meet individual learners' needs is seldom evident and a significant minority of lessons still fail to engage students. The range of teaching and learning approaches and activities is frequently still too narrow.
16. The college has introduced a rigorous lesson observation scheme by a team of advanced practitioners. Inspectors found the process reliable and accurate. It is having a positive impact on the quality of lessons. However, the summary of lesson observations carried out by the college shows that there are still too many lessons that are no better than satisfactory.
17. The college has implemented some well devised strategies to improve teaching and learning, including the effective mentoring of new staff and an extensive programme of staff development activities. However, there has been insufficient monitoring of the impact of the many teaching and learning initiatives introduced over the last few years. Learning resources are satisfactory.
18. Initial assessment is satisfactory. The provision of additional learning support is effective with learners who receive support achieving success rates comparable to those of their peers. Assessment and feedback to students on most courses are satisfactory. Individual progress reviews are not sufficiently effective at improving overall attendance and retention for learners aged 16 to 18. The quality of too many individual learning plans is poor with little recording of students' progress and few individual, measurable short-term targets.
19. The extent to which the college meets the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. The college enrichment programme is satisfactory. The college has developed the curriculum in the past year responsively to the needs of its stakeholders and is clearly focused on providing vocational options to meet local demand. The range of courses continues to increase with three additional level 1 programmes in 2007/08. Opportunities for suitable progression are available in most curriculum areas. The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory.
20. The college has strong collaborative arrangements with local schools. The number of pre-16 learners has increased in response to rising demand for vocational options. The range of programmes on offer to 14 to 16 years olds is good and includes applied GCSE, young apprenticeship and a variety of other vocational programmes at entry level, level 1 and 2. The college is actively involved in, and leads on, many 14 to 19 developments and partnerships in

Swindon. Effective arrangements are in place to deliver three of the five new diplomas from 2008. The college works closely with local organisations to support vulnerable young people who are often under-represented in further education and training.

21. The college responds flexibly and well to most employers' requests. Where necessary, training is delivered through specialist sub-contractors. The number of learners engaged in training delivered by the college in the workplace has increased significantly in the last year. The range of work-based learning and Train to Gain programmes is satisfactory. The college offers apprenticeships in five sector subject areas. The demand for apprenticeships is increasing. However, shortages in staffing, the suitability of resources and employment opportunities have affected the college's ability to respond to this demand.
22. Guidance and support are satisfactory overall but are good for learners aged 14 to 16. Full-time learners receive regular group tutorials on a suitable range of topics that are linked to the Every Child Matters outcomes. The college offers a good range of services and activities to support learners on health and other personal issues. Working relationships are effective with local organisations and agencies to provide appropriate specialist care and support for learners.
23. Potential learners receive a wide range of appropriate literature and information. The college works closely with Connexions and schools to provide clear and accurate information to young people. There is a good range of opportunities for young people and parents to learn about the college before applying. Advice and guidance are not sufficiently good to ensure learners start and remain on programmes that they will complete successfully.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Inadequate: Grade 4

24. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as the college judges in its own self-assessment, and are good for learners aged 14 to 16. The college has successfully relocated since the last inspection to good accommodation with some good resources. It still has challenges to tackle with some ageing accommodation and establishing a secure financial basis caused by not meeting targets. However, it has sound financial systems and budgetary controls.
25. Since the last inspection the college has successfully reshaped its curriculum to meet the needs of the local community, particularly for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 whose prior achievement at school has been low. Provision meets the LSC's priority areas.
26. Senior management, while pushing through the changes quickly in the interests of learners, has put in place a good communications strategy to consult appropriately and effectively with staff. The staff forum is well used by staff to

question senior management in a formal way and ensure they can be held to account. Governance is satisfactory with good clerking arrangements.

27. There is a good programme of staff development for all staff and particularly for the new middle managers. The priority is rightly on improving teaching and learning skills and ensuring staff gain suitable teaching qualifications quickly. The proportion of teachers with appropriate qualifications is high.
28. The quality of curriculum middle management, though satisfactory overall, is still not consistent across all areas of the college and this has resulted in the inconsistent application of the college's quality assurance procedures and the under-developed sharing of good practice across the college. There are strong aspects to the quality improvement programme, such as the regular cycle of quality improvement boards, but the expertise of staff in using data to assess performance and agree challenging targets is still not sufficiently developed. This has resulted in optimistic judgements about strengths and underestimated weaknesses in self-assessment. The lesson observation system is well established and reliable. It has improved the quality of lessons, but a high proportion of teaching and learning remains only satisfactory.
29. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Achievement and standards are inadequate, although satisfactory for adults. Inspectors found half of the curriculum areas inspected inadequate. The college provides unsatisfactory value for money.
30. The promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate. There are pockets of good practice but this is not effectively shared. The college is not fully compliant with its duties under race and disability legislation. For example, the college has yet to complete the impact assessment of college policies on promoting race and disability equality and has not yet produced a race equality scheme. Arrangements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are appropriate, but not all staff have yet received training. The tutorial programme includes some engaging equality and diversity activities. However, the embedding of equality of opportunity within the curriculum is at an early stage.

Sector subject areas

Health, care and early years

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

31. The college offers courses in health, care and early years from entry level to national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 4. The provision accounts for around 120 learners aged 16 to 18 and a very small number of apprentices. There are 36 learners aged 14 to 16 following courses in childcare. Around 250 adult learners are following part-time NVQ programmes in early years with another 50 on NVQ programmes at levels 2 and 3 in care through Train to Gain. Approximately 600 adults are following level 2 and level 3 vocationally related qualifications (VRQs) in care. There are 79 adult learners on access to higher education programmes.

Strengths

- high success rates for adults on NVQ level 2 programmes
- good teaching on NVQ programmes
- thorough and accurate assessment
- responsive provision to meet the needs of employers
- good management of NVQ provision.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on full-time provision for learners aged 16 to 18
- low key skills achievement
- lack of challenge and innovation in lessons on full-time programmes for 16 to 18 year olds
- insufficiently rigorous self-assessment at programme area level.

Achievement and standards

32. Learners' achievement is satisfactory. It is good for adults but inadequate for learners aged 16 to 18. Success rates are high on NVQ level 2 programmes but are average at level 3. Success rates for adults are high in the wide range of level 2 VRQs. For most learners aged 16 to 18, success rates have been consistently low. Success rates are low on the access to nursing provision. Key skills achievement is very low. Progression to employment or further study is good. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

33. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good for adults. However, they are inadequate for learners aged 16 to 18 where they are not leading to sufficiently improved achievement for learners. Teachers are well qualified and use their professional experience well to make learning vocationally relevant. However, a significant minority of teaching is uninspiring and work is not challenging enough. Teaching in the workplace is good and highly responsive to

the needs of both learners and employers. Learners are fully aware of equality and diversity issues and work safely.

34. Assessment is thorough and accurate. Learners receive detailed feedback that enables them to improve their work. However, learners' targets do not yet sufficiently distinguish the knowledge, understanding and skills to be improved. Initial assessment identifies well the needs of learners with specific difficulties or disabilities. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory.
35. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs of learners is satisfactory overall, but meets well the needs of adult learners, employers, and learners aged 14 to 16. Partnership arrangements with local employers and local schools are strong.

Leadership and management

36. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and good for adult learners. However, the management of provision for learners aged 16 to 18 is inadequate, because insufficient progress has been made in raising success rates. There has been insufficient improvement in key skills provision since the last inspection. Self-assessment at programme area level is not sufficiently rigorous. It does not incorporate the full range of provision and there is insufficient use of data for analysis of outcomes and for effective forward planning. Resources are satisfactory and the deployment of teaching staff is effective. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Construction

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

37. The college offers a wide range of construction courses from level 1 to level 3 to around 1,000 learners. Of these, around 300 are aged 16 to 18 and are mostly on full-time courses and approximately 600 are adults, mainly attending part-time. There are almost 300 apprentices of which around 20% are advanced apprentices. Around 200 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend the college one day per week.

Strengths

- good progression of 14 to 16 year old pupils into work, education and training
- good and well organised workshop facilities.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates
- very low timely success rates in work-based learning
- weak theory teaching
- unsatisfactory management.

Achievement and standards

38. Learners' achievement is unsatisfactory overall but is satisfactory in work-based learning and for learners aged 14 to 16. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 and adults are low and have been consistently below national averages in each of the three years to 2007. Success rates for key skills have improved and are broadly average. Overall success rates for apprenticeships have improved and are satisfactory but timely success rates are very low. The standard of learners' work in practical sessions is satisfactory with learners developing practical skills that match their level of experience.

Quality of provision

39. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and theory teaching is weak. In the majority of lessons planning is poor, lessons are uninteresting, learners are poorly prepared and they have little interaction with the teacher.
40. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. However, in work-based learning the slow collection of evidence, aspects of assessment practice and the low numbers of trained assessors and verifiers contribute to learners' slow progress. Most teaching staff are inexperienced with only one in five having teaching qualifications. Workshop resources are good; they are well set out to make maximum use of space, and are well resourced.
41. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. For learners aged 14 to 16 there are high levels of progression into work, education and training. A higher than average number of

learners aged 16 to 18 and adults leave their courses before completion. Work-based learning co-ordinators respond well to the needs of employers and the range of courses meets their needs. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

42. Leadership and management are inadequate. Several previous changes in management and curriculum changes have failed to improve consistently low success rates. Managers do not use data routinely to set targets for improvement. The improvement of teaching and learning is not routinely discussed at team meetings. Good practice in teaching, particularly in theory lessons, is not being shared. The turnover of managers has contributed to the weak implementation of teacher appraisal. Appraisals do not sufficiently analyse teaching performance. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Self-assessment is inadequate. It is insufficiently self-critical and failed to identify serious issues in the provision as areas for improvement.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

43. The college offers courses in three areas: hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapies. Courses offer progression from entry level to level 3. There are 364 full-time students of whom around three quarters are aged 16 to 18 and 190 part-time students who are mainly adult learners. There are over 50 learners aged 14 to 16 on a schools link programme and around 60 work-based learners. Just over half of all students are in hairdressing with the remainder in beauty and holistic therapies.

Strengths

- high success rates for apprentices in work-based learning
- highly effective support which improves learners' achievement
- good schools and business links.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient focus on individual students' learning and assessment needs
- limited opportunities for learners aged 14 to 16 to progress to level 2 courses.

Achievement and standards

44. Learners' achievement is satisfactory overall and good in work-based learning. Success rates improved in 2006/07 and on most courses are around the national average. In work-based learning there has been steady improvement and in 2006/07 overall success rates were high. Hairdressing and beauty learners develop practical skills appropriate to the level of course and stage of their training and exhibit satisfactory knowledge of their subject. On level 3 beauty therapy, learners doing presentations to peers produced imaginative resources and spoke confidently about their subject. However, students aged 14 to 16 attending link courses from local schools lacked understanding of basic terminology and techniques.

Quality of provision

45. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, planning to meet the needs of individual learners is not specific enough and is seldom implemented in lessons. In holistic therapies, learners were effectively coached in good client care. Good relationships between teachers and learners create a positive working environment.
46. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. The majority of learners are aware of the progress they are making and know what they need to do to achieve their qualification, but too many lack awareness of their progress and are insufficiently focused on their assessments.

47. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. On schools link programmes learners make slow progress and spend too long studying limited and similar material. The college does not recognise sufficiently their attainment and experience at the end of this programme, and so there are limited opportunities for them to progress to level 2. Good collaboration between key skills and subject tutors in hair and beauty is having a positive impact on the achievement of key skills qualifications.
48. Guidance and support for learners are good. There are productive working arrangements between key college staff and learners value the support they receive. Detailed analysis of learners' additional needs results in good ongoing support. Most learners who received this support in 2006/07 achieved their qualification.

Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Success rates in 2006/07 have improved. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed, but most strengths identified are satisfactory features of the provision. The self-assessment report did not identify all of the key strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors. Analysis of data at course level does not sufficiently inform planning and delivery. There is strong partnership working with local employers and schools. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Art, design and media

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

50. The college offers provision in art, design and media for approximately 150 learners aged 16 to 18 and 60 adult learners. The majority of learners aged 16 to 18 follow a range of level 3 courses in art and design, fashion, graphic design, media and photography. Provision includes a first certificate and a first diploma in art and design.

Strengths

- high success rates on the diploma in foundation studies and access to higher education courses
- good exploratory work by students in drawing, design and printmaking
- good support for learners from their specialist teachers
- good accommodation and specialist resources.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on graphic design and art and design
- insufficient sketchbook work and underpinning skills on level 1 and 2 courses
- unsatisfactory lesson planning and classroom management in a minority of lessons
- unsatisfactory key skills provision.

Achievement and standards

51. Learners' achievement is satisfactory. Success rates on the diploma in foundation studies and access courses are high. However, success rates on the national diplomas in art and design and graphic design are low. The standard of learners' work is good. Exploratory drawing, design and printmaking on the diploma in foundation studies, the access to higher education course in fashion and art and design, are good. There is insufficient use of sketchbooks and underpinning art and design techniques on the first certificate and first diploma courses. Overall attendance is low.

Quality of provision

52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, learners are developing their understanding and their skills in exploration and research and are confident in discussing their work. Teachers do not make good use of their comprehensive planning in lessons and give insufficient attention to the different needs and abilities of learners. In a few lessons, planning and classroom management are unsatisfactory.
53. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. Written feedback to learners is generally constructive and helps them to make progress. On the first diploma course there is too much reliance on lengthy projects and very little use of specific timed tasks.

54. Learners receive good support from their specialist teachers in studios and workshops. However, a significant proportion of individual learning plans lack precise targets and are not completed adequately. Key skills provision is unsatisfactory. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The area has undergone significant restructuring. Roles and responsibilities are clear and communication between managers and teachers is satisfactory and improving. However, there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of learners' achievement or the quality of teaching and learning. Not all teachers and managers are confident in setting and using targets to measure learners' performance. Learners benefit from good accommodation and a very good range of specialist resources. The self-assessment report is generally accurate but there is insufficient analysis and critical evaluation of information from lesson observations and course reviews. Professional development reviews are carried out annually. However, a significant minority of teachers expressed concern at not having sufficient opportunity to discuss their support needs. Teachers are appropriately qualified and many are practising artists and designers. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Literacy and numeracy

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

56. Literacy and numeracy provision is offered as discrete courses in community settings, at the college, with employers, and as part of provision for full-time students, including key skills. Around 200 learners were enrolled on literacy classes at entry level and levels 1 and 2, of whom most were adults. Around 130 were enrolled on numeracy classes at entry level and levels 1 and 2, of whom almost all were adults. Around 1,500 learners were enrolled on key skills courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on entry level literacy and literacy and numeracy level 1 courses.

Areas for improvement

- low and declining success rates on key skills provision
- unsatisfactory standards of work in literacy classes
- unsatisfactory attendance
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- inadequately completed individual learning plans
- ineffective management
- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

57. Achievement and standards are unsatisfactory. Success rates on entry level literacy and numeracy, and level 1 literacy and numeracy courses, are high. Success rates on key skills courses are low, and in some cases declining. The success rates of learners receiving additional support for literacy or numeracy are satisfactory. Standards of work are unsatisfactory in many literacy lessons and attendance, at below 58%, was unsatisfactory during the week of inspection. Registers showed a similar pattern in many classes.

Quality of provision

58. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Only one lesson observed by inspectors was better than satisfactory and many aspects of teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. These were not identified in the self-assessment report. Too often, particularly in literacy classes, the lesson content was based on a scheme of work that paid insufficient attention to the literacy needs of individual learners. Opportunities to revise work, or build on previous skills or knowledge, were insufficient. Worksheets and resources were not always checked for suitability or accuracy, and too little use was made of learners' experiences. Teaching and learning on key skills courses varied significantly from good to unsatisfactory. Records of work for learners requiring additional learning support are adequately maintained.

59. Individual learning plans are often inadequately completed. The recording of progress often consists of learners copying lesson objectives, with insufficient attention to their own learning. Where learners identify that they do not fully understand, subsequent lesson planning does not show that this has been acknowledged by the teacher.
60. The range of provision is satisfactory, with learners able to progress through different levels. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are inadequate. Staff have regular meetings, which they value, but the minutes of these meetings too often describe content rather than focusing on actions to address any issues identified. The skills for life strategy for 2005 to 2010 has not been monitored and has not been used to drive improvement or set targets. Processes to recognise and record progress and achievement (RARPA) have yet to be introduced. The quality assurance and self-assessment arrangements have not identified significant areas for improvement. The verification procedures for the individual learning plans of the 60% of learners whose achievement is based on learning objectives have been insufficiently rigorous. Aspects of race and gender are not adequately promoted through the curriculum, achievement data are not analysed in terms of equality and diversity, and staff have had insufficient training in this area.

ESOL

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

62. The college offers part-time courses from pre-entry to level 2 in ESOL. Courses take place during the day and evening on the college main sites and in four community venues for around 240 learners. Almost all of the learners are adults. Just over half of the courses lead to the new national qualifications.

Strengths

- well co-ordinated external support for learners.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates
- poor attendance
- teaching not meeting the needs of individual learners
- ineffective individual learning plans
- poor management
- ineffective promotion of equality and diversity.

Achievement and standards

63. Learners' achievement is unsatisfactory. Retention rates on most courses are very low and success rates are below national averages on many courses. Too many learners are not being entered for appropriate external accreditation. Attendance at classes is poor.
64. There is good achievement for those that complete their courses. Learners' work in lessons is satisfactory and in some instances good, but progress suffers from poor attendance.

Quality of provision

65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers develop the individual language skills in contexts that are relevant to the needs and aspirations of the learners. However, there is too much teaching that is over-reliant on group work and does not address the specific language needs of learners. Lessons do not relate to the vocational aspirations or interests of learners. Some accommodation is inadequate with cramped teaching rooms.
66. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are unsatisfactory. Many learners have the same learning goals regardless of their previous educational background, language skills or aspirations. Individual learning plans do not identify what they need to do to improve. Target-setting is rarely used to inform teaching and learning or to match learners' vocational interests.

67. Learners value the good support to address language or personal needs. Language support for ESOL learners on vocational courses is well organised and leads to good levels of success for those receiving support.
68. The programmes and activities fail to meet the needs and interests of learners. The range of provision is unsatisfactory and does not fully meet the needs of the community. In response to poor retention rates all courses have been moved to 10 week programmes, leading to long gaps between the end of one course and the beginning of the next. There are currently few employer-based courses. This had been identified as a strength at the last inspection.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The quality improvement plan does not relate to the self-assessment report and does not focus clearly on how to improve learning and teaching or learner success rates. There is ineffective monitoring of the quality of the curriculum. Staff do not use data sufficiently to inform quality improvement. Staff have limited understanding of the strategic priorities for ESOL and the actions needed to share good practice and address issues of poor performance.
70. RARPA processes have not yet been implemented. The self-assessment report is neither rigorous nor accurate. There has been slow progress to address issues raised at the last inspection and some remain areas for improvement. Some strengths previously identified are now weaknesses. There is insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity.

*Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04/05	891	46	65	-19	1979	61	62	-1
	05/06	661	66	69	-3	1543	70	65	5
	06/07	493	65			1418	72		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05								
	05/06								
	06/07								
NVQs	04/05	172	65	68	-3	280	58	66	-8
	05/06	189	68	72	-4	107	69	74	-5
	06/07	131	68			150	81		
Other	04/05	690	41	64	-23	1697	62	62	0
	05/06	472	66	69	-3	1436	70	65	5
	06/07	362	64			1268	71		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04/05	1136	47	61	-14	1798	64	60	4
	05/06	1084	61	66	-5	2074	70	66	4
	06/07	1049	57			2122	74		
GCSEs	04/05	321	54	64	-10	146	62	63	-1
	05/06	299	60	68	-8	136	58	67	-9
	06/07	260	57			105	65		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05								
	05/06								
	06/07								
NVQs	04/05	225	53	57	-4	339	55	60	-5
	05/06	187	65	65	0	360	66	67	-1
	06/07	241	66			371	66		
Other	04/05	550	41	61	-20	1289	68	59	9
	05/06	589	60	66	-6	1561	72	65	7
	06/07	518	53			1626	77		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04/05	813	53	68	-15	1059	54	58	-4
	05/06	610	63	70	-7	974	57	63	-6
	06/07	552	68			750	70		
A/A2 Levels	04/05	99	57	86	-29	116	63	69	-6
	05/06	75	65	87	-22	95	43	72	-29
	06/07								
AS Levels	04/05	212	42	66	-24	163	36	52	-16
	05/06	88	35	67	-32	91	35	55	-20
	06/07	32	53			35	43		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	82	52	61	-9				
	05/06	40	83	66	17				
	06/07								
NVQs	04/05	43	72	63	9	209	46	56	-10
	05/06	32	88	71	17	262	61	63	-2
	06/07	40	78			121	83		
Other	04/05	377	56	60	-4	561	60	59	1
	05/06	375	66	65	1	525	62	64	-2
	06/07	460	69			584	69		

* note to the achievement tables: qualification types with low numbers or that have been discontinued have been omitted from the table for the benefit of clarity. College data for 2006/07 yet to be validated.

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2005 to 2007.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners *	College NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate **	College framework rate **	National framework rate **
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	44	55	48	34	34
		timely	48	35	31	23	22
	05/06	overall	43	63	53	56	44
		timely	57	25	34	21	28
	06/07	overall	30	57	64	50	56
		timely	65	12	41	9	35
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	81	47	51	35	39
		timely	111	21	29	17	22
	05/06	overall	121	55	58	48	52
		timely	158	29	38	28	34
	06/07	overall	79	49	65	41	60
		timely	127	0	45	0	42
Train to Gain	06/07	Overall	130	89			

* 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'
LSC data for 2006/07 are yet to be validated.