

# Canterbury College

Inspection report

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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](http://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](http://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, public services and care; agriculture, horticulture and animal care; hospitality and catering; arts, media and publishing; preparation for life and work; and business and administration.

#### Description of the provider

1. Canterbury College is a general further education college (GFE) with a main campus situated close to the city centre of Canterbury. The college has a second campus on the Isle of Sheppey, known as Sheppey College. The college also operates from outreach and community venues in local towns.
2. For 2006/07, the college has a Learning and Skills Council (LSC) allocation of around £27 million. This is based on cohorts of 3,821 16 to 18 year olds and 3,801 adult learners. Work based learning is offered in 11 curriculum areas

comprising 169 apprentices and 156 advanced apprentices. There are also 420 Train to Gain learners. The college has sustained a wide range of courses in all sector subject areas, from entry level through to higher education.

3. The college works alongside 22 secondary schools, most of which have sixth forms. It offers a broad range of opportunities for 14 to 16 year olds, including 243 on an increased flexibility programme and two projects targeting young people who are excluded or at risk of exclusion from school. It works closely with three university partners to provide higher education courses for around 1,000 learners. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence in travel and tourism.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Satisfactory: contributory grade 3</i>

### Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Hospitality and catering	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
Business and administration	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. This is a satisfactory college with good capacity to improve. Overall success rates are at the national average and show a strong trend of improvement. All groups of learners of minority ethnic background achieve at least as well as learners in similar colleges. Value added information indicates learners achieve as expected, although performance is lower for a minority of courses. Work based learning achievements are high and have improved significantly since the last inspection.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although too much is no better than satisfactory, the proportion that is good or better is increasing. Good practice was observed particularly in floristry and literacy and numeracy teaching. Additional learning needs are met very effectively across the college. The rigour of assessment practices is uneven.

5. The college offers a broad range of provision that provides good opportunities for progression. Strong collaborative work with the community and schools is particularly effective in encouraging learners to join the college. Social and educational inclusion are good. There is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity issues within the curriculum.
6. Learners receive good guidance and support. Very effective procedures for information, advice and guidance are in place. Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.
7. Leadership and management are good. The principal, senior managers and governors provide clear strategic direction. Substantial re-building of the main campus is taking place whilst maintaining an improvement in college performance. Financial management is rigorous and the college offers good value for money. Some weaknesses in operational management affect learners adversely, including the inconsistent quality of key skills delivery.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

8. This is an improving college with good capacity to improve. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and the quality improvement plan focuses clearly and appropriately on areas for improvement. Quality assurance processes are rigorous and the college's judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are accurate. Staff are accountable for performance targets and take responsibility for the success of their areas. The college has increased its enrolments.

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

9. Good steps have been taken to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection whilst maintaining key strengths. Learners' success rates are improving and overall retention and attendance rates are satisfactory. Work based learning now has high success rates. One unsatisfactory curriculum area at the last inspection was found to be satisfactory on re-inspection. The current inspection judged three curriculum areas as good and no provision as inadequate. The standard of accommodation is improved with a substantial new build in progress. Quality improvement arrangements have become more rigorous and there has been an improvement in the use of management information. However, the proportion of good or better teaching and learning continues to be low.

### Key strengths

- high success rates for adults, 16 to 18 year-olds at levels 1 and 2 and work based learners
- clear strategic leadership and very effective management of change
- strong collaboration and good social inclusion
- good guidance and support for learners
- good provision for learners with additional learning needs across the college.

### Areas for improvement

#### *The college should address:*

- the low success rates of learners aged 16 to 18 at level 3
- the high proportion of teaching and learning which is no better than satisfactory
- the consistency of key skills delivery
- the rigour of assessment in all curriculum areas
- the promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Overall college success and pass rates are equivalent to the national averages for similar colleges and are improving strongly. Overall retention rates dipped in 2006/07, but are still satisfactory. Success rates are high for 16 to 18 learners at levels 1 and 2 and for adults at all levels. They are just below the national average for the large cohort of 16 to 18 learners at level 3, improving by 3% in 2006/07. Success rates for 14 to 16 year olds attending the college are good, rising from 59% in 2005/06 to 81% in 2006/07.
12. Success rates of learners of the main minority ethnic groups represented in the college are good. They are satisfactory for female learners. Male learners achieve less well, but they are closing the gap with females much faster than is the case nationally. Learners with additional learning needs are as successful as other learners in achieving their qualifications, and those with physical or mental health issues were very successful in 2006/07.
13. Work based learning achievements are high and have improved significantly, roughly doubling each year for the previous three years. In 2006/07, framework success rates were 78% which is higher than in similar colleges. Key skills success rates are high.
14. Analysis of the college's value added data up to 2005/06 indicates that all sector subject areas are operating at the national average. However, learners on some vocational courses and a number of A level subjects are not attaining as well as expected, based on their previous achievements.
15. There is much variation in the overall success rates of different curriculum areas. Increases from 2004/05 to 2006/07 were high in agriculture, horticulture and animal care (up 16%), leisure, travel and tourism (up 11%) and retail and commercial enterprise (11%). They fell slightly in education and training, engineering and manufacturing technology, health, public services and care, and social sciences. Courses in a wide range of areas of learning have high pass rates, often 100%.
16. Good standards of learners' work are found in some curriculum areas, for example, art and design, and preparation for life and work. Generally, standards are satisfactory.
17. Learners' attendance rates improved slightly to 80% across the college for 2006/07. They increased significantly in curriculum areas that used a new monitoring system which has now been extended throughout the college.

## Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

18. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there are significant variations in their quality, both between, and within, curriculum areas. Too much teaching and learning are no better than satisfactory, although the proportion of good or better teaching and learning has increased during the last year. These modest improvements are evaluated by the college's rigorous scheme of observation. When carrying out joint lesson observations with college observers, inspectors agreed with their judgements and findings. Staff are engaged in considerable development activities to help them improve their teaching, aided by a clear focus on what needs to be improved. The work of the college's advanced teaching practitioners and subject learning coaches is particularly beneficial in this respect.
19. In observed lessons, inspectors identified good aspects of teaching and learning which are essential in improving and building consistency in quality. For example, an AS philosophy lesson was enlivened by the teachers' imaginative questioning that stimulated interest and led to an informed debate among learners. There is good teaching across all areas of preparation for life and work, including the use of information learning technology (ILT). Lessons for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well planned with clear aims and objectives. Teaching and learning in floristry are good. In other areas of learning inspectors noted weaknesses in lessons which matched the weaknesses identified by the college.
20. The college is in the early stages of introducing a comprehensive virtual learning environment (VLE) with significant recent investment in additional information communication technology (ICT) resources. Teachers are trained in the use of the increasing number of interactive whiteboards. Specialist accommodation is good in the arts, media and publishing. The general state of resources and accommodation will continue to improve when the current phase of new buildings is completed. At the moment, some teaching accommodation is overcrowded.
21. The identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs are good. The initial assessment of learners' additional support needs is comprehensive, starting with summer school learners, prior to enrolment. Teachers are increasingly using the outcomes of tests to help them deliver effective teaching.
22. The delivery of key skills is inconsistent, with good provision, for example, in business, but poor in other areas such as hospitality and animal care and equine studies. The college acknowledges this and has addressed evident weaknesses in coverage and delivery. New arrangements are in place to link specialist key skills teachers with those in areas of learning and some new teaching appointments have been made.
23. Assessment, target setting and the monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory overall. Helpful staff development is enabling teachers to set more

meaningful and clearer progression targets for learners. Improvements are not consistent, however, and in hospitality and arts, media and publishing there is some poor assessment practice.

24. The college's response to meeting the needs of learners, employers and the local community is good. The curriculum is reviewed regularly, taking account of local and national priorities. Collaborative work with the community is particularly effective. The college works with 22 local schools and is closely involved in regeneration projects in deprived areas. Well developed links are established with three universities. Employer links are good and have improved. Employers receive clear communication about their employees' training and actively contribute to new course design.
25. A wide range of enrichment activities is offered by the college with a high uptake by learners, including those from Sheppey College. The college benefits from having an active student union.
26. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. A broad range of courses is offered from pre-entry to degree level with clear progression routes. Effective partnership working and new Entry to Employment, Train to Gain and European Social Fund provision has widened participation. The college is actively involved in reducing numbers of young people not in education, employment or training. Two projects, for pupils excluded from school or those at risk of exclusion, provide vocational tasters and training with good progression opportunities. The college actively engages with members of local strategic partnerships and community groups to encourage participation in education and training of under-represented groups, such as those with mental health issues.
27. Guidance and support for learners are good. The college provides very effective information, advice and guidance (IAG) prior to enrolment. The IAG personal adviser and college disability adviser effectively assist with identifying support needs. Support for learners is well planned. Learners at both Canterbury and Sheppey College have easy access to assistance for issues related to housing, funding, independent travel, training and counselling. Learners are referred to external support agencies when appropriate. Good support is available to learners from the college's essential skills centre. Twenty eight learning support staff assist learners very well within mainstream courses. Learners' targets for their additional support are generally well recorded and are used effectively to plan lessons.
28. Learners' induction is satisfactory. They feel well informed about their course and the support available to them. Monitoring of learners' attendance has improved since the last inspection. An online tracking system, piloted last year across three curriculum areas, has resulted in significant improvements in learners' attendance. The system is now implemented across the college. Tutorial support is generally well-planned. Group tutorials cover a wide range of personal and social topics and most are clearly linked to the Every Child Matters themes.

## Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

*Contributory grades:**Equality of opportunity**Satisfactory: grade 3*

29. Leadership and management are good. The college is very well led by the principal who provides clear strategic direction along with senior managers. Governance is good. The college has managed a large degree of change very effectively. Restructuring of the college has successfully changed the ethos and staff at all levels are accountable for the performance of their areas. The management of a substantial building programme to re-build the main campus at a cost of around £50 million is going ahead whilst the college is improving the quality of its provision and increasing enrolments.
30. Communication is good and decision making is transparent. The student union is actively involved in providing feedback and in decision making. Financial management is good and the college follows rigorous policies to ensure provision is cost effective. Value for money is good. Learning resources, in particular ICT, are improved. Health and safety policies and procedures, including arrangements for safeguarding, are thorough. However, inappropriate behaviour of learners at the Canterbury campus is not always challenged by staff.
31. College performance has shown a clear trend of improvement since the last inspection. Effective action has changed the kinds of learners in line with national priorities, with more 14 to 19 year olds, Train to Gain and work-based learners. Inspectors judged three areas of learning, with significant numbers of learners, as good provision, and three areas as satisfactory. Despite these improvements, weaknesses in operational management have impacted adversely on learners. These include key skills delivery, assessment and verification procedures, the management of staff absence and some overcrowded accommodation currently in use.
32. Arrangements for quality improvement have improved. Systems for monitoring performance at course level are good. Course review processes are improved significantly. Opportunities for staff development are increased significantly. The teaching observation scheme has greater rigour and is beginning to be effective in some areas, although the self-assessment report recognises rightly that much teaching and learning is still no better than satisfactory. Self-assessment is satisfactory. Overall judgements are accurate in most areas, although documents are overly long and descriptive.
33. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. The college has developed its equalities policies in line with the most recent legislation. The response to the disability equality duty is good and learners and staff with disabilities are involved in college decision making. Complaints are closely monitored and action taken if appropriate. Achievement for learners from vulnerable groups has improved steadily and in 2006/07 were higher than those for other learners. Most staff have not received training on the race equality duty for many years. The

college does not promote sufficiently its race and gender policies in relation to the curriculum or assess their impact.

Health, public services and care

Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Context

34. The college offers both full- and part-time courses from levels 1 to 4 in health and social care, early years and public services. Learners can work towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs), national diplomas, CACHE qualifications and other vocational awards. There are approximately 500 full-time learners and 469 part-time learners.

## Strengths

- high success rates for adults and level 2 learners
- very effective use of activities to consolidate learning
- wide range of provision providing good progression
- good work placements that enrich the learners' experience
- strong support for learners.

## Areas for improvement

- low success rates on level 3 courses in health and social care and public services
- failure to meet learners' needs in a minority of teaching
- ineffective management of the impact of some teachers' absence.

## Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Level 2 success rates have increased since the last inspection and exceed the national average. Adult learners achieve well. However, success rates for learners on level 3 courses in health studies and public services are below those in similar colleges. Learners' attendance is satisfactory.
36. The work of many learners is of a satisfactory standard. Learners develop good vocational skills through their experiences in a broad range of work placements.

## Quality of provision

37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In many lessons, teachers use their teaching and work experiences to provide a broad range of learning activities, helping learners to understand and to consolidate their learning. Lessons in early years have good links between theory and practical experience, enabling learners to extend their understanding. A minority of lessons are planned poorly with learners' involvement limited to broad question and answer sessions. Teachers are suitably qualified and resources and accommodation are satisfactory.
38. Assessment practices are satisfactory overall, but vary in terms of the quality of feedback to learners. Feedback to early years learners is clear and identifies

how they can improve their performance. In other areas, it is too brief and lacks detail.

39. The wide range of provision enables good progression from level 1 to level 4 courses in all curriculum areas. The range of enrichment opportunities is good. For example, in public services, teachers work hard to ensure learners have relevant enrichment experiences across the range of services, helping to engage them in their learning. Support for learners is good. Most tutors monitor learners' progress carefully and learners report that most teachers give freely of their time to support them.

#### Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have high aspirations and improvements are beginning to become evident. The self-assessment report provides an accurate description of the strengths and areas for improvement. There is increased accountability and managers monitor the progress towards targets for success rates, learners' attendance and the level of learners' satisfaction. Managers are using data more effectively to identify underperformance and put actions in place to resolve issues. Equal opportunities are an integral part of course content in the area and issues are robustly addressed. Cover arrangements for absent staff are not always effective and this has affected the quality of the learner experience on some courses.

## Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Context

41. The college offers full-time courses in animal care and equine studies, including an introductory diploma at level 1 to allow progression to levels 2 and 3. Most learners are aged 16 to 18. There are 102 learners on a range of floristry courses at levels 2 and 3, including short specialist courses. Some 144 learners are on courses in animal care and a further 69 on equine courses. There are 30 learners on the introductory diploma, 34 veterinary nurses and 22 learners on countryside management courses.

## Strengths

- high success rates on floristry and first diplomas in animal care and equine courses
- high pass rates on most courses
- good teaching and learning in floristry.

## Areas for improvement

- teaching at an inappropriate level in animal care and equine lessons
- low standard of practical work of some learners in equine courses
- weak aspects of quality assurance.

## Achievement and standards

42. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on floristry and first diplomas in animal care and equine courses are consistently high and are above those in similar colleges. Pass rates are very high and are 100% on the majority of equine, animal care and floristry courses. The overall standard of learners' work, including practical skills, is satisfactory, but practical work on some equine courses is poor.

## Quality of provision

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good in floristry where lessons are very well planned and structured. The atmosphere in the classroom is relaxed, yet workmanlike and commercial. Teachers set high standards and have high expectations of their learners. Teachers pay appropriate attention to learners' health and safety. Floristry learners make good progress and enjoy their lessons. In many equine and animal care lessons, teaching is pitched at an inappropriate level. The language used in some level 2 lessons is overly technical and teachers attempt to teach aspects which are too complex, whereas some level 3 lessons are overly simple and learners are insufficiently challenged. Some rooms are over crowded with limited access to computers. The development of key skills for learners on animal care and equine courses is slow and none are working towards key skills in application of number.

44. Assessment is satisfactory overall and teachers give constructive feedback and guidance to learners. The range of courses meets the needs of learners. Personal support for learners is satisfactory. Classroom assistants and support workers are used well to support learners and teachers during lessons. Tutorials are regular and used to monitor learners' progress and welfare.

#### Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers set clear objectives for improvement and most success rates are high and rising. Quality assurance arrangements have not identified accurately the wide variation in the quality of lesson planning. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

## Hospitality and catering

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

46. The college offers NVQ courses in hospitality and catering from levels 1 to 3 and a small number of part-time courses. Approximately 60% of learners are aged 16 to 18 and most are on full-time courses.

### Strengths

- high success and progression rates for all full-time courses
- good participation by learners in a wide range of enrichment activities
- very effective support for learners with specific needs.

### Areas for improvement

- ineffective assessment practices
- restricted choice of key skills
- ineffective management of learners' poor behaviour.

### Achievement and standards

47. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates are high on all full-time courses. They have improved significantly over the last two years and are now consistently above those in similar colleges. Nearly all learners gain their qualifications. Progression rates to higher level courses are good. Attendance rates are good, although learners' punctuality is poor in some lessons.
48. Learners develop effective practical skills in food preparation lessons. They work purposefully together, developing teamwork and use their initiative well. Learners are often helpful and attentive and take appropriate care of customers. Learners' standards of personal presentation are satisfactory, although many have insufficient awareness of health and safety and some poor behaviour was not corrected by staff.

### Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there is a wide variation in the quality of lessons. In good lessons, teachers plan well and use effective strategies to develop learners' understanding. Learners work purposefully and quietly in a professional atmosphere. Practical work in the restaurant is satisfactory. In the less effective lessons, teachers find it difficult to manage large groups of learners with mixed abilities and fail to correct poor behaviour. Classrooms are cramped and often cluttered and there is insufficient small catering equipment and access to computers.
50. Learners participate fully in a wide range of enrichment activities. Practitioners from industry attend the college regularly to enhance learning and learners enjoy interesting work experience opportunities.

51. The assessment of learners' work is often ineffective. Assessors' feedback to support assessment decisions is often very general and too brief. The arrangements for internal verification are insufficiently thorough. Targets in progress reviews lack detail and teachers do not focus sufficiently on the development of learners' skills. College managers have recognised that recently too few learners are taking key skills and that there has been a lack of choice as to which key skill is studied and insufficient expertise in their delivery. A new teaching appointment has been made to help address this. The range of provision is satisfactory, although the full extent of industry needs are not met. The college has recently developed two new courses in hospitality and catering management.
52. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Support for learners with a wide range of complex physical and/or learning difficulties is good. Tutors support the learners discreetly and sensitively and learners are involved fully in lessons. Referral arrangements for learners with behavioural and emotional problems to specialist support staff are good.

#### Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff participate in a broad range of training activities. They work well together and communication is good. Staff are self-critical, although the most recent self-assessment report lacks clarity and fails to identify the full range of strengths and areas for improvement. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory, for example, through the recognition of ethnic dimensions in food preparation, but is under developed in teaching.

## Arts, media and publishing

Good: Grade 2

## Context

54. Full- and part-time courses are available from level 1 to level 5, including GCE AS and A level, introductory, first and national diplomas and certificates and GCSEs. Of the 1,114 learners, 38% study art and design, 27% media, 15% performing arts and 20% music courses. There are 913 learners aged 16 to 18 and 100 learners are aged 14 to 16. Some 68% of learners are full time.

## Strengths

- high and improving success and attendance rates
- good standard of work in art and design
- good target setting and pastoral support
- high quality specialist accommodation and resources
- strong and effective curriculum leadership.

## Areas for improvement

- insufficiently rigorous assessment in performing arts, music and media.

## Achievement and standards

55. Learners' achievement and standards are good. Success rates have improved since the last inspection and are high. Many learners achieve high grade passes. Success rates on the first diploma in art and design are outstanding. In 2005/06, value added scores on GCE A level courses were low.
56. Standards of learners' work are good in art and design and satisfactory in performing arts, music and media. In art and design, learners' work demonstrates a breadth of media and a good range of skills. Observational drawing is good. In performing arts and music, learners demonstrate competent performance and technical skills. Learners' knowledge and understanding of professional practice and industry standards is satisfactory. Learners in media develop a good appreciation of the industry through links with a local radio station and newspaper. Learners' attendance is very good.

## Quality of provision

57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most learners extend technical skills and knowledge through well planned and challenging activities. Teachers are enthusiastic and encourage learners to work creatively and to critically appraise their own and others' work to achieve high standards. In weaker lessons, teachers fail to provide sufficiently challenging activities and learners lose interest. In art and design, the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. However, assessment is insufficiently rigorous in performing arts, music and media, where assessors' feedback is insufficiently detailed or critical.

58. The range of provision is satisfactory. Full-time courses provide progression routes from levels 1 to 5, but opportunities for learning in the community are very limited. Vocational enrichment is satisfactory. Learners participate in a broad range of competitions, trips and industry-set projects.
59. Guidance and support for learners are good. Recruitment and initial assessment are effective. Tutorials are well planned and tutors set clear targets for vocational and pastoral development. Learners receiving additional learning support achieve at least as well as other learners, although a significant number fail to take up the learning support offered.

#### Leadership and management

60. Leadership and management are good. High quality specialist accommodation and resources support learning well. Staff have good vocational expertise. Communication between staff and curriculum managers is excellent, with a clear and enthusiastic focus on driving up standards. Good progress has been made improving the provision and remedying weaknesses from the last inspection. The self-assessment report is generally accurate, but fails to highlight priority areas for improvement. Managers use data well to monitor learners' performance. Strategies to manage some learners' poor behaviour are weak. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

## Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

## Context

61. The college provides full- and part-time courses in literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and access provision at entry, level 1 and 2 for 16 to 18 year olds and adults at Canterbury and Sheppey College. Currently, 164 learners study literacy and numeracy, 160 ESOL and 173 follow access programmes, including 20 for the pre-access to nursing course. The essential skills centre (ESC) provides a drop-in and workshop facility additional to timetabled classes. Discrete courses for learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided for 171 learners. A further 240 learners receive additional learning support across vocational areas.

## Strengths

- consistently high success and retention rates
- high progression rates
- very effective teaching of literacy and numeracy
- broad range of programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good management of specialist support.

## Area for improvement

- insufficient range of work experience for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- ineffective delivery of key skills in some curriculum areas.

## Achievement and standards

62. Achievement and standards are good. Retention and success rates for learners on literacy, numeracy, ESOL and discrete courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are consistently high. Learners progress well through programmes that assist them to join mainstream vocational courses. Six learners from the St Nicholas specialist unit progressed to discrete provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the Canterbury campus this year.

63. The standard of learners' work is good and skills are developed effectively. This is particularly evident for those learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities undertaking practical tasks.

## Quality of provision

64. Teaching and learning are good, with very effective teaching of literacy and numeracy. Teaching is managed and planned well. Learners are set clear targets to meet their individual needs. They gain the confidence to manage their own learning. Lessons with a practical focus motivate and engage learners fully. Learners have satisfactory access to computers in the

classrooms, within the ESC and learning resource centres. Sheppey College provides good accommodation for its learners and is well resourced. Initial and on-going assessments are thorough and effectively inform individual learning and support plans. However, the teaching of key skills is not effective throughout the college. Learners in some vocational areas repeat work or study only one key skill qualification.

65. A good range of programmes is offered at an appropriate level to learners within the discrete learning difficulties and/or disabilities provision. However, there are limited opportunities for all of these learners to undertake external work placements. A broad curriculum is available for literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Citizenship courses are offered to young ESOL learners.
66. Partnerships with local special schools are well established. Further links are being developed to provide young people with the opportunity to learn in a more adult environment. Learners make good use of enrichment activities.
67. The guidance and support of learners is good, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Group sizes are small and experienced teachers and assistants provide sufficient access to adaptive resources. The tutorial process enables learners to develop personal and social skills. Learners' attendance is closely monitored and managed effectively.

#### Leadership and management

68. Leadership and management are good. The management of specialist support for learners is particularly effective and well planned. All areas of improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed except the uneven teaching of key skills. Communication with vocational areas is good. Equality and diversity are well promoted and learners are well represented within the college's disability forum. Effective arrangements are in place for the continuous professional development of staff.

## Business and administration

Good: Grade 2

## Context

69. The vast majority of the 419 learners on business and administration courses study full time and are aged 16 to 18. Just over 300 learners study full time at the Canterbury campus, half of whom are on GCE AS and A level business studies or applied business courses. The others study on levels 1 to 3 vocational programmes. Over 60 learners are on full-time vocational courses at Sheppey College. Forty five mainly adult learners study part time. Five are on work based learning programmes.

## Strengths

- high pass rates
- confident oral skills of learners
- very good key skills provision on vocational courses
- good additional learning support in lessons
- strong management action to promote improvement.

## Areas for improvement

- too much teaching that is no better than satisfactory.

## Achievement and standards

70. Achievement and standards are good. Pass rates are high, with four major courses at 100% in 2007. Success rates are improving and retention is satisfactory. Key skills pass rates are very high. The general standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Many learners participate confidently in lessons, showing good oral skills. Level 1 and 2 learners develop practical business skills through a supportive work placement in the college stationery shop.

## Quality of provision

71. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In better lessons, learners are kept thoroughly involved through interesting activities and questioning. Administration learners work well in groups. Learners on vocational courses study and achieve a good mix of key skills which they learn in a business context. Too many lessons are no better than satisfactory, during which teachers spend too much time talking and giving lengthy explanations. These lessons fail to stretch all learners sufficiently.
72. Assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. Written feedback on marked work is satisfactory, but could be more comprehensive. Progress reviews with individual learners are good on lower level courses. Specific targets and action plans for improvement are set for level 1 and 2 learners, but these targets are often vague in reviews with level 3 learners.

Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well with a wide range of full-time courses from level 1 through to degree level.

73. Guidance and support for learners are good. In particular, there is good additional learning support provided by curriculum support assistants in level 1 and 2 lessons. As well as supporting the literacy and numeracy needs of specific learners they monitor and guide learners well helping to keep them on task. Learners on the national awards benefit from imaginative group tutorials designed around themes from the Every Child Matters agenda.

#### Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management are good. Managers have taken positive action to bring about improvements. Pass rates are high and success rates are improving. Key skills provision is extremely well planned and implemented on vocational courses. Learners' attendance has improved significantly and is monitored very well. The college has upgraded computers and an increasing number of classrooms have interactive whiteboards. Much progress has been made against weaknesses identified in the last inspection. However, the quality of teaching has not improved sufficiently, although progress is being made with ongoing staff development and coaching.

## Learners' achievements

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	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	04/05	1222	67	65	2	722	73	62	11
	05/06	1217	73	69	4	721	76	65	11
	06/07	1394	74			608	79		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	78	67	68	-1	14	71	64	7
	05/06	10	100	72	28	4	100	-	-
	06/07	16	100			1	100	-	-
NVQs	04/05	197	63	68	-5	38	63	67	-4
	05/06	191	73	73	0	34	71	74	-3
	06/07	163	79			23	87		
Other	04/05	947	67	64	3	670	74	62	12
	05/06	1016	73	69	4	683	76	65	11
	06/07	1215	73			584	79		

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	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	04/05	1263	63	61	2	2143	60	60	0
	05/06	1333	66	66	0	1504	68	66	2
	06/07	1454	73			1103	71		
GCSEs	04/05	137	69	64	5	143	73	63	10
	05/06	105	71	68	3	127	81	67	14
	06/07	106	79			111	67		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	134	76	67	9	45	80	75	5
	05/06	71	71	69	2	36	92	68	24
	06/07	33	76			25	84		
NVQs	04/05	242	51	57	-6	678	31	60	-29
	05/06	283	61	65	-4	563	65	67	-2
	06/07	303	61			336	63		
Other	04/05	750	63	61	2	1277	73	60	13
	05/06	874	67	66	1	778	67	65	2
	06/07	1012	76			631	76		

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	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	04/05	2080	65	68	-3	960	60%	58	2
	05/06	2155	65	71	-6	884	68%	63	5
	06/07	2393	68			910	69%		
A/A2 Levels	04/05	452	89	86	3	74	91%	69	22
	05/06	406	80	87	-7	86	86%	72	14
	06/07	423	84			66	89%		
AS Levels	04/05	763	66	66	0	98	72%	52	20
	05/06	785	65	67	-2	104	64%	55	9
	06/07	884	64			99	71%		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	136	46	60	-14	28	71%	54	17
	05/06	43	61	66	-5	10	70%	57	13
	06/07	5	80			1	100%		
NVQs	04/05	46	59	63	-4	216	50%	56	-6
	05/06	54	82	71	11	130	64%	63	1
	06/07	71	75			208	66%		
Other	04/05	683	51	60	-9	544	56%	58	-2
	05/06	867	56	65	-9	554	67%	64	3
	06/07	1010	64			536	67%		

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	40	57.5%	48%	22.5%	34%
		timely	45	55.6%	31%	22.2%	22%
	05/06	overall	71	70.4%	53%	38.0%	44%
		timely	72	61.1%	34%	29.2%	28%
	06/07	overall	45	86.7%		77.8%	
		timely	58	55.2%		50.0%	
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	125	45.6%	50%	25.6%	37%
		timely	140	21.4%	29%	7.1%	22%
	05/06	overall	134	58.2%	56%	45.5%	49%
		timely	125	36.8%	37%	16.8%	32%
	06/07	overall	67	85.1%		77.6%	
		timely	53	52.8%		47.2%	
Adult training (long courses) ***	04/05	overall	-	-	-	-	-
		timely	-	-	-	-	-
	05/06	overall	-	-	-	-	-
		timely	-	-	-	-	-
	06/07	overall	385	Not yet complete			
		timely					

\* 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'

\*\*\* Adult training (long courses) includes 'Train to Gain' provision, but not 'Skills for Life'  
National rates are no yet available for 2006/007