

# Richard Huish College

## Inspection report

---

Provider reference 130808  
Published date November 2007

---

Audience	Post-sixteen
Published date	November 2007Error! Reference source not found.
Provider reference	130808

---

## Contents

---

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

## 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 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
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

### Description of the provider

1. Richard Huish College is a sixth form college in Taunton which draws students from a wide geographical area. In 2005/06, there were 1,631 students aged 16-18 and 230 adult students. Most students aged 16-18 study general certificate of education (GCE) AS or A level programmes. Forty-five advanced level subjects and a small number of general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects are offered. The largest sector subject areas are science and mathematics; arts, media and publishing; languages, literature and culture; and business, administration and law. The college provides courses in 13 sector subject areas. Most adult students take higher level courses in the business, administration and law area. Fifty learners follow apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes, mainly in accountancy, business administration

and management. The college has Beacon Status in science and a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in business and management skills. The proportion of students at college from minority ethnic backgrounds is around 4%, which is higher than in the local population. The unemployment rate for the area is low. In 2006, the proportion of pupils in Somerset attaining 5 or more GCSEs graded A\* to C, including English and mathematics, was slightly below the national average.

2. The college's mission is 'to be a centre of excellence in the South-West by providing 16-19-year-old students with high quality advanced level education, to prepare them for higher education and professional careers, and by contributing to workforce development in the region'.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: Contributory grade 2</i>

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

4. The overall effectiveness of provision is outstanding. The college demonstrates a strong commitment to meeting the educational and holistic needs of its students. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college achieves and maintains high standards and serves its students very well. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates are high on almost all courses and students make excellent progress. Progression rates to higher education and professional employment are high. Students develop confidence and demonstrate a mature approach to their studies in a well focused and caring environment. Teaching and learning are outstanding with almost all lessons at least good and with many that are outstanding. The assessment of students' work is thorough and detailed feedback on marked work enables students to improve their work. Academic support is excellent and students make good use of subject workshops. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. At level 3, the curriculum is extensive with 45 courses at advanced level. The outstanding enrichment programme contributes effectively to broadening students' knowledge and understanding and to their enjoyment of college life. Advice, guidance and support are outstanding. High quality pastoral and additional support are readily available. Students' progress is monitored frequently and effectively. Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. Financial management is highly effective and the college is financially strong.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

5. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. The self-assessment report is accurate. It takes account of a wide range of evidence. Areas for improvement are clearly identified and action plans set realistic and challenging targets. Progress is monitored effectively and the performance of relatively weaker areas has improved. Overall, high levels of success have been maintained. Quality assurance procedures are implemented rigorously and data is looked at carefully to assess the performance of different groups and categories of students. Staff are well qualified and attend development events regularly. Expertise gained by teachers who are external examiners is used to improve courses. Staff at all levels are highly committed to meeting the mission of the college. A caring environment is provided which promotes the education and wellbeing of students.

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

6. The effectiveness of steps taken to improve is outstanding. Leadership and management have continued to steer a successful path for the college since the last inspection. Students' success and the quality of provision continue to be outstanding. Very good progress has been made with issues identified at the last inspection. Considerable investment has been made in information learning

technology (ILT) and in training teachers in the use of new technology in the classroom. The use of ILT is now firmly embedded in lessons. Accommodation has been improved in a number of areas including the opening of an attractive sports dome which is well used. Plans for a large new building are at an advanced stage. The college is a partner in a Centre for Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in business and management skills and links with employers have been strengthened.

### Key strengths

- high success rates
- excellent student progress based on their attainment at GCSE
- high progression rates to higher education or professional employment
- outstanding teaching and learning
- outstanding enrichment programme
- strong focus on the holistic development of students
- outstanding advice, guidance and support
- welcoming and socially inclusive environment
- outstanding leadership and management at all levels
- strong governance
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- very good financial management.

### Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- success rates in key skills
- enlarging the refectory area
- extending the imaginative use of ILT in lessons.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

7. Achievement and standards are outstanding. The self-assessment report accurately identifies this. Almost all of the college's work is at level 3. Success rates for students aged 16-18 at level 3 are consistently much higher than the national average for similar colleges. Students enjoy their work and achieve well. Average attendance rates are high. Retention has improved well and in 2005/06 it was 95%. The proportion of grade A or B examination passes at level 3 is consistently very high. Overall, students make excellent progress based on their prior attainment for the GCSE. Students receiving additional support and those of minority ethnic heritage also achieve well. A high proportion of students progress directly to higher education or professional employment.
8. Success rates at levels 1 and 2 in 2006/07 are in line with, or slightly above, the national average for the previous year. Framework completion rates in work-based learning are satisfactory as are the outcomes on Learndirect provision. GCSE results on the Increased Flexibility Programme are good. Success rates in key skills are consistently low. Success rates for the small number of adult students in 2006/07 were high at levels 1 to 3 but they have fluctuated over recent years. Success rates are consistently low for adults taking higher level qualifications.
9. Many students develop their self-confidence and understanding of topics well during lessons by readily asking questions and working effectively in pairs and groups. Many achieve success in sporting, musical and other enrichment activities such as the debating society. Ensuring that students stay safe during lessons and enrichment activities has a high priority at college.

### Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

10. The quality of provision is outstanding, as recognised by the college in its self-assessment report. Overall, teaching and learning are outstanding. Teaching and learning are good or better in the large majority of lessons and in many are outstanding. Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly with an extensive range of learning activities that motivate, challenge and inspire students. A strong, professional and productive relationship exists between students and teachers. Teachers use their high levels of subject knowledge well in lessons to promote students' analytical and independent research skills. Teachers have very high expectations of students. Students demonstrate a strong commitment to, and enjoyment of, their studies and are highly motivated to succeed. Subject workshops are very effective and well attended. Students value and regularly use the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) which contains many high quality learning resources. Teachers use ILT regularly in lessons to make presentations but the more imaginative use of ILT is less widespread. Assessment is thorough and used particularly well to monitor and improve students' progress. Students receive marked work promptly with clear examples



of how they can improve. The assessment of students' additional support needs is good and particularly effective support is provided promptly.

11. College provision is outstanding at meeting the needs and interests of all learners. The range of GCE AS and A level subjects is extensive, with forty-five subjects, including a vocational programme with five applied GCE A levels. The level 2 curriculum includes GCSE courses in English and mathematics for those level 3 students who need to retake these subjects. The college works with five secondary schools as part of the Increased Flexibility Programme to deliver the applied GCSE in business. Its apprenticeship programme includes five vocational areas. Advanced apprentices include those on the sporting excellence apprenticeship aimed at students with the talent and ability to play golf at a professional and competitive level. The college focuses its small adult provision on business and management, information and communication technology (ICT) and Skills for Life. Through its CoVE, the college's business development unit meets the needs of local businesses particularly well and provides finance and management training for many local employers. The college responds well to national initiatives. It has recently developed a foundation degree in partnership with the University of the West of England in business management and has extended its Learndirect contract for ICT and Skills for Life. It has gained a new Train to Gain contract for 40 learners in business, management and ICT.
12. The enrichment programme is outstanding and valued highly by students. It plays a key role in the holistic development of students and enables many to make a positive contribution to their communities. Enrichment activities enhance students' learning and understanding of courses very effectively. General enrichment options such as sporting activities, languages, charity work, volunteering schemes, music and drama, debating, critical thinking and money management are very popular. Many options lead to additional qualifications and all contribute to the five outcomes of Every Child Matters. Many students undertake valuable work experience which helps to develop skills needed in employment.
13. Advice, guidance and support are outstanding. The college has very good links with partner schools and other colleges. Applications from students who do not meet the full entry requirements are evaluated on an individual basis. Additional support needs are identified at all stages of recruitment and induction. A skills audit is conducted for adults joining accountancy courses. Induction is thorough and enables students to settle into college life quickly. The tutorial process contributes strongly to the rigorous monitoring of students' progress. Students' progress against their target minimum grades is reviewed frequently in tutorials. Personal tutors ensure that college support services meet students' needs. Attendance and punctuality are monitored rigorously. Pastoral support is extensive and includes a wealth of information and guidance on staying healthy, welfare and finance. Support, information and guidance for students progressing to higher education or employment are excellent.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

*Contributory grades:*

*Equality of opportunity*

*Good: Grade 2*

14. Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. Managers and staff throughout the college are strongly focused on providing excellence in the education and wellbeing of students. High student achievement has been maintained for many years. The principal and other senior managers promote a mutually supportive and respectful working environment for students and staff. Senior managers, including the principal, teach students and understand how changes may affect teaching and learning. As identified in the self-assessment report, communication between staff and managers is very effective. Planning and target setting are undertaken systematically each year. The college has made very good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Significant investment has been made in learning technology. Full-time teachers have laptop computers and the whole campus can access wireless connection to the intranet. Good use is made of the remote connection facility. Students are very appreciative of being able to use the VLE, e-mail staff and check their individual learning plans whilst at home or at college.
15. Quality assurance is thorough and self-assessment is accurate. Management information is readily available to all staff. Data, including external benchmarking data and student feedback, are used very effectively at all levels. Detailed analysis of student performance and progress enables the college to identify any anomalies between groups or categories of students studying the same course, such as male and female students, those receiving additional support or by minority ethnic heritage students. Clear, well focused action plans to address areas for improvement are put in place promptly and progress is checked systematically. The college's observation of teaching and learning scheme is rigorous. Strengths and areas for improvement are accurately identified during lesson observations. Peer observation and other activities contribute to effective sharing of good practice.
16. Governance is strong. Governors are well informed and are demanding critical friends of the college.
17. Study accommodation is at least satisfactory and much is good. The number of students has increased by a quarter over the last three years and there is a shortage of refectory space during peak times.
18. The college's approach to equality of opportunity is good. An overarching equality and diversity policy is in place covering race equality, disability and gender equality. The college's response to equality legislation including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2002 (SENDA) is good but the race equality action plan is in need of updating. Many students understand their rights and responsibilities.

Equality of opportunity is monitored closely using data and feedback from students. Differences are celebrated, for example, during Black History Month prominent black figures are used as examples in teaching all subjects. All courses can be accessed by wheelchair users. Measures to ensure the safety, protection and wellbeing of young people at the college are effective. Staff are trained in equality of opportunity and child protection issues.

## 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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04/05	282	73	64	9	11	45	56	-11
	05/06	160	73	71	2	1	100	56	44
	06/07	53	79			0			
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	05/06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	06/07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NVQs	04/05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	05/06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	06/07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	04/05	282	73	63	10	11	45	56	-11
	05/06	160	73	71	2	1	100	56	44
	06/07	53	79	-	-	0	-	-	-

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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04/05	139	76	73	3	13	69	56	13
	05/06	193	67	78	-11	11	91	64	27
	06/07	171	77						
GCSEs	04/05	111	71	78	-7	-	-	-	-
	05/06	70	86	82	4	-	-	-	-
	06/07	97	84			1	0		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	05/06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	06/07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NVQs	04/05	9	89	62	27	10	70	58	12
	05/06	3	33	70	-37	11	91	68	23
	06/07	7	100	-	-	4	100	-	-
Other	04/05	19	95	62	33	3	67	52	15
	05/06	120	58	70	-12	-	-	-	-
	06/07	75	69	-	-	-	-	-	-

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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04/05	5349	88	82	6	57	65	59	6
	05/06	5852	89	83	6	45	49	65	-16
	06/07	6370	89	-	-	54	78	-	-
A/A2 Levels	04/05	1878	96	92	4	5	100	76	24
	05/06	1943	97	93	4	4	100	78	22
	06/07	2069	97	-	-	34	91	-	-
AS Levels	04/05	3250	84	78	6	7	14	54	-39
	05/06	3417	87	79	8	12	58	58	0
	06/07	3845	86	-	-	11	91	-	-
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	159	68	74	-6	-	-	-	-
	05/06	201	74	74	0	-	-	-	-
	06/07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NVQs	04/05	6	83	-	-	31	61	50	11
	05/06	7	86	-	-	29	38	63	-25
	06/07	11	45	-	-	26	65	-	-
Other	04/05	56	73	72	1	14	86	56	30
	05/06	284	75	75	0	-	-	-	-
	06/07	436	87	-	-	9	31	-	-