

Southampton City College

Inspection report

Provider reference 130696
Published date November 2007

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their 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, social care and early years; engineering; construction; hairdressing and beauty therapy; arts and media; and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Description of the provider

1. Southampton City College is a medium sized general further education (GFE) college, largely based on one site close to the city centre, with a separate centre for its specialism in marine engineering. Southampton, a unitary authority, has a population of around 220,000. Unemployment is low, at just over 2%, although a higher proportion of residents than nationally are economically inactive. The employment sectors with the highest proportion of workers are wholesale and retail trade, and manufacturing. Employment in the traditional engineering and manufacturing sectors has declined in recent years, with growth in the service sector. Around a quarter of the adult population have no qualifications and there are low levels of literacy and numeracy. Educational achievement at age 16 is significantly below England averages. Just over 7% of the population are from minority ethnic groups, although this figure does not include recent migrants from Eastern Europe.
2. The college offers a broad vocational curriculum, along with significant provision in basic skills. In 2005/06, around 12,000 students enrolled on over 21,000 courses. Of these students, over 80% were adults, although most full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Most enrolments for both age groups are at level 1. Apprenticeship programmes, organised under the college's City Training arm, are available in several sector subject areas, with the largest number in construction. The college is also involved in a substantial programme of work for pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools.
3. The college's mission is articulated through three key objectives: raising student achievement; developing community and other partnerships; and providing specialised training and skills development.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Health, social care and early years | Good: Grade 2 |
| Engineering | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Construction | Inadequate: Grade 4 |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Arts and media | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Literacy, numeracy and ESOL | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. Southampton City College provides a satisfactory standard of education and training. Achievement is satisfactory. Most students complete their courses and achieve their qualifications. As the college recognises, there is further work to do to ensure that the improvements in students' success rates over the last three years are replicated in all areas of the college. The standard of students' work and their attendance at lessons are satisfactory.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This overall judgement disguises significant variations in the quality of lessons. In the best lessons, students are enthused and engaged, and rapidly learn new concepts and skills. However, in a significant minority of lessons, students learn too little, too slowly. The college's internal processes for judging and improving the quality of teaching and learning are not yet fully effective.
6. The college's response to students' needs and interests is good. The curriculum has been modified in recent years to meet local demand for vocational courses and basic skills provision. The college's record on social and educational inclusion is good; the college plays a significant role in city-wide strategies to re-engage disadvantaged people of all ages into learning, and in raising skills levels. Partnership working is good.
7. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Improvements in advice, guidance and induction have led to more students being enrolled onto suitable courses at the right level. Students receive good individual support, although their experience of the college's group tutorial programme is not always positive.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has been in a precarious position for some years, both financially and in respect of its quality of provision. Leaders and managers have pursued a coherent strategy to improve the college's fortunes by re-designing the curriculum offer and prioritising students' outcomes. The curriculum is more apt, and success rates have risen. However, leaders have been less successful in tackling areas of underperformance and in improving significantly the quality of classroom practice.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. The college has satisfactory capacity to improve its provision. Overall success rates have improved to above national averages. Quality improvement processes have recently improved and are beginning to have an impact. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate in identifying key strengths and areas for improvement, although some grades awarded are too generous. Although significant areas of weakness persist, they are being identified and

rectified more promptly. However, actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been less effective.

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

10. The college has made satisfactory progress in resolving the main weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Student enrolments have risen, data are better used for quality improvement, workshop areas are much improved and staff cover for absences is better managed. The proportion of good or better teaching has improved in the college's judgement, although inspection evidence suggests that the college is over-estimating the quality of teaching. Work-based learning is now satisfactory or better in all areas except construction. However, there has been no improvement in the inspection grades awarded to curriculum areas or cross-college aspects.

Key strengths

- improvements in long course success rates to above national averages
- the college's clear strategy and coherent mission
- responsiveness to individual and community needs, and promotion of social inclusion
- good initial advice and guidance
- students' enjoyment of college life.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- arrangements to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- slow progress in developing the use of data to assess students' progress
- the inadequate quality of provision in construction
- weaker aspects of quality assurance and curriculum management
- the slow management response to pockets of poor performance.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, as recognised by the college. The proportion of students who successfully completed their courses rose significantly in 2006/07, after disappointing results in 2005/06, particularly for students aged 16 to 18. Students who take long courses now achieve results that are slightly above the national average for similar colleges. The large number of students on courses at level 1 achieve particularly well. At level 2, weak results in 2005/06 showed a very significant improvement in 2006/07. Students aged 16 to 18 on courses at level 3 achieve less well.
12. The overall figures for students' success rates disguise some significant differences within and between sector subject areas. In preparation for life and work, and in health, social care and early years, results on most courses are good. However, in construction and arts and media, for example, students' outcomes on several courses are weak and in some cases have been so for several years. Success rates on key skills courses are improving and are close to national averages. Attendance at lessons has improved over the last two years and is satisfactory.
13. Although female students achieve better outcomes than male students, the difference is not significant when taking into account national differences. The small proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well.
14. At the time of the inspection, over 550 learners were on work-based learning programmes. Currently, around half of all learners successfully complete their apprenticeship. Although low, this success rate represents a significant improvement over the last three years. The proportion of learners who complete their full framework within the time planned remains low. Success rates are particularly high in health, social care and early years, information and communication technology, and business administration. However, the large number of learners in construction do not achieve well.
15. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Many students develop good practical and vocational skills, enjoy their work, and pay due regard to health and safety. Most students make satisfactory progress during their courses, although the college has been particularly slow in developing the use of data on students' prior attainment to monitor and assess how much value is added by the college. Students on courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL improve both their skills and their employability.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

16. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Whilst inspectors agreed with the college that there is much good teaching, evidence also showed that there are still too many lessons that are no better than satisfactory, and a minority of inadequate lessons.

17. In the better lessons, teachers plan effectively and set clear and well understood objectives. They use good learning materials, including information and learning technology (ILT), and a range of methods that successfully engage and challenge students. For example, in health, social care and early years, high quality resources are used imaginatively to help many students to develop independent learning skills successfully. The less successful lessons are dull, poorly planned and insufficiently challenging for all students. Such lessons are characterised by a failure to pay sufficient attention to individual students' needs, uninteresting teaching materials, and a slow pace of learning.
18. Slow progress has been made in successfully integrating key skills into the curriculum. Key skills teaching and learning for many students are unsatisfactory, and progress is often slow. Assignments are often not well integrated with vocational work; as a consequence, students do not see the relevance of the work.
19. The college has well established arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning. The results of the college's internal observations in 2006/07 show an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. However, inspection evidence indicates an overestimation by the college of the proportion of good lessons and an underestimation of the amount of inadequate teaching and learning. The college's approach to internal lesson observations encourages a mechanistic approach that places insufficient emphasis on what students learn. Although staff development opportunities for teachers following lesson observations are extensive, development needs are not clearly articulated on the feedback from lesson observations.
20. Overall arrangements for assessment are satisfactory. Students' work is marked regularly but, for some, feedback on written work does not clearly indicate how they might make further improvements. In media and performing arts courses, some of the assessment methods used are ineffective in helping students understand the standard of their work, what their development priorities are and what they should do to improve. In work-based learning, particularly in engineering and health and social care courses, portfolios are of a high standard and contain a good range of varied evidence.
21. The range of courses offered by the college and its responsiveness to individuals, the local community, and employers, are good. In recent years, the college has re-configured its curriculum to focus on meeting the vocational and basic skills needs of students, in line with local and national priorities. In most sector subject areas, a wide range of provision enables students both to develop specialist skills and to progress through different levels. However, in arts and media the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Progression rates are high in many areas, although a low proportion of students progress to higher education.
22. The college's contribution to social and educational inclusion is good. Links with schools, employers and community partners are effective. Through thorough curriculum analysis and effective partnership working, the college plays a

significant role in offering opportunities to young people who may not otherwise engage in education or training. A good range of vocational opportunities are offered to pupils aged 14 to 16 who benefit from the more practical training available at the college. Links with employers provide a good range of work placements and work experience for students, in addition to an extensive apprenticeship programme.

23. Students' access to additional qualifications to improve their employment and progression opportunities varies across subject areas; it is good in health, social care and early years. The range of cross-college extra-curricular activities has been improved but remains narrow. The college has recognised this and appointed new staff to manage and develop the provision. Students enjoy college and feel safe and well looked after.
24. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory with some good features. Initial advice and guidance for students are good. Much care is taken to ensure that students are on the right course at the right level and this is beginning to have a beneficial impact on retention rates. Outcomes of initial interviews and assessments are used effectively to determine students' support needs, although in a minority of cases the results of initial assessment are not acted upon sufficiently swiftly.
25. Additional learning support assistants are used both to help individual students and to support whole groups studying at level 1 or below. Students who receive individual support for specific needs speak in glowing terms of the help they receive. In a minority of lessons, learning support assistants are not always used to best effect in targeting help where it is most needed.
26. The extensive range of welfare services is promoted effectively and used widely. Good links are well established with specialist support agencies including Connexions and the Youth Service.
27. Support for students through the tutorial programme is satisfactory. Individual tutorials are effective; group tutorials less so. Students receive regular one-to-one tutorials and the recent introduction of more rigorous college-wide systems to monitor students' progress and attendance are leading to more consistency in the quality of tutorial support. The cross-college group tutorial programme is well planned and includes teaching resources and sessions on the five Every Child Matters themes. However, implementation of the tutorial framework is inconsistently applied, with some students not receiving regular group tutorials.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: Grade 3

28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, governors and senior managers have set a clear and coherent strategic direction for the

college. The college's curriculum offer increasingly meets local and individual needs. Student numbers and financial management have improved to a sound position. Governors are playing an increasingly effective role in monitoring performance. The recent acquisition of City Training is a well thought out initiative to rationalise work-based learning in the city. Partnership working is effective. Some progress has been made in establishing a culture in which staff at all levels are more accountable for improving students' performance. However, aspects of curriculum management are less effective and efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning have had limited success.

29. Quality improvement arrangements have been recently revised and are now having a positive impact in some areas. A revised approach to the self-assessment process has improved staff involvement in identifying and tackling areas for improvement. A senior level quality group takes an active role in scrutinising and seeking to improve college performance, albeit with mixed results. Success rates improved in 2006/07 after a fall in 2005/06, but significant inconsistencies in students' outcomes remain. Management information is comprehensive and reliable; it is used well by managers in some, but not all, curriculum areas to monitor and improve performance. Despite recent improvements, there have been some slow responses to recognising and dealing with significant areas of weakness, for example, in construction and in arts and media. The internal lesson observation system is yet to have sufficient impact in improving classroom practice.
30. Staff development is satisfactory. Appropriate training is provided to meet both individual needs and college priorities. Overall, the workforce is appropriately qualified, although there are some difficulties in recruiting fully qualified teachers in some areas. Analysis of the wide range of feedback data from staff, students and employers is good but resulting action planning is sometimes unclear.
31. Ambitious plans to improve the learning environment through the development of the estate are well advanced. Resources are particularly good in some areas, for example, early years, motor vehicle and brickwork. Resources are deployed satisfactorily to achieve value for money.
32. The college's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Commitment to an inclusive approach is strong throughout the college. The college meets legislative requirements properly in respect of race, disability and child protection. Access for those with limited mobility is much improved. Promotion of equality and diversity to students through the curriculum is adequate.

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and early years

Good: Grade 2

Context

33. The college offers full-time courses in care at levels 2 and 3 and in early years from entry level to level 3. Provision for part-time students includes national vocational qualifications (NVQs), counselling courses, a certificate in community mental health, and a range of short courses. Apprenticeships are offered in care, early years and dental health. Most of the 150 full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Around 300 adult learners study part-time. Of these, approximately 60 are on apprenticeship programmes, 80 on counselling courses and 150 on NVQs.

Strengths

- high overall success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- high success rates on early years courses at levels 1 and 2
- imaginative use of high quality resources to enthuse students.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on advanced level full-time courses
- inadequate support for individual learning needs on early years courses at level 1.

Achievement and standards

34. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates have improved on most courses and are now high, particularly on early years courses at levels 1 and 2. The proportion of learners who achieve the full apprenticeship framework is also high. However, success rates for students on full-time courses at level 3 have declined and are low.

35. Standards of work are good. Students develop good work-related skills. Written work is of an appropriate standard with good progress being made in the application of key theories to practice. For example, students develop a good understanding of the role of health and safety legislation in childcare settings. Students progress successfully to higher level courses within the college, to higher education, and to employment, with some gaining promotion in the workplace. Students enjoy their work and are enthusiastic.

Quality of provision

36. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching for full-time courses is effectively delivered through task-based activities in large, open plan areas. The rooms are very well equipped with computers and imaginative resources such as practical childcare areas and baby equipment. This provides a very rich environment for students to manage their own learning and encourages the development of

independent study skills. Learning support assistants are a useful resource in many classes. However, learning support is insufficiently targeted to ensure that the specific needs of individual students are met in early years courses at level 1. Assessment and monitoring are satisfactory. NVQ portfolios contain a good range of diverse evidence.

37. The range of provision is good. Productive links with a wide range of employers and higher education provide good work experience and progression opportunities. Enrichment activities such as first aid, manual handling, tourism qualifications for childcare, counselling and a wide range of work placements are well integrated into the curriculum.
38. Guidance and support for students are good. Students receive good individual support through personal tutors and central college services. Group tutorials have an appropriate programme to support personal development.

Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Measures to improve success rates on many courses have been successful. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but insufficiently evaluative. Course reviews lack clear targets. Staff are well supported and make effective use of opportunities for occupational updating and professional development. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

Engineering

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

40. The college offers full- and part-time courses from entry level to level 4 in engineering and motor vehicle studies. There are 269 students aged 16 to 18 and 160 adult students. On work-based learning programmes, there are 43 apprentices and 61 advanced apprentices. Over 70 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools undertake engineering courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on motor vehicle programmes
- high standard of apprentices' portfolios
- good range of programmes with good progression routes
- excellent resources in motor vehicle
- good use of data to plan for improvements.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates in engineering on level 1 qualifications for students aged 16 to 18
- insufficiently careful planning of lessons
- inadequate assessment of key skills in vocational lessons
- poor use of individual learning plans to monitor students' progress.

Achievement and standards

41. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on long courses and apprenticeship frameworks have risen over the last three years and are around national averages. Success rates are high in motor vehicle studies. However, too few students aged 16 to 18 are successful on level 1 courses in engineering. Apprentices make slow progress on their programmes.
42. Students work competently and diligently, pay good attention to health and safety in the workshops and produce good work. The standard of apprentices' portfolios is high and students' practical skills are well developed. The majority of advanced apprentices work with a prestigious employer and produce work that meets high industry standards. Punctuality and attendance are good.

Quality of provision

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most students demonstrate good understanding of their work and develop good practical hand skills. For example, second year students in an electrical workshop were confident in using a variety of power and hand tools to undertake realistic installation tasks. The planning of lessons is insufficiently careful; some learning outcomes are not measurable and teaching and learning strategies are frequently not identified. Key skills are not adequately assessed in vocational lessons. Assessment strategies in schemes of work are repetitive and lack clarity.

44. A good range of programmes is offered, with good progression routes. The college works very well with local schools for pupils aged 14 to 16, some of whom progress onto full-time courses at the college. Full-time students are able to progress to apprenticeships. The quality of work-based learning is satisfactory. Apprentices' progress is carefully monitored and targets set are clear and measurable.
45. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Students find their teachers approachable and supportive. Poor use is made of individual learning plans to monitor students' progress. Full-time students are not set clear targets and do not always know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good use is made of data to evaluate the provision, plan for improvements and develop the curriculum offer. New provision is actively developed and specialist resources are good; those for motor vehicle courses are excellent. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory and students with learning difficulties are well supported. The self-assessment report accurately reflects many of the judgements made at inspection.

Construction

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

47. Full- and part-time courses are offered in the major construction trades. At the time of inspection, there were over 400 students, of whom 60% were on full-time courses. Around one third are adults. There were 88 work-based apprentices, half on advanced programmes. Over 100 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend construction courses. Higher level qualifications are offered in civil engineering, building services and site management.

Strengths

- high and improving success rates on national certificate courses
- students' enjoyment in developing practical skills
- high progression rates from level 1 to level 2 courses.

Areas for improvement

- low completion of apprenticeship frameworks
- low and declining pass rates on construction award programmes
- inadequate quality of provision in plumbing
- insufficient employer involvement
- unsatisfactory curriculum management.

Achievement and standards

48. Achievement and standards are inadequate. Success rates on national certificate construction courses have improved and are high. However, too few apprentices successfully complete their frameworks. Success rates for all apprentices fell sharply in 2006/07. Pass rates on construction award programmes are low and declining. Standards, and the quality of provision, are inadequate in plumbing. Success rates in basic plumbing are significantly below national averages. In 2006/07, over half of first year full-time students were unsuccessful.
49. Even though too few students gain their qualifications, they enjoy developing practical skills. Brickwork apprentices make rapid progress and produce good quality walls and pillars early in their programme. Carpentry students exhibit early skills development working on the construction of floors and partitions. School pupils develop useful skills through the painting of safety signs. Progression rates from level 1 to level 2 are high; in 2006/07, nearly 60% of those who succeeded at level 1 progressed to level 2.

Quality of provision

50. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers actively involve students. In one session, the whole class contributed well to the calculation and plotting of contour lines from survey data. Some teachers make good use of ILT to enhance learning. In weaker lessons, students simply copy

notes from overhead transparencies or are set insufficiently challenging tasks. Practical workshop sessions bring out the best in students. Assessment, in both college and the workplace, is satisfactory.

51. The range of provision is good with good progression opportunities. Employer involvement is weak. There is a lack of industry visits on some courses and no planned work placements for full-time craft students. There is no industrial consultative committee.
52. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Attendance is good and has improved through close monitoring. Some group tutorials are insufficiently well planned to ensure students cover topics essential for their wellbeing. Many targets set to help students improve are insufficiently well defined and, until recently, the monitoring of students' progress was weak.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Strategies for quality improvement have been largely ineffective. There is insufficient monitoring of the ongoing performance of courses and data are not used effectively to inform improvement. Self-assessment is broadly accurate. Internal communications are good and the large numbers of new teachers are well supported. Efforts to encourage female participation in construction are increasingly successful. Resources are satisfactory, with a particularly good brickwork area.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

54. There are 341 students in hairdressing and beauty therapy at NVQ levels 1 to 3. Of these, 208 are on hairdressing courses. Most students are female, full-time and under 19 years of age. Around a third have additional learning needs. Twenty-two students are on work-based learning apprenticeships in hairdressing. Around 80 school pupils aged 14 to 16 attend level 1 courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on hairdressing programmes at levels 2 and 3
- good teaching and learning in both theory and practical lessons
- good individual support for students.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on beauty therapy programmes
- poor organisation of key skills provision
- slow progress to improve beauty therapy success rates at levels 1 and 3.

Achievement and standards

55. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on levels 2 and 3 hairdressing programmes are high and have been consistently well above national averages for the last three years. Students' achievements on level 1 hairdressing courses are satisfactory. However, success rates on beauty therapy programmes are poor and have been low for the last three years, although in 2006/07, success rates improved at level 2. Success rates for hairdressing apprentices are satisfactory. Attendance at lessons is satisfactory.
56. Students acquire satisfactory practical skills. School pupils aged 14 to 16 attain commercial standards in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Health and safety and client care are good. Students enjoy their work and produce assignments to a satisfactory standard. A high proportion of students progress from one level to the next.

Quality of provision

57. Teaching and learning are good in both theory and practical lessons. Effective use is made of question and answer, discussion and small group work to promote learning. Students' confidence and motivation are developed well and most are actively involved in lessons. Teachers use industrial examples well to illustrate key points. Demonstration techniques are good. Teachers set high commercial standards in practical lessons. Assessment and verification procedures are satisfactory, as are specialist resources. The client base is adequate to meet demand.

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58. The range of provision is satisfactory. Students speak positively about specialist enrichment opportunities. Selection and induction procedures are satisfactory. However, the organisation of key skills teaching is poorly designed and ineffective. Students express dissatisfaction with duplication of work and feel key skills are not relevant to their course. Work-based learners were enrolled on the wrong key skills level in 2006/07.
59. Support for students is good. Students with additional learning needs benefit from good support, leading to improvement in both success rates and progression rates. Individual tutorials are good. Insufficient time is available to cover the group tutorial programme.

Leadership and management

60. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Programmes in hairdressing are well led and managed. The self-assessment report reflects most of the judgements made at inspection. Teachers are actively involved in reviewing provision, target setting and action planning. They are set projects to improve the curriculum as part of their appraisal. Progress to address poor success rates in beauty therapy courses has been slow, but improvements are now being made. Students at risk of not achieving are highlighted for additional support. Teachers have changed the curriculum delivery and standardised their assessment procedures.

Arts and media

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

61. The college offers mostly national certificates and diplomas at levels 2 and 3 in art and design, acting, technical theatre and media. The provision is small; around 150 students follow these courses each year, of whom over two thirds are aged 16 to 18. Most students take qualifications at level 3.

Strengths

- very high success rates on the diploma in foundation studies in art and design
- beneficial industrial links in media and technical theatre
- significant recent improvements in leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on the national diploma in art and design
- low attendance rates in art and design
- underdeveloped curriculum in media and performing arts.

Achievement and standards

62. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Almost all students on the diploma in foundation studies in art and design complete and pass their course, as did the small number of students on the first diploma in art and design in 2006/07. However, over the last two years only about half the students on the national diploma in art and design achieved their qualification. Attendance in art and design lessons is low.
63. Students develop a clear personal expressive voice in their chosen discipline and the necessary technical skills to support it. Work produced by media and technical theatre students draws directly from industrial practice and aspires to professional standards. Art and design students have an assured grounding in the manipulation of a wide range of media. Most work, however, lacks the creative flair and sense of adventure that springs from a fully confident exploration of meanings and ideas. Students' evaluative annotation of their own work is underdeveloped.

Quality of provision

64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers effectively impart new knowledge and guide students' creative responses to stimuli. Praise, constructive criticism and open questions are used well. However, students' capacity for personal experiment and independent exploration are not fully realised because too much teaching lacks imaginative risk-taking. Teachers know their students well, but their assessment of their progress lacked rigour and insight until new arrangements were recently introduced. Students'

progress is now carefully monitored and their skill development is the subject of detailed and pragmatic advice in the feedback they receive on their work.

65. The range of provision is unsatisfactory. It is underdeveloped in performing arts and media. Courses in these areas enrol few students. Music and dance are not taught. Consequently, opportunities for inter-disciplinary work are restricted. Students in media and technical theatre, however, enjoy many opportunities to work in professional settings, undertaking live briefs and responding to commissions.
66. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Students appreciate the dedicated personal advice, guidance and care they receive from their teachers and the generous support of specialist technicians. Group tutorials are ineffective.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management are now satisfactory, having been ineffectual for some time before the arrival of a new curriculum leader and the appointment of other team leaders. Their drive and vision have re-invigorated staff and students alike and capacity to improve is good. Communications are now open, decisions transparent and there is proper delegation of responsibility. The latest self-assessment offers shrewd analysis of what needs to change further to secure improvements. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

68. Full- and part-time literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses are offered at the college, in the community and at the workplace, with over 3,500 enrolments in 2006/07. Courses range from entry level to level 2 for adults and students aged 16 to 18. Approximately 60% of students are adults. Most students are part-time. Key skills in application of number and communication are offered to students on vocational programmes.

Strengths

- high success rates on external qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- effective strategies to improve attendance and retention rates
- students' good progress in adult literacy and numeracy lessons
- effective strategies and partnerships to reach disadvantaged learners.

Areas for improvement

- low progression from literacy, numeracy and ESOL on to other college courses
- insufficient attention to individual student needs in many ESOL lessons
- slow progress in implementing the national skills for life strategy
- insufficient subject specialist trained staff.

Achievement and standards

69. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are high for those students entered for external qualifications. Rigorous monitoring of punctuality and attendance at lessons has contributed to improvements in the proportion of students who complete their courses. The standard of students' work is satisfactory and they take pride in their folders. Teachers assess work helpfully, identifying areas for improvement. The number of adult students progressing to other college courses is low.

Quality of provision

70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In literacy and numeracy lessons, personalised tasks are effective in engaging students in learning, and adult students in particular make good progress. Teachers are adept at regularly reviewing students' progress and encouraging them to practice and consolidate new skills. Well targeted in-class support enables students to build on their learning. Individual learning plans are used effectively to guide students and involve them in monitoring their own progress.

71. In many ESOL lessons, insufficient attention is paid to the individual needs of students. Planning of lessons, teaching methods and materials used in lessons

do not adequately reflect the learning that individual students require to improve their language skills. Opportunities are missed to use students' prior experiences in planning and organising tasks and activities. Learning tends to be text-book based and insufficient time is made for those who may need extra help.

72. The curriculum range offered is good. Good collaborative partnerships are used effectively to develop strategies to attract disadvantaged groups into learning, both at college and in communities and workplaces. Vulnerable students with diverse and complex needs benefit from provision.
73. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Many students are benefiting from effective additional learning support arrangements. Not all part-time ESOL students receive adequate tutorial support.

Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teamwork is good. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and identifies many of the strengths and areas for improvements, although it is insufficiently analytical about the quality of teaching and learning. Progress in implementing the national skills for life strategy in order to improve the quality of the provision has been slow. Currently, there is an insufficient number of subject specialist trained staff across all the curriculum areas. Opportunities to promote and celebrate diversity by drawing on students' lives and experiences are missed in ESOL lessons.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

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

| Notional Level | Exp End Year | 16-18 | | | | 19+ | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| | | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | <i>Diff</i> | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | <i>Diff</i> |
| 1 Long | 03-04 | 532 | 68 | 61 | 7 | 2124 | 77 | 59 | 18 |
| | 04-05 | 515 | 69 | 65 | 4 | 1991 | 77 | 62 | 15 |
| | 05-06 | 550 | 66 | 69 | -3 | 2254 | 80 | 65 | 15 |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03-04 | 42 | 62 | 65 | -3 | 5 | 100 | 64 | 36 |
| | 04-05 | 25 | 76 | 68 | 8 | 3 | 67 | 64 | 3 |
| | 05-06 | 14 | 93 | 72 | 21 | 2 | 50 | ... | ... |
| NVQs | 03-04 | 177 | 76 | 61 | 15 | 74 | 72 | 62 | 10 |
| | 04-05 | 143 | 63 | 68 | -5 | 64 | 66 | 66 | 0 |
| | 05-06 | 204 | 54 | 72 | -18 | 65 | 78 | 74 | 4 |
| Other | 03-04 | 313 | 64 | 60 | 4 | 2045 | 78 | 59 | 19 |
| | 04-05 | 347 | 70 | 64 | 6 | 1924 | 78 | 62 | 16 |
| | 05-06 | 332 | 71 | 69 | 2 | 2187 | 80 | 65 | 15 |

Table 2

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

| Notional Level | Exp End Year | 16-18 | | | | 19+ | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| | | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | <i>Diff</i> | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | <i>Diff</i> |
| 2 Long | 03-04 | 743 | 47 | 56 | -9 | 1046 | 47 | 54 | -7 |
| | 04-05 | 673 | 57 | 61 | -4 | 1145 | 67 | 60 | 7 |
| | 05-06 | 538 | 52 | 66 | -14 | 1097 | 64 | 66 | -2 |
| GCSEs | 03-04 | 96 | 52 | 61 | -9 | 144 | 60 | 59 | 1 |
| | 04-05 | 90 | 43 | 64 | -21 | 168 | 57 | 63 | -6 |
| | 05-06 | 59 | 53 | 68 | -15 | 79 | 67 | 67 | 0 |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03-04 | 53 | 64 | 63 | 1 | 6 | 83 | 59 | 24 |
| | 04-05 | 9 | 67 | 67 | 0 | 1 | 100 | 75 | 25 |
| | 05-06 | 37 | 57 | 69 | -12 | 15 | 67 | 68 | -1 |
| NVQs | 03-04 | 360 | 42 | 51 | -9 | 278 | 53 | 53 | 0 |
| | 04-05 | 221 | 58 | 57 | 1 | 600 | 76 | 60 | 16 |
| | 05-06 | 175 | 51 | 65 | -14 | 461 | 61 | 67 | -6 |
| Other | 03-04 | 234 | 48 | 54 | -6 | 618 | 41 | 53 | -12 |
| | 04-05 | 353 | 60 | 61 | -1 | 376 | 56 | 59 | -3 |
| | 05-06 | 267 | 51 | 66 | -15 | 542 | 67 | 65 | 2 |

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

| Notional Level | Exp End Year | 16-18 | | | | 19+ | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|------|
| | | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff |
| 3 Long | 03-04 | 412 | 38 | 64 | -26 | 927 | 45 | 54 | -9 |
| | 04-05 | 266 | 61 | 68 | -7 | 883 | 56 | 58 | -2 |
| | 05-06 | 256 | 57 | 70 | -13 | 695 | 55 | 63 | -8 |
| A/A2 Levels | 03-04 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 04-05 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 05-06 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| AS Levels | 03-04 | 1 | 100 | 63 | 37 | 26 | 38 | 50 | -12 |
| | 04-05 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| | 05-06 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03-04 | 202 | 32 | 53 | -21 | 70 | 31 | 45 | -14 |
| | 04-05 | 39 | 62 | 61 | 1 | 32 | 38 | 54 | -16 |
| | 05-06 | 17 | 35 | 66 | -31 | 7 | 43 | 57 | -14 |
| NVQs | 03-04 | 28 | 75 | 54 | 21 | 269 | 51 | 48 | 3 |
| | 04-05 | 23 | 74 | 63 | 11 | 306 | 61 | 56 | 5 |
| | 05-06 | 31 | 65 | 71 | -6 | 243 | 58 | 63 | -5 |
| Other | 03-04 | 181 | 38 | 57 | -19 | 562 | 44 | 56 | -12 |
| | 04-05 | 204 | 60 | 60 | 0 | 545 | 54 | 59 | -5 |
| | 05-06 | 208 | 57 | 65 | -8 | 445 | 54 | 64 | -10 |

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 | 36 | 33 | 48 | 11 | 34 |
| | | timely | 47 | 17 | 31 | 6 | 22 |
| | 05/06 | overall | 95 | 46 | 53 | 35 | 44 |
| | | timely | 107 | 22 | 3 | 15 | 28 |
| | 06/07 | overall | 112 | 5 | 64 | 47 | 56 |
| | | timely | 129 | 35 | 41 | 28 | 35 |
| Apprenticeships | 04/05 | overall | 32 | 72 | 51 | 19 | 39 |
| | | timely | 44 | 25 | 29 | 0 | 22 |
| | 05/06 | overall | 29 | 76 | 58 | 48 | 52 |
| | | timely | 22 | 45 | 38 | 23 | 34 |
| | 06/07 | overall | 126 | 68 | 65 | 48 | 60 |
| | | timely | 161 | 36 | 45 | 25 | 42 |

* 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'