

# Derby 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; engineering and manufacturing technologies; information and communication technology (ICT); preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law.

## Description of the provider

1. Derby College is a large general further education college (GFE). The college has five sites located in and around Derby: Broomfield Hall; Joseph Wright Centre; Masons Place; Norman House; and Prince Charles Avenue. In addition, the college offers provision at community venues and employers' premises. In March 2002, Broomfield College, Derby Tertiary College, Wilmorton and Mackworth College merged to form Derby College. The college's mission is "Derby College will achieve outstanding learner success through transforming the organisation in response to skills priorities to meet the needs of individuals and employers".
2. Around 75% of the college's learners are from Derby and Derbyshire. Most of the remainder are from neighbouring local authorities in the East and West Midlands. In 2006/07, the college had 24,355 learners. Of these, 81% were adult learners. Of the learners aged 16 to 18, 50% were male and 55% of adult learners were female. Some 19% of learners aged 16 to 18 and 16% of adult learners were from minority ethnic groups. The college has 298 learners aged 14 to 16, 648 work-based learners and 263 Train to Gain learners.
3. The college offers courses in all sector subject areas (SSAs). The highest number of learners are in preparation for life and work; health, public services and social care; engineering and manufacturing technologies; retail and commercial enterprises; information communication technology (ICT); and business, administration and law. The college provides education and training for apprentices, advanced apprentices and Train to Gain learners. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in information technology (IT) and is involved with partners in CoVEs for lean engineering manufacturing, construction and retail.
4. Derby's population is 221,708 of whom 13% are from minority ethnic groups. Derby ranks 69 out of 354 for the average scores for the highest levels of deprivation in England. The unemployment rate in Derby is just over the national average. The percentage of pupils in Derby gaining five GCSEs at A\* to C, including English and mathematics, in 2006 was 42.2%, compared to the national average of 45.8%.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

### Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	Good: Grade 2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Outstanding: Grade 1
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. Effectiveness of provision is good and some aspects are outstanding. Success rates are high overall and have increased substantially since the last inspection. Most learners' work is of a high standard, particularly occupational skills. Generally, learners make good progress while at college.
6. Teaching and learning are good. Most teachers plan lessons well and use a range of good teaching and learning methods, particularly in preparation for life and work. Teaching of occupational skills and the training of work-based learners are very effective. Teaching of key skills is good. However, a small minority of teaching is dull and does not stretch more able learners.
7. Social and educational inclusion and the response to the needs and interest of learners, employers and local communities, are outstanding. The range of provision for employers is excellent. Arrangements to increase the participation of those under-represented in education are very effective.
8. Guidance and support are good. Learners receive very effective additional learning support. Good quality guidance and support are available for learners before they start, during and at the end of their studies. Tutorial provision is good. Learners value the support they receive from staff but, in a small minority of instances, the feedback they receive on their progress is too brief.
9. Leadership and management are good. Senior managers have a particularly effective focus on raising standards and success rates. Subject management is good. Strategic planning is very good. Governance is of a high standard. Quality improvement arrangements secure high standards of provision. Resources are good but the standard of accommodation is mixed.

### Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

10. Capacity to improve is outstanding. Overall success rates have increased very substantially from a low to a high level. Provision has improved very significantly from mostly satisfactory, with some unsatisfactory areas, to good with some outstanding aspects. Governors, principal, managers and staff focus very effectively on raising standards for learners. Good quality assurance arrangements are very effective in bringing about substantial improvements. Staff use the very good quality management information well. The college is in a good financial position and managers deploy resources well to improve standards. Accommodation on parts of the college's estate is outstanding but on other parts it is poor.
11. Rigorous self-assessment processes, well supported by data, lead to particularly effective actions for improvement. The judgements in the comprehensive self-assessment report are accurate and match closely those made by inspectors.

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

12. The college has made good progress in addressing areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. All areas for improvement have been resolved successfully and strengths have been maintained or further improved. At the last inspection most provision was judged, at best, satisfactory. Two areas which were unsatisfactory were judged to be satisfactory when reinspected. All provision is now good or better. Actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and additional support have had a particularly good impact.

#### Key strengths

- high success rates overall in 2006/07
- high standard of learners' work, particularly occupational skills
- good teaching and learning
- very good additional learning support
- excellent range of courses with clear progression routes
- outstanding responsiveness to learners' and employers' needs
- outstanding educational and social inclusion
- comprehensive range of support services for learners
- very good leadership and clear strategic direction
- highly effective management actions to improve success rates and provision.

#### Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- low success rates for retail and commercial enterprise learners aged 16 to 18
- declining success rates for GCE A level provision between 2005/06 and 2006/07
- poor accommodation at the Prince Charles Avenue site
- a minority of dull and insufficiently challenging teaching.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

13. Achievement and standards are good; a strength recorded in the self-assessment report. Long course success rates in 2006/07 were high at all levels overall, particularly for adults. Long course success rates for sector subject areas in 2006/07 were all high with the exception of those for retail and commercial enterprises learners aged 16 to 18, which were low. Between 2004/05 and 2006/07, the increase in the overall long course success rate was very substantial. However, GCE A level success rates declined slightly between 2005/06 and 2006/07. Success rates for short courses remained high between 2004/05 and 2006/07. Key skills success rates in 2006/07 were high and increased considerably between 2004/05 and 2006/07.
14. The success rates for advanced apprentices and apprentices in 2006/07 were just above the national average. The increase in success rates between 2004/05 and 2006/07 was significant. The success rates for Train to Gain for 2006/07 and the first part of 2007/08 were satisfactory.
15. Learners from minority ethnic groups achieved success rates similar to the college as a whole in 2006/07. The long course success rate for women was slightly better than that for men.
16. Learners' work overall is good. They are particularly effective at developing their workplace, social and economic skills. Most learners make good progress towards their learning goals. GCE A level learners make adequate progress. Learners' behaviour and attendance are mostly good or better. Learners aged 16 to 18 are good at contributing to the community and working towards a healthy lifestyle. Learners on preparation for life and work courses develop their communication, numeracy and language skills very effectively. The manufacturing skills of engineering learners are of a high standard. Health, public services and care learners' behaviour and attitude to study and work are good. The ICT skills of vocational business, administration and law learners are good. Work produced by agriculture, horticulture and animal care learners combines good practical and theoretical skills. In ICT, learners new to computing make significant improvements in their skills. Work-based learners have good occupational skills. Learners regularly enter local, regional and national competitions and do well.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

17. Quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. The planning of teaching and learning is thorough. Most teachers use a wide range of effective teaching and learning methods to provide stimulating and purposeful lessons. Teaching in practical vocational lessons is of a high standard. In preparation for life and work, teaching and learning are innovative and imaginative. Most teachers take account of learners' individual learning needs effectively. With the



exception of health, public service and care, teachers make good use of ILT. Questioning to check learners' understanding is good. The teaching of key skills links well with learners' main area of study. The training learners receive in the workplace is of a high standard. Learners on full-time courses receive a good range of subject enrichment. In a small minority of lessons, teachers are not effective at stretching the more able learners; an issue identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching in these lessons is dull and teachers do not develop learners' understanding to improve their knowledge of a subject. The coordination of some on- and off-the-job training is not effective.

18. Arrangements to observe teaching and learning are thorough. Managers review the arrangements for observations regularly to ensure they are effective. They have resolved issues with moderation of grades by strengthening the team responsible for this area and reinforced arrangements to ensure consistent standards between observers.
19. Assessment is accurate. Teachers set timely assignments and most learners receive prompt, useful written feedback. Learners value the feedback they receive from most teachers but for engineering and ICT learners it is too brief. Work-based learners receive good quality assessment and observation visits. Monitoring of their progress is good. Parents and employers receive useful information about learners' progress.
20. Additional learning support is very good. Initial assessment is very effective, an issue at the last inspection. Staff use the results of the assessment to promptly plan individual support for learners. All learners on full-time and substantive part-time courses receive support. Staff provide very effective support, in lessons and at specialist sessions for individuals or groups. Managers use data effectively to identify courses that will need additional learning support. Success rates of learners who receive additional learning support are similar to other learners.
21. The response to meeting the needs of employers and learners is outstanding. An excellent range of academic, vocational and Skills for Life courses offers learners progression from entry level to level 5. Courses are available at the college's different sites, community venues and employers' premises. Provision includes a substantial programme for work-based learners and learners aged 14 to 16. Responsiveness to employers is outstanding. The college links with a very wide range of local, regional and national employers to improve workforce skills. College staff tailor courses very effectively to employers' specific requirements. In 2006/07, the college trained 16,421 learners from 1,100 employers. These learners were on a range of Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and employer funded courses.
22. Educational and social inclusion is outstanding. The college has very effective arrangements to increase the participation of individuals under-represented in education. This includes refugees, migrants, offenders, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and individuals from wards with a high level of deprivation. A significant programme of outstanding English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and Skills for Life courses is available at a range of

venues, including locations in areas with significant barriers to learning. The substantial range of support services ensure learners complete their studies successfully. The number of learners from minority ethnic groups is higher than the local population.

23. Learners receive good guidance and support to help them to complete their studies successfully. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report. Pre-enrolment guidance is good and few learners change course after they have started. Induction helps learners settle into their studies effectively. Tutors monitor learners' attendance closely and report quickly any absence to the retention officers for further investigation. Assistance for learners identified as being at risk of leaving early is very thorough. Tutors plan tutorials well. They provide a range of useful activities. Promotion of Every Child Matters to learners during tutorials is good. Learners value tutorials. Attendance at tutorials is good. The college provides a comprehensive range of support services for learners. Counselling, advice and welfare support are widely available. The college has well established links with external support agencies. Learners on part-time and work-based learning courses can access the support services. The college has an effective range of careers education and guidance, including good support for learners applying to higher education. Specialist staff prepare health and safety risk assessment for learners, when appropriate. A wide range of sports activities is available at the Prince Charles Avenue site.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

*Contributory grades:*

*Equality of opportunity*

*Good: grade 2*

24. Leadership and management are good. This agrees with the self-assessment report. The principal provides very good leadership and, along with senior managers, sets a clear strategic direction for the college. The college works very well with a range of strategic partners to widen participation in education and training. The college has made significant improvements to its estate since the last inspection. All areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been resolved successfully. Communications are good.
25. Actions to improve success rates have been particularly effective. In 2006/07, they were high; at the time of the last inspection, they were low. Between 2004/05 and 2006/07, success rates on long courses improved at a faster rate than was the case nationally.
26. Governance is very good. Governors have relevant experience which they use well for strategic planning. Governors monitor financial and educational matters thoroughly and have a good knowledge of the college's strengths and areas for improvement.
27. Quality assurance arrangements have been simplified and strengthened since the last inspection. They are now good. Managers use monthly reviews well to ensure that areas for improvement are identified at an early stage and prompt

actions are taken to resolve them. Rigorous self-assessment involves all staff and leads to very clear action plans. The comprehensive self-assessment report is accurate. Managers monitor action plans closely to ensure their effectiveness. Management information is accessible and of a particularly high standard. Subject managers and staff make good use of management information for planning, quality improvement and self-assessment. Subject management is good in all areas and in preparation for life and work it is outstanding.

28. Resources are good. The college exceeds targets relating to the proportion of teachers holding appropriate teaching and training qualifications. Staff development and learning resources are good. Accommodation at Joseph Wright centre is outstanding but poor on parts of the Prince Charles Avenue site. Financial management and value for money are good.
29. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The college is making good progress in response to statutory requirements, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA), and it has clear arrangements to assess the impact of its policies. The college is fully compliant with requirements for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The analysis of performance data relating to various groups of learners enables the college to identify areas for development. The college has been particularly effective in attracting learners with substantial barriers to learning.

## Sector subject area

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

## Context

30. The college offers full-time and part-time courses from levels 1 to 3 in health, social care, early years, safety, public services and work-based learning. Qualifications available include NVQ, BTEC certificates and diplomas, Access and other vocational awards. Of the 1,082 learners, 765 are adults, 769 are part-time, 876 are women, 198 are from minority ethnic groups, 41 are work-based learners and 17 are aged 14 to 16.

## Strengths

- high success rates for adult learners on long courses
- good progression of BTEC national diploma learners
- very effective development of vocational and study skills
- comprehensive links with employers
- effective actions to improve the provision.

## Areas for improvement

- declining pass rates on level 3 courses for learners aged 16 to 18
- inadequate use of information and learning technology (ILT).

## Achievement and standards

31. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates for adult learners in 2006/07 on long courses were high. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 increased substantially between 2004/05 and 2006/07. Pass rates on level 3 courses for learners aged 16 to 18 in health, care and childcare declined in 2006/07. The progression of learners on BTEC national diploma courses to employment and higher education is good.
32. Learners' work is good, particularly their vocational and study skills. Learners on care courses are particularly good at planning and evaluating activities for the elderly. Learners on level 1 courses are very effective at analysing the problems those with hearing problems have to overcome. Learners' behaviour, including punctuality, is good. Attendance is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

33. The quality of provision is good. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that teaching and learning are good. Planning of learning is effective. Teachers make good use of their experience of the health, public services and care sector through good teaching and learning to develop learners' vocational and study skills to a high standard. Teachers use learners' own experiences well to explore new topics. Assessment is good. Staff provide learners with effective

feedback on how to improve. The majority of classrooms have insufficient ILT resources and, when available, they are not used effectively.

34. The range of provision to meet the needs of employers and learners is good. Links with employers are comprehensive as recognised in the self-assessment report. Feedback from employers on the college's work is positive. They consider the provision the college offers is very useful. Employers appreciate staff providing courses at their premises to meet their particular needs. Employers support learners well through work experience placements and a very wide programme of visits and talks.
35. Guidance and support for learners are good. Initial advice, guidance and additional learning support for learners are thorough and effective. Tutors use tutorials effectively to help learners improve their performance.

### Leadership and management

36. Leadership and management are good. Managers and staff take effective action to improve provision. At the last inspection, this area was satisfactory; it is now good. Managers and staff have maintained strengths and rectified areas for improvement. Staff development is good. The use of data to monitor learners' progress is effective. The comprehensive self-assessment report is broadly accurate. Teachers cover equality and diversity comprehensively in lessons. It is particularly good in public services where staff work with a range of external agencies to strongly promote opportunities for learners from minority ethnic groups.

## Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Good: Grade 2

## Context

37. The college offers full-time and part-time courses from entry level to level 3, including agriculture, equine, countryside management, arboriculture, animal care and horticulture. Learners can work towards NVQ, BTEC first and national diplomas and certificates, and other vocational qualifications. Of the 354 learners, 186 are aged 16 to 18, 231 are full-time, 185 are women, 21 are from minority ethnic groups and 23 are aged 14 to 16.

## Strengths

- high and improving success rates on the majority of levels 2 and 3 courses
- very effective links between theory and practical teaching and learning
- good use of ILT
- broad range of provision
- very good personal support.

## Areas for improvement

- low pass rates on full-time animal care courses
- insufficient use of additional duties to develop learners' workplace skills on animal care courses
- weak management of assessment on animal care courses.

## Achievement and standards

38. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates were high in 2006/07 on the majority of courses at levels 2 and 3, and have improved sharply between 2004/05 and 2006/07. Pass rates on full-time animal care courses in 2006/07 were low. This is an area for improvement recognised in the self-assessment report.
39. Work produced by learners is good, often combining high quality practical and theoretical skills. Horticulture learners have a good understanding of the need for safety when driving tractors. Learners following chainsaw maintenance programmes ask good questions of their teacher on safety procedures. Learners are successful in regional and national competitions, including UK Skills floristry and landscape gardening. Attendance is good.

## Quality of provision

40. The quality of provision is good, including teaching and learning. Teachers link theory and practical work very effectively. Their very good technical skills, combined with productive use of specialist resources, make lessons enjoyable, stimulating and relevant. Teachers make good use of information and learning technology, including the use of animal and plant databases and interactive learning resources for garden design. The teaching of key skills links effectively to learners' main areas of study. Teachers use good initial assessment to plan

learning effectively. Assessment is satisfactory overall. An area for improvement the self-assessment report did not record is the poor planning of assessment on animal care courses. Teachers do not allocate sufficient additional routine duties to animal care learners to develop their workplace skills. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not stretch learners sufficiently to extend their knowledge.

41. The college provides a broad and flexible range of provision, which meets the learners' and employers' requirements effectively. This includes provision for those under-represented in education, short courses for community groups, and part-time courses for local schools and innovative programmes for offenders on probation.
42. Guidance and support are good. Individual personal support is very strong. Advice and guidance are good. Specialist support is very effective. Tutors and teachers set learning targets for learners but do not focus sufficiently on actions to bring about improvement.

#### Leadership and management

43. Leadership and management are good. Managers have improved and promoted the college's land-based provision very effectively, particularly the actions to improve success rates. Specialist resources are good with a wide range of animals, including several rare breeds, such as Tamworth pigs. Communication is very good. Self-assessment is broadly accurate. Equality of opportunity is good.

## Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: Grade 2

## Context

44. Full-time and part-time courses are available from entry level to level 5. The college offers courses in mechanical, electrical and electronic engineering, fabrication and welding, manufacturing, computer aided engineering and motor vehicle programmes. Learners can work towards NVQ, BTEC national diplomas and other vocational awards. Of the 498 learners, 262 are adults, 344 study part-time, 26 are women, 120 are from minority ethnic groups, 39 are aged 14 to 16 and 41 are work-based learners.

## Strengths

- high success rates in 2006/07
- high standard of learners' work
- good teaching and learning
- very good range of courses
- effective additional learning support
- good leadership and management.

## Areas for improvement

- insufficient written feedback in assignments and portfolios
- insufficiently exacting target setting during progress reviews.

## Achievement and standards

45. Achievement and standards are good. Most success rates in 2006/07 were high and have increased over the last three years. Success rates were particularly high on the BTEC national certificate and national diplomas in manufacturing engineering, advanced diploma in engineering technology, NVQ level 1 performing manufacturing operations. However, the success rate was low in 2006/07 at level 2 NVQ performing manufacturing operation.
46. Learners of all ages produce work of a high standard. They make good progress in developing and using their engineering and manufacturing skills. Learners present and research assignments well and make good use of ICT. In practical lessons, learners' occupational skills are good, particularly when producing engineering components. In computer numerical control lessons, learners are confident in developing complex machine tool programmes to enable the accurate manufacture of engineering parts. Attendance is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

47. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan and manage lessons well. They use a wide range of good teaching and learning activities and are skilful in motivating and sustaining learners' interest. Teachers provide good verbal feedback on learners' progress. However, teachers' written feedback on work is insufficient to help learners improve their performance, an



area for improvement recognised in the self-assessment report. Targets set during progress reviews are insufficiently exacting. Teachers do not provide learners with clear, challenging and achievable targets. Individual learning plans are satisfactory.

48. Responsiveness to the needs of the learners and employers is very good. The wide range of full- and part-time courses has well established progression routes from courses for learners aged 14 to 16 through to higher education courses. As part of reciprocal arrangements, Rolls-Royce provides good opportunities for teachers to teach on a range of courses at the company. Other collaborative arrangements provide funding for the purchase of machine tools and a substantial programme of specialist courses for local employers.
49. Advice, support and guidance for learners are good. Learners receive very effective and sensitive additional learning support. The promotion of safe working practices is strong.

#### Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are good and effective in improving the provision for learners. Managers monitor provision closely. They take effective action to maintain and improve standards. Learners benefit from using well managed resources and a range of industry standard engineering equipment. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. However, the report did not identify an area for improvement in the review of learners' work and progress. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good.

## Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

## Context

51. Full-time and part-time ICT courses are available from entry level to level 3 at college sites or community venues. Qualifications offered include NVQ, BTEC national diploma and first diploma, GCE A and AS level, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), and other practitioner and user qualifications. Of the 972 learners, 665 are adults, 491 are men, 672 study part-time, 295 are from minority ethnic groups, one learner is aged 14 to 16 and one is an advanced apprentice.

## Strengths

- high success rates in 2006/07
- good teaching and learning
- thorough monitoring of outreach learners' progress
- effective additional learning support
- good resources
- good leadership and management.

## Areas for improvement

- low success rates for the diploma for IT users and the diploma for IT practitioners in 2006/07
- insufficiently rigorous marking.

## Achievement and standards

52. Achievement and standards are good. Overall, most success rates were high in 2006/07 for all ages and levels, particularly adults. The improvements in success rates between 2004/05 and 2006/07 were particularly marked. However, as the self-assessment report records, the success rates for the diploma for IT users and the diploma for IT practitioners in 2006/07, were low.
53. The standard of learners' work is good. They make good progress compared to their prior levels of attainment. They develop a range of good workplace and ICT skills. Learners new to computing make substantial improvements in their general ICT user skills and confidence. Learners work very well together in groups. Punctuality and attendance are good.

## Quality of provision

54. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are stimulating, contain a good range of teaching and learning activities and take account of the full range of learners' needs. Teachers make good use of ILT questioning and discussion to help learners develop and reinforce their ICT skills.

55. The monitoring of the progress of learners on outreach programmes is good. Teachers and learners are fully involved in the appraisal and recording of progress. Monitoring of the progress of learners on full-time courses and assessment for all learners is satisfactory. The marking of learners' work is insufficiently rigorous. Teachers do not always correct errors. Some answers are marked incorrectly. Teachers do not always provide learners with sufficient detail to help them understand their errors.
56. The range of ICT provision is satisfactory and meets the needs of learners, employers and local communities. The range allows learners to build on prior attainment and progress to other courses.
57. Support and guidance are good. Additional learning support is effective. Initial assessment is rigorous. A wide range of additional learning support is available and used well both in lessons and by attending specialist support sessions. In lessons, teachers provide swift and effective support to learners.

#### Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are good. Managers have an effective focus on raising standards. Managers monitor closely the performance of the ICT subject area. They make good use of targets to improve provision. Targets are challenging and achievable. Communications are good. The self-assessment report is mostly accurate. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Resources are of a high standard. Accommodation at the Joseph Wright Centre is outstanding and of a high standard at community venues. All ICT classrooms are fitted with good equipment. Staff are well qualified and experienced.

## Preparation for life and work

Outstanding: Grade 1

## Context

59. The college provides key skills, literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses and courses for learners with learning disabilities and/or difficulties, from entry level to level 2. Of the 1,465 learners, 743 are aged 16 to 18, 825 are women, 788 study part-time and 670 are from minority ethnic groups.

## Strengths

- excellent success rates for accredited courses in 2006/07
- outstanding progression for full-time ESOL learners aged 16 to 18
- very good teaching and learning
- very extensive range of provision that meets the needs of learners, communities and employers
- outstanding support for learners
- very good leadership and management.

## Areas for improvement

- insufficient use of work placements to support transition to employment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Achievement and standards

60. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Most success rates for accredited courses were high or very high in 2006/07, particularly for adults. Between 2004/05 and 2006/07, the long course success rate increased very substantially.
61. Learners develop very high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Learners improve their literacy, numeracy and language learners' skills significantly. ESOL learners have high levels of self-confidence. The progression of full-time ESOL learners aged 16 to 18 is outstanding. Almost all learners move to meaningful employment or further education. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop very strong independent living skills, food hygiene and housekeeping. Learners work well together to improve their own learning. Attendance is good.

## Quality of provision

62. Quality of provision and teaching and learning are outstanding. Very imaginative lessons inspire learners. Teachers use a wide range of very good teaching and learning methods that meets the different needs of learners very effectively. Teachers make very good use of assessment to plan individual learning. Many lessons are innovative. In literacy, teachers used the tasting of different types of chocolate to develop learners' understanding of adjectives. Teachers use community fundraising to improve ESOL learners' cultural skills.

Monitoring of learners' progress through individual learning plans for non-accredited courses is very effective. The use of work placements to support learners with learning difficulties into employment is insufficient; an area for improvement recorded in the self-assessment report.

63. The very extensive range of provision meets the needs of learners, communities and employers particularly effectively. The college provides a particularly good range of courses in over 20 locations easily accessible to learners. Many locations offer other services including crèche facilities, health, housing and debt advice. The full-time ESOL programme for learners aged 16 to 18 meets the needs of migrants or asylum seekers who have arrived recently in the United Kingdom, particularly well.
64. Support is outstanding. Learners have access to very good support services. Support staff work very well with the teachers to provide excellent support. Tutorials are highly effective, especially for those with learning difficulties. However, although careers guidance is good, employment advice for adult ESOL learners does not take sufficient account of qualifications and experience of learners in areas where there are skill shortages.

#### Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers are very successful at implementing quality improvement arrangements and raising standards. Managers and staff use team meetings very well to share good practice. Staff development is good, particularly for subject specialist qualifications and courses. Self-assessment is rigorous. The promotion of equality of opportunity is strong. The strategy for outreach provision is particularly effective in meeting the needs of under-represented groups.

Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

## Context

66. Full-time courses are available from levels 1 to 3 and part-time and short courses up to level 5. Provision includes administration, customer services, business, law and management. Learners can work towards NVQ, BTEC foundation, first and national diplomas, GCE A and AS level, and other management and professional awards. Of the 887 learners, 694 are adults, 625 are women, 743 study part-time, 163 are from minority ethnic groups and 11 are work-based learners.

## Strengths

- high success rates on most courses 2006/07
- good teaching and learning on vocational business courses
- good provision for adults in the workplace through close partnerships with employers
- rigorous actions taken to rectify weaknesses and improve success rates.

## Areas for improvement

- declining success rates for GCE A-level business studies in 2006/07
- dull teaching on GCE A and AS level business studies courses.

## Achievement and standards

67. Achievement and standards are good. Most success rates in 2006/07 were high, particularly for adults; a strength recorded in the self-assessment report. Overall, success rates between 2004/05 and 2006/07 increased markedly. However, the success rates for GCE A-level business studies declined significantly between 2005/06 and 2006/07.
68. The standard of learners' work is good. Business vocational learners are confident in using a wide range of work place skills. They work productively in groups and engage in lively discussions. NVQ and management learners' written work is of a high standard. Learners have good ICT skills and use them well to produce work of a professional standard. Most learners make good progress during their studies. Attendance is good.

## Quality of provision

69. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Lively and purposeful lessons promote learning well. Teachers take effective account of individual learning requirements. Teachers' expectations of learners are high, and learners willingly respond to meet this challenge. On GCE AS and A-level business studies courses, teaching is often tedious. Teachers do not challenge learners to think widely or undertake tasks requiring a range of skills to develop understanding of the subject. Teachers do not make good use of learners' time.

Most assessment is good. Teachers give helpful feedback to learners on how to improve their work. Some feedback on GCE A and AS level learners' work is poor.

70. A wide range of flexible courses meets the needs of employers and learners well, particularly the provision the college provides in the workplace. Links between customer services teachers and industry are strong. In 2006/07, over 600 learners in local companies undertook customer services training. Learners appreciate the good enrichment programme and enjoy planning events for charities.
71. Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. Individual learning plans have realistic targets for learners. Tutors regularly review learners' progress regularly. Learners are good at taking responsibility for drawing up action points for improvement.

### Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are good. The self-assessment process accurately identified success rates on vocational courses were poor. Managers and staff took particularly effective action to improve provision and success rates significantly. Quality improvement arrangements are good. Staff use data effectively. Communications are good. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Most resources for teaching and learning are good.

## Learners' achievement

Table 1

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04/05	2546	65	65	0	3125	57	62	-5
	05/06	1541	73	69	4	2683	66	65	1
	06/07 **	1880	76	*	*	2101	78	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	81	63	68	-5	3	67	64	3
	05/06	16	69	72	-3	1	0	...	...
	06/07 **	0	0	*	*	0	0	*	*
NVQs	04/05	273	62	68	-6	879	55	66	-11
	05/06	244	69	72	-3	1095	73	74	-1
	06/07 **	139	68	*	*	755	77	*	*
Other	04/05	1121	55	60	-5	2493	54	59	-5
	05/06	2192	65	64	1	2243	57	62	-5
	06/07 **	1741	77	*	*	1346	78	*	*

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	1762	52	61	-9	4342	53	60	-7
	05/06	1507	65	66	-1	3923	67	66	1
	06/07 **	1687	73	*	*	4500	77	*	*
GCSEs	04/05	348	69	64	5	250	56	63	-7
	05/06	404	70	68	2	149	69	67	2
	06/07 **	359	76	*	*	113	81	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	50	60	67	-7	21	62	75	-13
	05/06	52	71	69	2	16	75	68	7
	06/07 **	46	78	*	*	19	89	*	*
NVQs	04/05	273	38	57	-19	2368	55	60	-5
	05/06	224	58	65	-7	2085	69	67	2
	06/07 **	332	66	*	*	2912	77	*	*
Other	04/05	1091	49	61	-12	1703	49	59	-10
	05/06	827	65	66	-1	1673	64	65	-1
	06/07 **	950	74	*	*	1456	78	*	*



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	2061	64	68	-4	2199	56	58	-2
	05/06	2727	69	70	-1	2091	67	63	4
	06/07 **	2911	78	*	*	1635	78	*	*
A/A2 Levels	04/05	412	84	86	-2	70	69	69	0
	05/06	400	92	87	5	112	84	72	12
	06/07 **	716	89	*	*	75	80	*	*
AS Levels	04/05	851	66	66	0	211	51	52	-1
	05/06	1524	64	67	-3	149	56	55	1
	06/07 **	1355	74	*	*	104	68	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	46	54	61	-7	17	53	54	-1
	05/06	31	45	66	-21	6	17	57	-40
	06/07 **	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQs	04/05	45	42	63	-21	977	61	56	5
	05/06	25	40	71	-31	971	67	63	4
	06/07 **	38	68	*	*	843	81	*	*
Other	04/05	707	53	60	-7	924	52	59	-7
	05/06	747	67	65	2	853	66	64	2
	06/07 **	802	75	*	*	613	75	*	*

\* Not available

\*\* College data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

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	148	50%	48%	36%	34%
		timely	126	17%	31%	13%	22%
	05/06	overall	147	61%	53%	54%	44%
		timely	115	18%	34%	15%	28%
	06/07	overall	135	64%	64%	61%	56%
		timely	137	35%	41%	31%	35%
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	272	56%	51%	42%	39%
		timely	244	18%	31%	17%	22%
	05/06	overall	311	67%	58%	61%	52%
		timely	272	35%	38%	31%	34%
	06/07	overall	352	64%	65%	65%	60%
		timely	360	48%	45%	45%	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'

Table 5

Success rates on work-based learning 'Train to Gain' programmes managed by the provider/college 2006 to 2007

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	College NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2006/07	overall	191	73%
		timely	191	73%

\*\*\* Adult training (long courses) includes 'Train to Gain' provision, but not 'Skills for Life'