

# Doncaster College

## Inspection Report 11-15 June 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, care and public services; engineering; construction; information and communication technology (ICT); visual, performing arts and media; and literacy, numeracy and key skills.

## Description of the provider

1. Doncaster College is a large general further education (FE) college in the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster. Doncaster is the largest metropolitan borough, by geographical area, in the country. With the demise of traditional industries, the borough has experienced considerable social and economic decline. Unemployment is high in some of the borough's wards. In spite of significant recent inward investment, Doncaster is still one of the most deprived local authorities in England, being ranked the 36th most deprived out of a total of 354. In 2006, the proportion of pupils from the borough gaining five or more GCSE subjects at A\*-C was 52% in comparison to the national average of 59%.
2. The main campus of the college is the new £65m waterfront development in the centre of Doncaster. 'The Hub', which opened in September 2006, provides high quality facilities for staff and learners. The University Centre, Doncaster is the college's second campus. It is set in countryside at High Melton, six miles west of Doncaster.
3. The college is the major provider of post-compulsory education for the 290,000 residents of Doncaster and is a regional and national centre for a number of specialist courses. It offers programmes from foundation to postgraduate degree level. Further education courses are provided in all of the 15 sector subject areas. In 2005/06, there were 23,490 FE learners, 440 work-based learners and 796 full-time equivalent higher education students. Around 70% of learners live in Doncaster. Some 7% were from minority ethnic groups which is higher than the local average of 3.5%.
4. The college has a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in management, leads a partnership CoVE in early years and playwork, and is a partner in another five. Learndirect provision is offered at the Stainforth FE centre and 'The Hub'. Through its links with local schools, around 200 pupils aged 14-16 study vocational courses at the college. As part of its strategies to widen participation, the college delivers offender learning and skills services (OLASS) for the South Yorkshire Region. The college's mission statement is: "Meeting learner needs and aspiring to excellence".

## Summary of grades awarded

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

### Sector subject areas

Health, care and public services	Good: grade 2
Engineering	Inadequate: grade 4
Construction	Satisfactory: grade 3
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: grade 3
Visual, performing arts and media	Satisfactory: grade 3
Literacy, numeracy and key skills	Satisfactory: grade 3

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Inadequate: grade 4

*Contributory grades:*

*Learners aged 14-16*

*Satisfactory: grade 3*

*Work-based learning*

*Satisfactory: grade 3*

5. The effectiveness of provision in Doncaster College is inadequate. Achievement and standards are inadequate. Success rates on long courses have not improved sufficiently and are low compared to the latest national averages. In 2005/2006, the rates for learners aged 16-18 were low at levels 1 and 3, and satisfactory at level 2. For adults, the rates were low at levels 1 and 2, and satisfactory at level 3. Success rates are low on GCSE at grades A\*-C, GCE AS and A level courses and key skills. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory, but not improving.
6. Work-based learning success rates are satisfactory and improving. However, rates vary considerably between curriculum areas. Arrangements to co-ordinate the provision and share best practice are not effective. Actions plans to improve the quality of provision are not sufficiently detailed.
7. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Over the last year, the college has invested heavily in improving the quality of teaching and learning and has been successful in raising standards in most curriculum areas. However, too few teachers make effective use of the college's excellent facilities for information and learning technology (ILT). Assessment practice is satisfactory.
8. Learndirect provision is inadequate, despite a good range of additional learning resources. Completion and achievement rates are mostly below the regional and national averages. The pace of progress of many learners is slow and too many withdraw from their courses. Target setting to aid learners' progress is poor. The leadership and management of the provision are inadequate. Arrangements for quality assurance are not robust.
9. The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. Well developed partnerships are used effectively to widen participation in learning. The college's curriculum is broadly matched to the needs of the area. However, opportunities for personal development and additional

courses to improve full-time learners' employment chances are underdeveloped. Links with local schools provide a satisfactory range of vocational courses for 14-16 year olds which promote post-16 participation. Internal progression is satisfactory. The proportion of level 3 learners that progress to higher education is low. College wide enrichment activities are underdeveloped.

10. Support and guidance for learners are unsatisfactory. Learners benefit from a comprehensive range of personal support and welfare services, including help on financial matters, counselling services and a nursery. The needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met well; however, arrangements to provide literacy and numeracy support are not fully effective. The uptake of additional support is low. The quality of tutorial provision is inconsistent. The progress of individual students is reviewed regularly, but the use of individual learning plans to set targets for learners and to monitor their progress, is variable. Targets set are not sufficiently clear, specific or challenging.
11. Leadership and management are inadequate. Governance is inadequate. Governors have failed to discharge several of their key duties effectively. They have not set a clear strategic direction and their monitoring of the performance of the college is weak. Progress has been hindered by a lack of stability in the senior leadership of the college. Success rates have not improved sufficiently. The current financial position is weak. Curriculum management is mostly satisfactory. Arrangements to promote equality and diversity are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Inadequate: grade 4

12. The college's capacity to improve is inadequate. Leadership and management are inadequate. Governors have not handled the appointment and removal of senior post holders appropriately and they have failed to set a clear strategic direction for the college. The college has had four principals in the last two years. The acting principal has been temporary for around a year and plans to appoint a substantive post holder are only in the early stages. The current senior management team have maintained a degree of stability over the last year. Some progress has been made in strengthening quality assurance arrangements and establishing a more robust process for the observation of teaching and learning. Arrangements for self-assessment are insufficiently rigorous. The college's current financial position is weak.

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

13. The college has made inadequate progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection and some of the previously identified strengths have not been maintained. Senior and other managers have maintained the focus on partnership working to widen participation. Achievement of apprenticeship frameworks has improved. However, success rates on long courses have not improved sufficiently, especially at level 3. One of the sector subject areas inspected and the Learndirect provision were judged to be inadequate by inspectors. The proportion of learners using additional learning support is low. The quality of tutorial provision is still inconsistent. Recent actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning are beginning to have an impact, but too much teaching and learning is only satisfactory. Educational and social inclusion and the promotion of equality of opportunity, which were graded good at the last inspection, are now satisfactory.

#### Key strengths

- high quality accommodation
- good quality provision in health, care and public services
- strong partnerships to widen participation
- high quality resources for information and learning technology
- CoVE developments which enhance learning opportunities.

#### Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- inadequate governance
- low success rates, particularly for learners aged 16-18
- the rigour of self-assessment and quality improvement processes
- inadequate provision in engineering, GCE A levels and learndirect
- setting and monitoring of individual targets for learners
- the low take-up of additional learning support
- the consistency of group tutorials
- the co-ordination of work-based learning.



## Main findings

Achievement and standards

Inadequate: grade 4

*Contributory grades:*

*Learners aged 14-16*

*Satisfactory: grade 3*

*Work-based learning*

*Satisfactory: grade 3*

14. Achievement and standards are inadequate, which does not agree with the college's own self-assessment. Success rates on long courses have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection and are low compared to the latest national averages. On work-based programmes, overall success rates are satisfactory and improving. However, the rates vary significantly between sector subject areas. The rates are high in accountancy and in business, professional and management, but are very low in hairdressing. Short course success rates are good. Completion and achievement rates are low on learndirect provision. Key skills success rates have improved but remain low. Standards for learners aged 14-16 are satisfactory.
15. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 at level 1, have improved steadily over the last three years, but are below the latest national average. At level 2, the rate has improved over the last three years and is satisfactory. However, at level 3, the success rate has been low for the last three years, is not improving and is significantly below the national average. For adults, success rates have not improved sufficiently and are low. At levels 1 and 2, the rates are below the latest national averages. At level 3, the rate is around the national average.
16. Success rates are low on GCE AS and A level courses and on GCSE at grades A\*-C. On GCSE courses, the rate has not improved sufficiently and is below the national average. On GCE AS and A level courses, success rates have been declining for the last three years and are significantly below the national averages.
17. Pass rates are satisfactory. For learners aged 16-18 they have improved at levels 1 and 2, to around the latest national averages. However, at level 3, the rate has been declining and low for the last three years. Adult pass rates have improved: at level 1 the rate is good; at levels 2 and 3 they are satisfactory.
18. Retention rates are low. For learners aged 16-18, rates have improved over the last three years. At level 2, the rate is around the latest national

average and is satisfactory. However, at levels 1 and 3 the rates are low. For adult learners, retention has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. The rates at levels 1 and 2 declined in 2006 and were low. At level 3, the rate is around the latest national average and is satisfactory. During 2006/07, the college has prioritised the need to improve retention and has been successful on courses for adults, particularly at levels 1 and 2. However, actions taken have not had sufficient impact on courses for learners aged 16-18.

19. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory. Learners' attendance at lessons is satisfactory, but has not improved since last year; levels vary significantly between curriculum areas. Attendance at lessons, observed by inspectors, was high in health, care and public services and literacy and numeracy. However, levels were low in engineering and visual, performing arts and media. Attendance at tutorials is low.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

*Contributory grade:*

*Learndirect*

*Inadequate: grade 4*

20. The quality of the provision is satisfactory, which agrees with the college's self-assessment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are inadequate on engineering and learndirect provision. Over the last year, the college has invested heavily in reducing the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and learning and has been successful in most areas of the curriculum. The number of observations carried out by the college has increased significantly and intensive support is provided to teachers when lessons are judged to be unsatisfactory. Follow-up observations generally show improvement. The better lessons are well planned, with clear objectives and a good range of activities to ensure all learners make progress. However, too many lessons fail to engage and challenge all learners. Few teachers make effective use of the college's excellent information and learning technology facilities. Teaching on work-based training is satisfactory and workplace learning is good. Assessment practice is satisfactory overall. However, written feedback on learners' work does not always indicate what they need to do to improve. Appropriate arrangements for internal verification are in place.
21. The college offers a satisfactory range of provision and has developed its curriculum to meet the needs of the local area. A high proportion of learners are from areas of widening participation and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is above the local average. In most curriculum areas,

learners can progress from entry level to higher education. The rates of progression are satisfactory for learners aged 16-18, but are low for adults. The proportion of level 3 learners that progress to higher education is low. The college maintains a good focus on widening participation initiatives. The proportion of learners enrolling on entry and level 1 courses, and on provision designed to reduce the number of young people not in education or training, has increased. The college has good partnerships with a wide range of organisations, including local strategic groups, employers, schools and the wider community.

22. Learners' access to additional qualifications to improve their employment and progression opportunities varies across subject areas. The range of extra-curricular activities, including external speakers, visits and competitions, is satisfactory. Learners are supported in organising social activities and fund raising events. The college has recognised there are insufficient opportunities for lunchtime clubs and participation in sport, and have established student focus groups to listen to learners' concerns, and plans are in place to improve them in September. Many, but not all, full-time learners benefit from work experience. Good links with community groups provide learners with opportunities to contribute to the local area, for example, around 50 learners are millennium volunteers.
23. The college has a CoVE in management and is a partner in another six that provide direct links to employers and the relevant industries for learners. There are some good examples of work with employers and the college is generally responsive to their needs. The college is a key partner in the provision of training courses for staff at the new local airport. A satisfactory range of vocational provision is provided for around 200 pupils aged 14-16 from local schools and a high proportion progress to further courses at the college.
24. Guidance and support are unsatisfactory. Support for work-based learners and those on learndirect provision is satisfactory. Most full-time learners complete a diagnostic assessment at induction and are offered appropriate literacy and/or numeracy support. Learners who accept the support are positive about their experience and how it has helped them in their studies. However, the overall uptake of additional support is low and varies significantly across subject areas. Strategies to increase the number of learners receiving literacy and numeracy support are not robust. The college has not yet established systems to monitor the impact of additional support.
25. Marketing information provides learners with sound advice before they join the college. Learners benefit from a comprehensive range of personal support and welfare services, including help on financial matters,



to some other senior post holders upon their departure, represent an inappropriate use of public funds. Very recent changes in clerking arrangements have begun to improve the working practices of the governing body.

29. The college's financial position is weak. This has resulted from higher than planned expenditure, on the new accommodation, on costs associated with the removal of a senior post holder and the payments made to other senior post holders. In addition, the college has been slow to review its curriculum in response to changing local and national priorities. It has increased successfully the number of 16-18 year old learners enrolling at the college, but levels of funding for adult provision have reduced significantly. The college will not meet its funding target for 2006/07. Satisfactory plans are in place to bring the college position back to an operating surplus by 2008/09.
30. Arrangements for self-assessment and quality assurance have been strengthened recently. High priority has been placed on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Access to accurate management information has improved. Although the impact of these initiatives has yet to be fully realised, there have been some improvements in standards of teaching. The self-assessment report is insufficiently rigorous. It does not reflect accurately the performance of the college. Strengths are often overstated and areas for improvement underestimated. Where weaknesses are identified, they are not always addressed clearly in quality improvement plans. Managers do not make sufficient use of management information to monitor and evaluate the impact of actions to raise standards and to inform decision making processes.
31. Curriculum management is mostly satisfactory. Work-based learning has improved but further action is needed to coordinate the provision and ensure consistency in the quality across subject areas. Leadership and management of learndirect provision are inadequate.
32. 'The Hub', the main further education campus located in the town centre, provides high quality, spacious accommodation for learners. The very latest e-learning technology offers exciting opportunities for many more students to access learning, wherever they live. Staffing is adequate. Recent restructuring has resulted in a fall in the number of qualified teachers.
33. Actions taken to promote equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Adequate procedures for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are in place. The college is compliant with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002. The monitoring and promotion of health and safety is not consistent.

34. In the context of the slow progress made since the last inspection, inadequate achievement and standards, the weak financial position, the inappropriate use of public funds by governors and the inadequate support and guidance, the college provides poor value for money.

## Sector subject area

Health, care and public services

Good: grade 2

## Context

35. The college offers full-time courses in health and social care and childcare at levels 1, 2 and 3. Public service courses are offered at levels 2 and 3. There are 482 full and 731 part-time learners on these courses. Most are female and aged 16-18. There are close to 1,600 employed learners enrolled on NVQ qualifications in health, social care, and cleaning and support services. Around 70 learners are enrolled on part-time counselling courses.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates at levels 2 and 3
- good teaching and learning
- good progression to higher level courses and employment
- CoVE developments which enhance learning opportunities.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low retention on a minority of courses
- insufficiently rigorous self-assessment.

## Achievement and standards

36. Learners' achievements are good. Success rates on long courses at levels 2 and 3 were significantly above the national averages in 2005/06. Success rates on NVQs in cleaning and support services are significantly above the national average. Retention and pass rates on public service courses are above the national average. Retention was low on a minority of courses in 2005/06.

37. The standard of learners' work is good. They develop a detailed understanding of vocational language and use it confidently. On level 3 courses, learners acquire strong evaluative and analytical skills. Levels of learners' attendance at lessons and their attitudes to work are very good.

## Quality of provision

38. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' planning ensures that lessons meet the needs of learners well. The outcomes from initial assessment, and

support in lessons from additional learning support assistants, are used productively to plan learning activities which meet individual learners' needs. Teachers make effective use of stimulating and vibrant displays to support learning. Teachers of childcare courses use individual learning plans well to develop levels of vocational understanding. However, arrangements to set learners targets and monitor their progress are not fully developed across the provision. Learning resources are very good. Most learners participate enthusiastically in lessons and enjoy their time at college.

39. Outstanding CoVE facilities and learning resources enhance the quality and range of provision available. For example, developments in the use of ILT provide employed learners in health and social care and their employers with very good access to assessment in the workplace.
40. A good range of courses is offered which allows learners to progress from levels 1 to 4. Good collaboration with external partners and extensive links with local NHS trusts and the emergency services are used effectively to develop provision which meets the needs of employers. A high number of learners continue onto higher level courses and progress into vocationally relevant employment.
41. Support for learners is good. Initial advice and guidance, and tutorial and pastoral support for learners are comprehensive and help them to succeed. Support for learners studying in the community is flexible and responsive to their needs.

#### Leadership and management

42. Leadership and management are good. Good communications promote effective team working which is focused on improving the quality of provision. Arrangements for sharing good practice are effective in improving teaching and learning. However, the self-assessment process lacks rigour. The report does not accurately identify all of the key strengths and areas for improvement. Staff are not involved sufficiently in agreeing targets and actions for improvement. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.



## Engineering

Inadequate: grade 4

### Context

43. The college offers full-time motor vehicle courses at levels 1 and 2, and part-time courses at levels 2 and 3. Full-time provision in engineering is offered at levels 1, 2 and 3, with progression opportunities to higher education. There are 111 full-time and 207 part-time learners. The majority of full-time learners are aged 16-18; most part-time learners are adults. There are 149 learners enrolled on work-based apprenticeships. Vocational courses are provided for 27 pupils aged 14-16 from local schools. There are 18 learners aged 14-16 undertaking motor vehicle training and 9 are enrolled on the GCSE in engineering. Most learners are male.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on engineering apprentice programmes
- good theory teaching on engineering courses
- enhanced engineering opportunities through CoVE developments
- good links with the engineering industry.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low success rates on motor vehicle courses
- uninspiring teaching on motor vehicle courses
- weak target setting for advanced apprentices
- poor management of key skills for advanced apprentices
- insufficient opportunities for work experience on full-time motor vehicle courses
- insufficient rigour in the application of health and safety in the workshops
- unsatisfactory curriculum management.

### Achievement and standards

44. Overall, achievement and standards are inadequate. Whilst success rates on engineering apprenticeships are good; motor vehicle success rates are low. The success rate for motor vehicle work-based apprentices declined in 2005/06 and is low. The success rate on the diploma in motor vehicle studies is well below the national average. A high proportion of engineering apprentices progress to advanced apprenticeships. Progression to engineering higher education courses in college is good. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners' attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was low.

## Quality of provision

45. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers use well planned activities to develop learners' problem solving skills. The teaching of theory on engineering courses is good. Teaching in motor vehicle lessons is uninspiring. In these lessons, teachers do not plan effectively to meet the individual needs of all learners. There are too few activities to challenge them throughout the lesson and they do not make sufficient progress. Assessment feedback does not always provide sufficient information to help learners identify what they need to do to improve. Advanced apprentices' key skills are introduced too late in their course, which frequently prevents them from completing their programme on time. Overall, the college offers a satisfactory range of provision which meets the needs of most learners and employers. However, on motor vehicle programmes, the full-time provision does not effectively prepare learners for employment. There is no full-time level 3 course and there are insufficient opportunities for work experience and visits to the industry.
46. Guidance and support for learners are inadequate. Target setting for advanced apprentices is weak. Too few learners take up additional learning support, having been identified as needing it through initial testing of literacy and numeracy.

## Leadership and management

47. Curriculum management is unsatisfactory. Arrangements for quality assurance are weak. Too few observations of teaching and learning have been carried out to inform action plans to improve quality. The use of management information to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision is underdeveloped. Communications across the provision are poor. For example, team meetings are not used effectively to identify and share good practice.
48. Arrangements for health and safety in the workshops lack rigour. Risk assessments are not carried out routinely. The absence of demarcation lines around hazardous areas and moving machinery inhibits the promotion of safe working practice and fails to prepare learners for employment.
49. Workshop accommodation is spacious and light; classrooms are a good size. The ineffective window shading prevents the use of interactive learning technology in some rooms. Teachers are appropriately qualified. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Construction

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

50. The college offers craft, technician and professional courses from foundation level to higher education. Specialist courses are available in plastering, road building and asphalt technology. There are 327 learners aged 16-18 and 359 adult learners studying on these courses. Around 40% of these are full-time students. There are 125 work-based learners: 109 are on the apprenticeship programme and 16 on advanced apprenticeships. Vocational courses are provided for around 110 learners aged 14–16 from local schools.

*Strengths*

- high pass rates
- good range of traditional and specialist courses.

*Areas for improvement*

- low retention on a minority of courses
- insufficient learning resources in workshops.

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. In 2005/06, the pass rates on most courses were well above the national averages. For example, the rate on the introductory certificate in construction is 100% and on the national certificate it is 90%. Retention is low on a minority of courses. On the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in decorative occupations, the rate has been declining for the last two years and is significantly below the national average.
52. Success rates on apprenticeship programmes improved markedly in 2005/06 and are in line with national averages. However, for the small number of advanced apprentices, the success rate in 2005/06 was very low.
53. The standard of learners' practical work is satisfactory. Learners develop a range of hand skills and produce practical work that meets industry standards. Learners' portfolios of evidence are variable in quality. The better portfolios contain detailed assessment plans and well written tasks which are cross-referenced to the qualification. The standard of learners' written work on technician courses is at least satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers use a good range of activities which meet individual learning needs and they use questioning effectively to check learners' understanding of the topic. In weaker lessons, teachers use generic lesson plans and the learning objectives for the lessons are not clear. There is too much emphasis on whole group teaching and insufficient use is made of ILT to enrich learning. The readily available interactive whiteboards are rarely used and the college has very few specialist computer software packages. Assessment and internal verification for college-based learners are satisfactory. For work-based learners, there are some poor assessment practices. Learners often work in situations where there are good assessment opportunities but the evidence is not collected and assessed until too late in the programme.
55. The range of provision is good and meets the needs and interests of learners who can progress within the college from level 1 to level 4. Learners and employers benefit from specialist courses that are offered on a part-time and distance learning basis. However, subject enrichment is limited. There are no planned industrial visits or work placements for full-time learners.
56. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Group tutorials for full-time learners cover topics such as healthy lifestyles, budgeting and personal finance. However, the arrangements, for setting targets for learners' achievements and monitoring their progress, are underdeveloped. Arrangements for monitoring learners' attendance at lessons are satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications have improved and are more focussed on raising standards. Previous arrangements for self-assessment have not been sufficiently focused on identifying areas for improvement in teaching and learning. Strategies have been developed recently to improve the quality of teaching and learning and learners' success rates. However, it is too early to measure their full impact on the quality of provision. There are insufficient permanent teachers and technicians to deliver the curriculum. However, the college has taken effective action to appoint new staff for the area. Poor quality hand tools and the lack of consumable resources in the workshops, hinder the progress of some learners.

Information and communication technology      Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

58. The college offers courses from foundation to undergraduate level. Full-time provision includes: foundation and intermediate GNVQs; e-media and GCE Applied A levels. Part-time courses for adults include: NVQs in using information technology (IT); Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) and the information technology qualification. A large proportion of the adult provision is taught on employers' premises. Courses are delivered to around 3,000 learners; 247 are full-time. Most learners are adults.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on GNVQ foundation and NVQ courses
- wide range of courses responsive to employers' needs
- very good ICT resources.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low retention on CLAIT courses
- insufficient use of challenging targets for improvement
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

### Achievement and standards

59. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 are above national averages on long courses at levels 1 and 2. However, success rates for the small number of learners at level 3 have been low for the last three years. Pass rates on GNVQ Foundation have been 100% for the last two years. Success rates for adults on NVQ courses are well above the national averages. Retention on CLAIT courses declined in 2005/06, to below the national average.

60. Learners' IT skills are well developed and the standard of their written and practical work is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that learners are challenged appropriately, take responsibility for their own learning and are focused on their work throughout the lesson. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not plan effectively to meet the needs of all learners. The pace of lessons is too slow and fails to interest all learners.

Most learners' work is marked thoroughly and returned promptly with comments that help them understand what they need to do to improve.

62. The college has invested heavily in high quality hardware and software, which is widely available for lessons and private study. However, the potential of ILT to support learning is not yet exploited to its fullest extent.
63. The range of courses is satisfactory. Full-time provision for learners aged 16-18 has been extended over the last two years. Strong links with employers have been used to develop flexible provision which meet their diverse needs.
64. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. All learners undergo initial assessment to identify their levels of literacy and numeracy. However, too few of those identified as needing additional learning support take it up. Many learners who do not take up additional support do not complete their courses.

#### Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Progress has been made in identifying and resolving areas for improvement from the last inspection. Course teams meet regularly to monitor learners' progress. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice across the provision. Self-assessment has identified many of the areas for improvement in the provision but targets for improvement are not always sufficiently challenging.
66. Teachers are well qualified and keep up-to-date with new technology through courses and industrial updating. Resources are very good but installation problems at the beginning of the academic year caused problems for staff and learners. Support provided to teachers is effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The college is a safe environment and learners are encouraged to adopt safe practices in their use of ICT.

Visual, performing arts and media

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

67. The college offers mainly full-time courses for learners aged 16-18 in creative, performing arts and media. Courses include first and national diplomas, GCSE, GCE AS and A level courses. An adult access course is also offered. Some 754 learners are enrolled on courses. The majority are enrolled on courses in creative arts.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on first diploma courses
- good teaching and learning in performing arts and media
- high quality learning environments.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low success rates on most part-time creative arts courses
- low key skills success rates
- insufficiently rigorous self-assessment.

### Achievement and standards

68. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Over the last three years, retention and pass rates on long courses for learners aged 16-18 have improved to around the national averages. Success rates on first diploma courses are high. The success rates on most part-time creative arts courses are low. Key skills success rates are low at all levels.

69. Learners' work is satisfactory. In dance, learners develop good levels of mature, performance skills. The drawing skills of learners in creative arts, together with their presentation techniques, are not always developed to an appropriate standard. Learners' attendance at lessons observed during the inspection, was low.

### Quality of provision

70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and are good in performing arts and media. The better lessons are well planned, interesting and have clear learning objectives. Teachers use a wide range of activities to motivate and challenge learners. In the less effective lessons, teaching is dull and uninspiring, and teachers talk too long without checking learners' understanding of the topic. Learners in performing arts and media are provided with assessment feedback on their work which helps them to

improve. However, in creative arts, assessment practice is inconsistent and some learners are unclear about how well they are doing and what skills they need to develop.

71. The college offers an extensive range of courses in creative and performing arts, and there are good opportunities for learners to progress from level 3 courses onto degree and postgraduate provision within the college. Opportunities for learners to work on joint projects with degree level students are successful in raising their aspirations. A good range of enrichment opportunities enhances learning, including: theatre workshops, summer schools, fashion shows, exhibitions of art work and educational field trips.
72. Support for learners is good. The tutorial programme is effective in identifying and providing good additional support for learners at risk of underachieving. Support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good.

#### Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed manager is beginning to address inconsistencies in the quality of provision between performing arts and media, and creative arts. Arrangements for self-assessment are not carried out with sufficient rigour. Some strengths in the self-assessment report are overstated and not all areas for improvement are addressed in action plans.
74. Accommodation and resources are excellent. Learners benefit from being able to work in an extensive range of spacious studios and well equipped workshops. Teachers and technicians are appropriately qualified. Targeted staff development activities, including mentoring, have been effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning.



## Literacy, numeracy and key skills

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

75. The college offers part-time literacy and numeracy classes, additional support for learners on vocational courses, GCSE mathematics and English and key skills. Many of the courses take place in the community or in the workplace; a high proportion are very short drop-in courses leading to accreditation through the national tests in literacy and numeracy. There are around 2,290 adult learners and 375 learners aged 16-18 enrolled on courses.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on level 2 adult literacy courses
- high success rates on adult numeracy courses
- good use of target setting to develop learners' skills.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low success rates on entry and level 1 adult literacy courses
- low key skills success rates.

### Achievement and standards

76. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The success rates on adult literacy qualifications at level 2 and numeracy qualifications compare well with national averages and are high. Success rates on GCSE English and mathematics at A\*-C are satisfactory. On entry and level 1 literacy courses, success rates are low. Key skills communication and application of number success rates are improving, but remain low.
77. Retention is poor and declining on a minority of courses, particularly on key skills. For example, on application of number, the rate is well below the national average. Retention rates on other courses have improved over the last three years.
78. The quality of learners' written work is satisfactory. Many adult learners develop new skills and the confidence to progress onto higher level courses.

## Quality of provision

79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most teachers support and encourage learners well. However, some lessons have insufficient variety and stimulus to fully engage all learners. Very good target setting for learners on short courses, and for those receiving additional support, is effective in helping learners improve their work. Teachers use information from initial and diagnostic assessments and from vocational tutors, to set learners clear and measurable targets for improvement. These include the correct use of the apostrophe, spelling of vocationally related vocabulary, and accurate proof-reading of written work. Learners' progress is monitored regularly against their targets, helping them to understand what they have learned and what they need to do to develop further.
80. A good range of provision is offered. The college has good links with a wide range of agencies and develops provision which is very responsive to community needs, especially for disadvantaged groups.
81. Good support, advice and guidance help learners to progress. For example, students whose literacy or numeracy levels are not high enough to benefit from very short courses are encouraged by their tutors to join other college provision. A college outreach worker attends the second day of short courses for offenders on probation, to provide information about further learning opportunities.

## Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Changes to the management of literacy and numeracy provision have been effective in promoting a more coherent college-wide approach. Communications are good. Arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning have raised standards. A cross-college group and the work of vocational co-ordinators, successfully promote improvements in the teaching of key skills. The self-assessment process involves all staff and is mostly accurate, but understates some areas for improvement.

## 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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	1,414	51	59	-8	4,362	61	59	2
	04/05	858	55	61	-6	4,003	57	61	-4
	05/06	798	61	*	*	2,406	59	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	109	49	63	-14	**	**	**	**
	04/05	61	69	64	5	**	**	**	**
	05/06	25	84	*	*	**	**	**	**
NVQs	03/04	121	84	61	23	966	89	66	23
	04/05	176	64	65	-1	771	85	71	14
	05/06	184	65	*	*	354	72	*	*
Other	03/04	1,184	48	59	-11	3,386	53	58	-5
	04/05	621	52	61	-9	3,232	51	61	-10
	05/06	589	59	*	*	2,052	57	*	*

\* National averages not available for comparison.

\*\* Denotes fewer than 15 enrolments.

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	1,546	53	56	-3	6,086	57	54	3
	04/05	1,330	57	60	-3	3,607	60	59	1
	05/06	1,345	61	*	*	3,383	59	*	*
GCSEs	03/04	219	55	64	-9	267	60	57	3
	04/05	209	57	65	-8	243	62	63	-1
	05/06	208	57	*	*	190	61	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	89	67	60	7	30	60	56	4
	04/05	83	65	66	-1	49	47	61	-14
	05/06	81	67	*	*	50	48	*	*
NVQs	03/04	314	57	51	6	1,883	65	54	11
	04/05	260	59	56	3	1,148	76	63	13
	05/06	350	61	*	*	872	69	*	*
Other	03/04	924	51	53	-2	3,906	52	53	-1
	04/05	778	55	58	-3	2,167	51	57	-6
	05/06	706	62	*	*	2,271	55	*	*

\* National averages not available for comparison.

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03/04	1,104	52	61	-9	2,142	58	53	5
	04/05	1,103	54	65	-11	1,972	57	57	0
	05/06	1,053	53	*	*	1,986	60		
A/A2 Levels	03/04	128	68	84	-16	69	71	69	2
	04/05	143	75	85	-10	69	74	73	1
	05/06	140	69	*	*	84	68		
AS Levels	03/04	357	52	60	-8	135	47	50	-3
	04/05	357	52	64	-12	154	48	53	-5
	05/06	401	43	*	*	88	49		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	108	55	50	5	**	**	**	**
	04/05	86	30	59	-29	**	**	**	**
	05/06	26	38	*	*	**	**	**	**
NVQs	03/04	32	41	51	-10	544	49	48	1
	04/05	40	70	53	17	584	58	54	4
	05/06	50	64	*	*	609	64	*	*
Other	03/04	479	49	51	-2	1,388	61	54	7
	04/05	477	52	56	-4	1,155	56	56	0
	05/06	436	58	*	*	1,192	59	*	*

\* National averages not available for comparison.

\*\* Denotes fewer than 15 enrolments.

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2005 to 2006.

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVO rate **	National rate **
2004/05	Apprenticeship	158	39%	38%	44%	50%
	Advanced	83	54%	34%	61%	48%
2005/06	Apprenticeship	216	51%	53%	59%	58%
	Advanced	81	57%	44%	68%	54%

- \*       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'

b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVO rate **	National rate **
2004/05	Apprenticeship	177	28%	22%	32%	29%
	Advanced	75	29%	21%	33%	31%
2005/06	Apprenticeship	217	38%	33%	44%	38%
	Advanced	83	53%	27%	59%	34%

- \*       The number of learners who planned to complete their learning programme in the given year
- \*\*      College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'