

Walford and North Shropshire College

Inspection Report 14 – 18 May 2007

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their 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: agriculture and horticulture; engineering and manufacturing technologies; leisure, travel and tourism; arts, media and publishing; and preparation for life and work.

Description of the provider

1. Walford and North Shropshire College was created on 1 January 2001 as a result of the merger of Walford College, primarily a specialist land-based college with its main campus near Baschurch, and the North Shropshire College, a tertiary college with its main campus in Oswestry.
2. The college has extended its provision by the opening of a number of centres within the county of Shropshire and its neighbours. The Shipley centre on the southeast Shropshire border with Staffordshire offers horticulture, crafts and information technology. The Aspire centre near Ludlow in south Shropshire offers mechanical, motor vehicle and agricultural engineering, information and communication technology (ICT) learndirect and other related work. A significant investment has taken place at the Walford campus with the opening of a new animal care and horticultural centre in April 2006.
3. The mission of the college is 'to aim to provide outstanding education and training opportunities in order to add value to the lives of all our learners, and to advance the economic and social wellbeing of the communities we serve'.
4. The majority of learners are from Shropshire with a small proportion from neighbouring counties and Wales.
5. In 2005/2006, there were 19,453 enrolments, of which 4,357 were 16-18 years of age and 14,544 aged 19 plus. This is a decline in numbers from 2004/2005. In the current academic year, there are 1,106 full-time learners and 4,870 part-time learners. Over 4,000 of the part-time learners are on non-accredited personal and community development learning (PCDL) courses. Full-time learners are predominantly 16-18 years of age and part-time learners aged 19 plus. There were around 250 learners aged between 14 and 16 years of age at the beginning of May 2007.
6. The college offers courses in all sector subjects. The highest number of learners are in preparation for life and work, information and communication technology (ICT), health, public services and care, leisure, travel and tourism and arts, media and publishing. Agriculture, horticulture and animal care also have significant numbers. The college provides programmes in general further education (GFE), work-based learning for apprentices, personal and community development learning (PCDL), learndirect, entry to employment, distance learning and 14-16 programmes.

7. Oswestry has high levels of deprivation. Thirty one percent of the local population is the most deprived in Shropshire and five of Oswestry's wards are the most deprived in England. In the north of the county, difficulties with transport are superimposed upon issues of rural deprivation and poor socio-economic context.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Agriculture and horticulture | Good: grade 2 |
| Engineering (motor vehicle) | Satisfactory: grade 3 |
| Leisure, travel and tourism | Satisfactory: grade 3 |
| Arts, media and publishing | Satisfactory: grade 3 |
| Preparation for life and work | Satisfactory: grade 3 |

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

8. This is a satisfactory college. Overall success rates have improved over the last three years. The overall success rate on long courses is satisfactory. Success rates for the 14-16 provision are high. The success rates of work-based learning have significantly improved since the last inspection. Standard of learners' work and attendance are satisfactory. Success rates for key skills is substantially below national averages.
9. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There has been improvement in the college's observation grades for teaching and learning during the last year. Weaker lessons are insufficiently challenging. The use of individual learning plans (ILPs) is improving and satisfactory. Resources to support learning are satisfactory. Very good use is made of the college farm and horticultural resources to develop practical skills. There is insufficient work experience for some courses.
10. The college has a broad curriculum with a good range of courses giving good opportunities for progression. The activities to widen participation, to provide social and economic inclusion and widen community provision are good.
11. Learners receive satisfactory guidance and support. Learners value the individual tutorial support but the content and quality of tutorials is variable. Strong and effective links with local schools provide good provision for 350 14-16 year olds annually. There is insufficient monitoring and setting of learners' progress against targets.
12. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and managers have led the college well through a period of uncertainty. Actions to improve long course success rates and poorly performing courses have been effective. Managers have been slow to implement key strategies for key skills and recognition of achievement on non-accredited courses. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. Overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

13. The college demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve. Success rates on long courses have improved and actions for improvement in the last year have been largely effective. However, progress to improve several key areas has been slow. Self-assessment is comprehensive and identifies

accurately where there are shortcomings in most areas. Actions to improve teaching and learning are insufficiently explicit. Quality assurance is broadly effective although several aspects are not yet robust. Significant changes in senior management are imminent. Changes have been well planned and the college has the support of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college has a loyal and stable staff.

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

14. Since the last inspection, the college has made satisfactory progress in addressing the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. The quality of land-based provision has improved and the management of work-based learning is now satisfactory and improving. The proportion of lessons judged inadequate is now very small; however, the proportion of teaching judged good or better has only recently improved to match that established at the last inspection. Retention rates have improved significantly. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory; however, success rates remain too low. Provision of additional learning support for literacy and numeracy is now satisfactory. Overall, the profile of the college's self-assessed grades for curriculum areas has shown little improvement over the last two years.

Key strengths

- improving success rates
- good collaboration with a number of stakeholders including schools
- broad curriculum
- 14-16 provision
- wide ranging community provision
- effective programme of improvement to physical resources.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- development of the Skills for Life strategy
- strategic planning to drive forward improvement
- the proportion of good or better teaching
- implementation of recognising and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) in community learning
- co-ordination and content of group tutorials and enrichment activities
- promotion of Every Child Matters (ECM) and equality of opportunity
- development of access to and use of data for curriculum managers.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

Adult and community learning

Satisfactory: grade 3

Learndirect

Inadequate: grade 4

Work-based learning

Satisfactory: grade 3

Learners aged 14-16

Good: grade 2

15. The college's overall success rate has improved over the last three years and is well above the national average. In 2003/04, the overall success rate was 74%. For 2004/05 and 2005/06, the overall success rate increased to 85%. The overall success rate on long courses is satisfactory and has improved to slightly above the national average. Long course success rates for 16-18 year olds improved in both 2004/05 and in 2005/06. There was a similar improvement in long course success rates for learners aged 19 and above in 2005/06. Short course success rates are particularly high at 95% and 93% respectively for 2004/05 and 2005/06. However, this area includes a high number of non-accredited PCDL funded courses. Success rates for the 14-16 provision are high for 2005/06; 81% of learners achieved their target qualification.
16. Data provided by the advanced level information system (ALIS) indicate that learners on the general certificate in education advanced subsidiary (GCE AS) psychology, sociology, history and geography, and general certificate in education advanced (GCE A) level history and geography, achieve better than expected based on their prior general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) attainment. However, learners on AS art and design, media, chemistry, computing and physical education do not perform as well as expected. On learndirect courses, success rates are substantially below national averages and the number of learners who withdraw from their programmes is higher than national benchmarks.
17. Pass rates for long level 1 and level 3 courses are satisfactory with rates at or around the national averages. During 2005/06, pass rates declined for level 1 learners aged 19 and over. Pass rates for level 3 courses also declined slightly for learners aged 16-18 and those over 19.
18. Retention rates have improved over the last three years to levels in line with national averages and are satisfactory overall. On some courses, for example, on level 1 long courses, retention rates declined to 77% in 2005/06.

19. Work-based learning success rates have improved significantly over the last three years to 56% for apprenticeships, which is just above national averages. Timely success rates are improving, but remain below national averages. Although success rates for key skills across the college have improved, they remain low for all levels and subjects and are substantially below national averages.
20. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory. In photography, learners demonstrate a good standard of work, and in preparation for life and work, learners develop self-confidence and skills to help them in employment. In agriculture, learners develop good rural craft skills that help them to contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of the community. Attendance is satisfactory on most courses and has averaged at just over 80% for the last three years.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

Adult and community learning

Satisfactory: grade 3

Work-based learning

Satisfactory: grade 3

Learners aged 14-16

Good: grade 2

21. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory and agrees with college's self-assessment. Practical skill development is generally good. Where teaching is good, it is well planned, uses a variety of teaching styles and engages learners. In weaker lessons, there is insufficient identification of aims objectives and it is difficult to identify what learning has taken place. Some lessons do not sufficiently challenge learners. There is good recognition of different learning styles and changes in teaching methods to meet the needs of all learners, particularly in literacy, numeracy and language classes. The use of individual learning plans (ILP) in teaching is improving and has reached a satisfactory standard. An example of good integration of the use of information technology takes place at the Aspire centre when teaching engineering to 14-16 year olds.
22. The college has made improvements to the teaching of key skills by instigating a pilot for a team teaching approach with key skills and vocational tutors. Learners are beginning to see the purpose of key skills. Some learners have progressed to key skills at level 3.

23. In some full-time vocational courses, there is insufficient work experience. Learners are unable to develop appropriate skills to enhance progression to employment.
24. Assignment briefs are moderated to ensure they meet the requirements of awarding bodies and are appropriate to the level of learning. Although the written brief for practical tasks is moderated there is no verification of practical tasks on academic courses.
25. Resources to support learning are satisfactory overall. Considerable investment has been made, resulting in new teaching facilities at Oswestry and a significant animal care unit at Walford campus. Further refurbishment of the Walford campus is planned. Partnerships have also provided good teaching facilities at two outreach centres in the county. There is very good use of the college farm and horticultural resources to develop practical skills.
26. In the large adult community learning provision, there is a lack of robustness in the non-accredited assessment criteria to identify progress and success. Learning plans are sporadic and few clearly identify progression.
27. The college's evaluation of teaching and learning through a system of lesson observations is satisfactory. The results of lesson observations have shown an improvement of good or better teaching in the last year. There is some over grading at the high levels. Although records are read, no moderation process takes place. In the majority of observations, it is difficult to identify learning activity and development of skills.
28. The quality of work-based training and assessment has improved since the last inspection. Placement offices are vocationally competent and progress is effectively monitored. Key skills achievement is earlier in the programme. Employers are increasingly effectively involved.
29. The quality of support and guidance is satisfactory. College staff are friendly and supportive. Individual tutorial support is valued by learners. Learners' progress reports are effectively recorded, twice yearly discussed with learners and sent to the parents/guardians of 16-18 year olds. However, the recording of target setting and action planning in both individual learning plans and progress reviews is generally inadequate. Flexible delivery of additional learning support (ALS) for literacy, numeracy and specific learning difficulties is integrated well into curriculum areas. However, ALS for learners' needs identified during course induction, is not always available at the start of their courses.

30. There are strong and effective links with the college's four partner schools and 50 other schools across the region. The college student services team have good links with external referral agencies to effectively support learners. The good quality of the service is further recognised by external accreditation. There is a good range of transport links to college campuses at key points in the college day. The college prospectus is good but key skills taken as part of full-time courses are not included in course content details. The college website is being developed.
31. Student services are based in insufficiently prominent campus positions to be fully promoted to learners. The team's expertise is insufficiently integrated with group tutorial work. Tutorial annual planning is minimal, with too much individual tutor autonomy. Good tutorial practice is insufficiently recognised and shared. There is inadequate promotion and use of the comprehensive mapping of ECM to tutorial newsletters and enrichment activities.
32. The college has good widening participation activities to promote social and economic inclusion and wide-reaching community provision. Good employer and partnership working benefits learners and includes work-based learning, bespoke programmes for employers and distance learning provision. Good working across college enterprise, community and employer engagement teams uses funding sources effectively.
33. Good use is made of curriculum related enrichment activities for full-time learners, including local, national and international visits. Taster courses are used well with learners interested in progressing onto higher level courses, school pupils and other prospective learners. The range of curriculum is good. The good range of courses gives good opportunities for progression onto higher level courses or to related qualifications. However, some gaps in the curriculum restrict progression.
34. In some curriculum areas, such as land-based and engineering, additional qualifications are offered to learners to support industry needs. The ECM themes are promoted well on care and courses for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although they are insufficiently embedded into tutorial, enrichment and curriculum activities. At the Walford campus, recreational and social activities predominately organised for residential learners are well managed. There are insufficient recreational and social areas at the Oswestry campus for learners and too little participation in college-wide enrichment activities.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: grade 3

35. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and senior managers, well supported by governors, have led the college well through a period of uncertainty. They give clear strategic direction towards achieving the college's mission that is well communicated to staff and stakeholders. Beneficial and productive collaboration takes place with a full range of stakeholders. Links with schools are particularly good. Recent actions for improvement have been largely successful. In planning, too little priority is given to explicit whole college actions to improve teaching and learning. Planning and monitoring of progress towards meeting strategic objectives lacks formality. The arrangements for target setting are unclear and not always helpful to ensuring improvement.
36. Managers have secured steady improvement in raising achievement overall. Actions taken to improve long course success rates and poorly performing courses have been very effective. Management of work-based learning is now satisfactory, having improved from a very low base. By contrast, there has been slow progress and only very recent improvement in the management of key skills. The implementation of measures to recognise and record progress and achievement for non-accredited programmes is behind schedule. The college has yet to develop a sound strategy to embed Skills for Life across the college. The use of management information is now satisfactory following a period of several years of significant difficulty. Confident use of this information is improving rapidly enabling better management of provision.
37. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. They are well established and used generally consistently. However, several aspects, including the rigour of course evaluation and the moderation arrangements for the lesson observation procedure, are not yet strong features. Self-assessment is broadly accurate, although parts are overly descriptive. The appraisal system is underdeveloped. Personal development targets are not set. Staff development is satisfactory.
38. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed and use their range of skills well. Much of their time has been very effectively spent on merger and senior management restructure. They are becoming increasingly confident in holding the college to account. Curriculum management is

satisfactory and middle managers are charged with a high degree of accountability.

39. The college manages its finances well. It has afforded several major capital projects, including a state-of-the-art animal centre, and provides a largely stimulating learning environment. However, the college does not have a robust system for establishing the cost of courses to ensure viability. It deploys its resources effectively and provides satisfactory value for money. The college environment is safe with a culture of friendliness and respect. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory; the college meets statutory legislation in terms of race legislation discrimination and child protection legislation. Sound policies are in place and safeguarding arrangements are robust. However, promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum is limited. The college has not yet published the results of its race equality monitoring.

Sector subject area

Agriculture and horticulture

Good: grade 2

Context

40. Courses are offered at the Walford, Shipley and Ludlow centres. Provision offered includes agriculture, horticulture and countryside management. There are 83 learners on full-time courses, 12 at level 1, 8 at level 2 and 63 at level 3. There are 80, 14-16 learners attending the college and 59 learning through work one day a week. There are 36 learners on apprenticeships studying mixed farming, livestock or amenity horticulture. There are 248 learners, mainly aged 19+, on part-time courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on national diploma courses
- high success rates for apprentices
- very good use of farm and horticultural practical resources
- good teaching and learning
- good support and guidance for learners across all programmes.

Areas for improvement

- underdeveloped course evaluation procedures
- insufficient action planning on lesson observations for continued improvement in teaching and learning
- limited opportunities for progression to level 3 for apprentices.

Achievement and standards

41. Learners' achievements are very good. Retention, achievement and success rates are improving on all national diploma programmes. Success rates on the national diploma in agriculture and horticulture in 2006 were outstanding. Pass rates on the first diploma in agriculture in 2006 were good. Success rates on short courses are satisfactory. Overall success rates for apprenticeships are improving. Improvement in retention for work-based learning has been by the use of taster courses and rigorous initial assessment. Assessed work across all courses is of an appropriate standard. Discrete key skills teaching and assessment has improved achievement of full framework qualifications for apprenticeships. Learners achieve good practical skills both at college and in the workplace.

Quality of provision

42. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are mainly good, have clear objectives, and tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Most lessons have a range of activities including individual and group work. Information learning technology (ILT) is used to good effect. Tutors effectively recognise learners' needs. Practical teaching is good. There is good implementation and awareness of safe working practices. Key skills are satisfactory. Assessment in the workplace for apprentices is satisfactory. A good range of vocational assignments are used to assess key skills on apprenticeship schemes.
43. The range of provision is good and activities meet the needs and interests of learners. Good use is made of horticultural and particularly farm resources in both theory and practical lessons. Learners clearly enjoy their courses, think tutors are helpful and supportive and have relevant industry knowledge. Employers speak highly of the college and those that have apprentices are visited regularly. Apprentices acquire good practical skills.
44. Assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress are good. Learners' progress is regularly reviewed and targets set and monitored. Guidance and support for learners are good. Apprentices receive regular written and verbal feedback, although target setting and action plans are not well recorded in progress reviews.

Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management are good. Course teams take action points to the curriculum quality meetings for inclusion in the self-assessment report, but annual course reviews and action plans are not completed. The self-assessment report was accurate. Improved management of work-based learning is raising achievement and success with good communication between staff across all vocational areas. Tutors are observed at least once per year but this does not always result in an action plan for development, and is not referred to in appraisals. There are limited progression opportunities for apprentices to level 3. The learning resource centre is a good learning environment; however, the range of specialist books is limited. The Shipley Centre is well resourced but much underused. Equality and diversity are satisfactory.

Engineering (motor vehicle)

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

46. The provision comprises craft courses in motor vehicle, manufacturing and welding. There are 65 learners aged 16-18, mostly studying full-time, and 58 adult learners, mostly studying part-time. In addition, there are 22 work-based learners and a further 8 learners on advanced apprenticeships. The college also offers motor vehicle and engineering courses to 14-16 year olds from schools.

Strengths

- high success rates for learners aged 14-16
- good practical skills development
- good employer links
- effective management action to secure improvement.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on City and Guilds motor vehicle 4101 level 2
- insufficient differentiation in theory lessons
- ineffective target setting for some learners.

Achievement and standards

47. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for most courses are satisfactory. The success rate for work-based learners on apprenticeships is above the national average. Most apprenticeship learners achieve their qualification late. Changes in structure to a motor vehicle level 2 course have improved success rates this year on the first stages of the course.
48. Learners on motor vehicle, welding and manufacturing courses produce a good standard of practical work. Learners develop a good range of skills in lessons in practical lessons. Apprenticeship programmes develop good workplace skills in lessons. For example, agricultural learners were observed competently adjusting and setting major machine components on a straw baler, and motor vehicle learners developing their work-based skills and knowledge of performance testing procedures for four-stroke petrol engines. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety.

Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and use a satisfactory range of teaching methods to consolidate and extend learning. Learners' individual needs are not well met in theory lessons, with some learners' progress not being fully developed, due to a limited range of teacher led learning activities. ILT is used effectively in some lessons, but it is not used well to develop independent learning. In better lessons, learners build on their practical experiences to extend their knowledge. In weaker lessons, teachers place too much emphasis on whole group teaching methods and do not allow learners to explore and develop the skills they need. Learning resources range from adequate to industrially advanced, modern and inspiring learning environments that incorporate new technologies very effectively.
50. The programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well. There is a suitable range of provision except for entry level 1, which includes fast track achievement routes for advanced full-time learners at levels 1 and 2.
51. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Tutorials are generally well planned and scheduled appropriately. However, targets set in learners' progress reviews do not identify clearly what learners need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent management actions to vary courses' delivery methods have been effective in raising standards. The learning environment is satisfactorily resourced. Self-assessment is generally accurate. Quality assurance of course reviews is satisfactory. Appropriate course targets are set for continuous improvement that is conveyed to teaching staff. Teaching staff are monitored for their performance and this is used in appraisals of staff; but this process is ineffective in supporting new staff and initiating improvements in teaching and learning. Promotion of equality is satisfactory.

Leisure, travel and tourism

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

53. The college offers a broad range of full- and part-time courses in sport and travel and tourism from levels 1 to 3 at Oswestry and Walford campuses. There are over 1,500 learners who take a variety of community-based courses, most of whom are adults. In full-time sport provision, there are 82 learners on the national diploma and 19 on the national certificate, most of whom are aged 16–18. There are also 18 learners on the first diploma in sport. In travel and tourism, there are 29 learners on the national diploma and 12 learners on the first diploma.

Strengths

- outstanding success rates on AS physical education, national diploma in travel and tourism and first diploma sport for 2005/06
- high success rates for additional courses for travel and tourism for the past three years
- highly effective strategy for improving high grade profile for national diploma in sport
- highly effective employer partnerships in sport.

Areas for improvement

- weak tutorial arrangements for sports learners at the Oswestry campus
- ineffective lesson planning with insufficient challenge and differentiation for learners
- inconsistently implemented quality assurance procedures.

Achievement and standards

54. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates have improved significantly from 2004/05 when they were poor. Many courses have high success rates; AS physical education, national diploma in travel and tourism and first diploma in sport have success rates significantly above national averages. Success rates on the national diploma in sport with significant numbers of learners are at the national rate and learners do not gain higher grades. In-year grade profiles for learners who complete in 2006/07 have improved. Learners on sports courses develop a range of vocational skills relevant to the workplace. The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory. Travel and tourism learners succeed well at relevant additional qualifications. Attendance is satisfactory. Behaviour in classes is good. The

large number of learners on personal and community development courses achieve satisfactorily. Much of this provision is leisure-based.

Quality of provision

55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In better lessons, planning is good and includes activities for differentiation and effective checks on learning. In many lessons, planning lacks rigour, has insufficient pace and challenge, and makes no reference to individual needs. Promotion of equality and diversity are not part of all curricula. There is some effective monitoring and action planning for individual learners but these are not consistently implemented across all areas.
56. The range of programmes to meet the needs and interests of learners is good. There are strong links with two local professional football clubs. Travel and tourism learners are not able to undertake work experience. Many full-time learners are able to go on educational visits overseas as part of their enrichment programme. Additional learning provision is broad and vocationally relevant for learners.
57. Support for learners is satisfactory. The use of targets to raise learners' performance is underdeveloped in many tutorials and reviews. There is inconsistent practice in the delivery of group tutorials and many schemes of work are too general.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have identified a number of strategies to improve performance and implemented them effectively in 2005/06. The self-assessment report was generally accurate. A number of new strategies were introduced during 2006/07 but it is too early to assess their impact. Some quality assurance processes are informal and their effectiveness in improving learner performance cannot be evidenced. Tutorial schemes of work are evaluated but not at both sites. Resources are deployed effectively. Equality is satisfactorily promoted.

Arts, media and publishing

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

59. The college offers a range of level 2 and level 3 full-time courses for 16-18 year old and 19+ learners. There is a significant programme of adult and community courses with over 2,473 learners enrolled on non-accredited courses across the county. There are 51 learners on level 2 courses that include City and Guilds, first diploma in art and design and GCSE photography. There are 128 students on level 3 courses that include a range of AS and A2 subjects in music, music technology, photography, media, graphics and art.

Strengths

- high success rates on City and Guilds embroidery courses
- high success rates on GCSE photography
- good retention on personal and community courses
- good use of the curriculum to promote social and educational inclusion.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on media courses
- low success rates on the first diploma art and design
- underdeveloped observational drawing skills.

Achievement and standards

60. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates at levels 2 and 3 have mostly been unsatisfactory and have declined since the last inspection. The success rate and pass rate on the AS and A2 media have declined in 2006; however, January examinations have seen a significant improvement in achievement, with students improving achievement by two grades. Pass rates on the GCSE photography and the national diploma in performing arts are 100%. Learners show a high standard of photographic work with a good balance between technical skills and creative development. The standard of drawing from observation at level 2 and at level 3 is underdeveloped, relying on secondary sources and working from books. Learners develop good skills of analysis and evaluation in music and media studies. Learners on the first diploma have limited knowledge of formal elements of art and design and lack communication skills both verbally and visually.

Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory across art and design courses with good teaching on music courses. In better lessons, learners are actively engaged in lively discussions, question and answer activities. Learners display good skills of analysis and evaluation when presenting an argument and are thoughtful and reflective. Some learners on level 2 courses lacked confidence and the standard of the three-dimensional work produced was poorly made and ill considered. Schemes of work do not focus sufficiently on learner activity.
62. The college is developing the A level programme. This has proved to be successful in terms of recruitment, with an increase in the number of learners following A level courses. Progression opportunities for level 2 learners in art and design are limited. The range of provision is limited, with no national diploma courses available at level 3. Only 13 students progressed to higher education courses from full-time vocational courses.
63. Tutorial and staff support are effective across the area with additional open workshops made available. Guidance and support are satisfactory. RARPA is not fully implemented on adult community provision. Monitoring of learner progress is good with curriculum teams effectively recording the learners' journey.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Team coordination is effective and quality team meetings have led to improvement. Good progress has been made to address weaknesses identified in retention. The internal verification process has improved and is now satisfactory. There remains a lack of confidence in the centrally held data with staff still relying on their own data. The self-assessment report accurately reflects the areas for improvement. Recognition of different learners' needs are not always promoted in lessons.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

65. The college offers courses from pre-entry to level 2 in preparation for working life, literacy, numeracy and language. Courses take place during the day and evening on the college main sites and in 20 community venues. The majority of the 249 literacy, 139 numeracy and 111 language learners study on part-time programmes. Of the 148 learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, 90 study on full-time programmes. 51% of these 647 learners are male and 417 are on entry level courses. The majority of learners are aged over 19. Most of the courses lead to the new national qualifications.

Strengths

- high success rates on most literacy and numeracy courses
- good progression for many learners
- good range of well located programmes.

Areas for improvement

- low attendance on many courses
- ineffective review of progress for part-time learners.

Achievement and standards

66. Achievement is good. Learners develop good self-confidence and participate well in activities. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good team work skills and become more independent in everyday life. Other learners apply their new skills either at home or at work. Many learners progress to the next level of learning or onto other courses. Success rates on most literacy and numeracy long courses are high. Success rates on language programmes have improved and were high on most 2005/06 courses. Attendance on many courses is well below average.

Quality of provision

67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most teachers have good expertise and experience. On some programmes, learning is well planned in the context of everyday life, with a good variety of learning activities and materials. In the best lessons, the initial and diagnostic assessments are used effectively to inform planning. However, on some programmes, more

able learners are insufficiently challenged and tutors rely too much on paper-based materials with too little ILT to support learning.

68. Accommodation is satisfactory. Equipment and materials are generally of good quality and relevant to the needs and interest of learners. Programmes are well located in 20 venues including schools, libraries, learning centres and parish offices. The curriculum provides a good range of progression routes.
69. Tutorials for full-time learners are effective in monitoring learner progress and needs. Learning support staff provide good support on most courses. On part-time programmes, although specific learning goals are set for individuals, progress reviews are not sufficiently focused on the development of skills and timescales. Records of daily work are not always kept. Individual learning plans are not systematically dated and signed. On these programmes, additional learning support is not systematically provided when needed.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management provides a clear sense of direction and is supportive. Data are not sufficiently reliable or accessible to monitor performance and bring improvement. Curriculum planning is focused on needs and learner feedback. Communications are good but the sharing of what is good in teaching and learning is insufficiently developed. The observation of teaching and learning does not sufficiently focus on learning, attainment and the quality of RARPA. There is too little subject-specific staff development. The implementation of equality and diversity is satisfactory overall. The self-assessment process involved full-time staff but the self-assessment is not sufficiently critical.

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 | 523 | 45 | 60 | -15 | 1123 | 64 | 59 | 5 |
| | 04/05 | 1093 | 64 | 64 | 0 | 1071 | 70 | 62 | 8 |
| | 05/06 | 591 | 67 | - | - | 1506 | 75 | - | - |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04 | 11 | 81 | 65 | 16 | - | - | - | - |
| | 04/05 | 2 | 50 | 67 | -17 | - | - | - | - |
| | 05/06 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| NVQs | 03/04 | 47 | 51 | 61 | -10 | 9 | 66 | 62 | 4 |
| | 04/05 | 12 | 91 | 67 | 24 | 1 | - | 66 | -66 |
| | 05/06 | 14 | 100 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other | 03/04 | 456 | 44 | 60 | -16 | 1114 | 73 | 55 | 18 |
| | 04/05 | 1079 | 63 | 63 | 0 | 1079 | 70 | 61 | 9 |
| | 05/06 | 629 | 66 | - | - | 1524 | 75 | - | - |

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 | Diff | Starts – Transfers | College Rate | National Rate | Diff |
| 2 Long | 03/04 | 787 | 42 | 56 | -14 | 1172 | 36 | 54 | -18 |
| | 04/05 | 424 | 60 | 61 | -1 | 1081 | 51 | 60 | -9 |
| | 05/06 | 614 | 64 | - | - | 1173 | 64 | - | - |
| GCSEs | 03/04 | 168 | 57 | 61 | 4 | 61 | 42 | 58 | -16 |
| | 04/05 | 116 | 67 | 64 | 3 | 25 | 68 | 62 | 6 |
| | 05/06 | 137 | 77 | - | - | 31 | 48 | - | - |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04 | 55 | 67 | 63 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 56 | -56 |
| | 04/05 | 43 | 62 | 66 | -4 | 3 | 66 | 70 | -4 |
| | 05/06 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| NVQs | 03/04 | 92 | 26 | 51 | -25 | 117 | 25 | 53 | -28 |
| | 04/05 | 62 | 62 | 57 | 5 | 316 | 51 | 59 | -8 |
| | 05/06 | 79 | 63 | - | - | 413 | 68 | - | - |
| Other | 03/04 | 205 | 62 | 50 | 12 | 991 | 37 | 52 | -15 |
| | 04/05 | 202 | 55 | 60 | -5 | 725 | 51 | 59 | -8 |
| | 05/06 | 398 | 59 | - | - | 742 | 62 | - | - |

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 | 1239 | 57 | 64 | -7 | 491 | 35 | 54 | -19 |
| | 04/05 | 1121 | 70 | 68 | 2 | 319 | 49 | 57 | -8 |
| | 05/06 | 999(1012) | 71 | - | - | 318(320) | 56 | - | - |
| A/A2 Levels | 03/04 | 207 | 90 | 83 | 7 | 25 | 76 | 65 | 11 |
| | 04/05 | 286 | 91 | 85 | 6 | 14 | 64 | 69 | -5 |
| | 05/06 | 218 | 89 | - | - | 25 | 72 | - | - |
| AS Levels | 03/04 | 598 | 63 | 62 | 1 | 42 | 63 | 62 | 1 |
| | 04/05 | 589 | 67 | 65 | 2 | 29 | 48 | 52 | -4 |
| | 05/06 | 518 | 66 | - | - | 38 | 74 | - | - |
| GNVQs and precursors | 03/04 | 198 | 31 | 52 | -20 | 10 | 30 | 43 | -13 |
| | 04/05 | 89 | 47 | 60 | -13 | 3 | 0 | 52 | -52 |
| | 05/06 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| NVQs | 03/04 | 7 | 43 | 53 | -10 | 98 | 22 | 47 | -25 |
| | 04/05 | 5 | 80 | 62 | -18 | 51 | 21 | 53 | -32 |
| | 05/06 | - | - | - | - | 85 | 49 | - | - |
| Other | 03/04 | 223 | 32 | 56 | -24 | 317 | 34 | 55 | -21 |
| | 04/05 | 170 | 56 | 60 | -4 | 225 | 54 | 58 | 4 |
| | 05/06 | 270 | 66 | - | - | 172 | 52 | - | - |

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college end year 2004 to 2006.

| Programme | End Year | Success Rate | No, of learners * | College NVQ rate ** | National NVQ rate ** | College framework rate ** | National framework rate ** |
|---|----------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Advanced Apprenticeships | 03/04 | overall | 6 | 17 | 48 | 17 | 31 |
| | | timely | 6 | 17 | 30 | 17 | 19 |
| | 04/05 | overall | 6 | 67 | 48 | 50 | 34 |
| | | timely | 6 | 50 | 31 | 33 | 21 |
| | 05/06 | overall | 5 | 40 | | 20 | |
| | | timely | 5 | 20 | | 0 | |
| Apprenticeships | 03/04 | overall | 45 | 49 | 47 | 31 | 32 |
| | | timely | 41 | 20 | 24 | 12 | 16 |
| | 04/05 | overall | 73 | 55 | 50 | 36 | 38 |
| | | timely | 74 | 16 | 29 | 9 | 22 |
| | 05/06 | overall | 55 | 60 | | 56 | |
| | | timely | 56 | 30 | | 29 | |
| Adult training (long courses) *** Train2Gain | 03/04 | overall | 13 | 8 | - | - | - |
| | | timely | - | - | - | - | - |
| | 04/05 | overall | 136 | 74 | - | - | - |
| | | timely | - | - | - | - | - |
| | 05/06 | overall | 259 | 72 | - | - | - |
| | | timely | - | - | - | - | - |

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

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