

# Abingdon and Witney College

Inspection report

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## Contents

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Background information	3
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Key strengths and areas for improvement	7
Main findings	8
Sector subject reports	12

## Background information

### Inspection judgements

#### Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

#### Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: horticulture, equine studies and animal care; information and communication technology (ICT); arts, media and publishing; preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law.

#### Description of the provider

1. Abingdon and Witney College is a medium sized general further education college in a semi-rural location in South and West Oxfordshire. Educational achievement in the area at age 16 is slightly below the national average. The college has three main sites: the largest in Abingdon; a rural skills centre at Common Leys, near Witney; and the third in the centre of Witney.
2. The college provides courses in all 15 sector subject areas and courses from entry level up to level H. Overall numbers in construction, history, philosophy,

and theology, social sciences and education and training are small. The college has three Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), one in information technology (IT) systems support and another where the college is a partner in an engineering CoVE led by Aylesbury Training Group. The college has also achieved Action for Business accreditation. The college offers a range of qualifications including foundation degrees. A small number of apprentices undertake work-based learning in the land-based subjects. There are also small numbers of students on Train to Gain programmes.

3. In 2005/06, the college had 3,302 full-time equivalent (FTE) students of whom around 52% were aged 19+. In terms of FTE students, more students aged 16 to 18 study at level 3 than at levels 1 and 2. For adults, 33% study at level 1, 24% at level 2 and 28% at level 3. In 2006/07 the college enrolled 219 students aged 14 to 16 in partnership with local schools. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is low, although considerably higher than the proportion in the surrounding area.
4. The college mission emphasises high quality, service to the local community through partnership, and inclusiveness.

## 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>Good: Contributory Grade 2</i>

### Sector subject areas

Horticulture, equine studies and animal care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Arts, media and publishing	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. Overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates show an overall upwards trend with high success rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 1. However, overall performance has been inconsistent with some significant areas of low success rates. Standards of practical work are good.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of outstanding lessons is low. Good planning and teachers' good subject knowledge typify better lessons. However, teaching fails to challenge the more able students and does not always meet individual needs.
7. Educational and social inclusion are good. A broad range of provision meets students' needs well. Partnerships are successful and employer links are strong. Provision for students with a range of profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good.
8. Students receive good advice, support and guidance. The diagnosis and subsequent support for specific additional learning needs is particularly effective. Good tutorials integrate Every Child Matters themes well.
9. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Student outcomes have improved but remain low on too many courses. Promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Self-assessment, although the process is thorough and broadly accurate, does not critically analyse provision sufficiently well. Financial management is much improved since the last inspection and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

### Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. The college's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The rise in student success rates has been neither swift nor consistent and significant pockets of underperformance remain. Unsatisfactory teaching has diminished, but teaching as a whole remains broadly satisfactory. Recent actions to secure improvement in provision through more effective curriculum management have been successful in a few areas, but in most it remains too early to assess the impact on student outcomes. Managers make better use of data to analyse and improve provision, but the range and quality of data available is too variable. Self-assessment and quality assurance processes generally identify areas for improvement and judgements are broadly accurate. Senior leaders have made significant progress in developing a culture in which students' success is paramount.

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

11. The college has made satisfactory progress in promoting improvement and rectifying weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The college's financial position has improved significantly. Links with employers are now strong. Enrichment programmes are improved. Many students now have individual learning plans that are used well. Curriculum management is improving. Although improving, the proportion of lessons that are good or outstanding remains low. Teachers do not always ensure more able students are challenged sufficiently. Weaknesses in key skills programmes remain.

### Key strengths

- very good provision for students with profound, multiple and severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- high success rates on level 1 courses
- good standards of students' practical work
- good pastoral and academic support
- strong employer links and effective partnerships
- good equality of opportunity and educational and social inclusion.

### Areas for improvement

#### *The college should address:*

- achieving consistent improvement of success rates across the curriculum
- reducing the proportion of teaching that is satisfactory and increasing the proportion that is outstanding
- the lack of challenge for the more able students
- the amount and use of critical analysis to review aspects of the curriculum
- the management of GCE A/AS programmes.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. Overall achievement and standards are satisfactory, in line with the college's self-assessment. Since the last inspection many success rates show an overall upwards trend. However, overall college performance has been inconsistent with some significant underperformance in a few significant areas.
13. In 2006/07, success rates on levels 1 and 3 long courses for adults are good and have improved significantly. Success rates have improved steadily for the last three years and are high for students aged 16 to 18 at level 1.
14. Success rates on 16 to 18 long courses at level 2 rose significantly to 9% above the national average in 2005/06. However, there has been a slight decline in 2006/07. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 3 have continued an upward trend, but only in line with a rising national rate the year before.
15. Students develop a range of work-related skills well and standards of work are good overall. Students generally enjoy their studies.
16. The rate of improvement of overall success rates on long courses for both age groups has been slow and whilst significantly improved for adults, it has only kept pace with rising national success rates for the previous year.
17. At level 2, success rates for adults are poor and have declined significantly. The college has recognised this weakness in its own evaluation and attributes this to the closure of some IT centres where students chose not to take up the arrangements to continue with their studies.
18. Success rates on too many general certificate of education (GCE) A/AS level courses are poor. Whilst only representing a small proportion of students overall, success rates on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) mathematics and English have declined from previous years and are unsatisfactory. Fewer students take key skills and although success rates have improved they remain unsatisfactory.
19. The college monitors attendance. However, it does not do so across all courses so could not say what attendance is like for the whole college. However, attendance in lessons observed during the inspection was generally good.

### Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

20. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors did not agree with the college's self-assessment which suggested an overall picture of good quality teaching and learning. Improvements have been made to the system for judging the quality of teaching and learning and the system is comprehensive and thorough. Advanced practitioners provide good follow up support to



develop teachers' expertise. Inspectors broadly agreed with college observers about key aspects in teaching, but did not agree that observers gave sufficient consideration to the effectiveness of learning. The outcomes of lesson observations are not sufficiently analysed to identify where significant improvements are required across the college. Overall, not enough teaching is good and the proportion of outstanding teaching is too low.

21. Practical teaching, a weakness at the last inspection, has improved in most subjects and better lessons develop students' work-related skills well. However, teaching in ICT has insufficient vocational relevance. In general, careful planning and teachers' good subject knowledge typify the better lessons. In weaker lessons, individual learning needs are not met sufficiently and teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able students.
22. Information and learning technologies (ILT) are used well in many lessons with imaginative ways used to keep students interested. However, facilities are not available for all teachers to use ILT as effectively, particularly in business studies.
23. Assessment strategies are good. Teachers return marked work promptly and most give constructive feedback. Progress review reports effectively keep parents informed of progress.
24. Specialist resources and facilities are good in land-based subjects, design, media and performing arts. At the Witney campus the college has insufficient computers at peak times.
25. The college recognises that many students do not make satisfactory progress in the development of communication, numeracy and ICT. The college has responded well to integrate key skills subjects within the curriculum. However, in many curriculum areas, key skills teaching remains underdeveloped.
26. Overall, the college meets the needs and interests of students well. Educational and social inclusion is good. The college responds particularly well to local employers. Consultation is effective and the college provides flexible and responsive provision for students who may otherwise not access training. The college is particularly effective in providing for the needs of students with profound and multiple disabilities. Partnerships are effective.
27. The range of provision is broad in most curriculum areas and allows students to progress to higher education courses within the college. However, in a few areas, there are gaps in provision. The college provides effective vocational training programmes for pupils aged 14 to 16.
28. Enrichment activities are improved since the last inspection. Most students aged 16 to 18 complete relevant work experience. Many benefit from a wide range of relevant residential study tours abroad. Recent initiatives include a well designed college magazine and radio station.

29. Feedback from students is acted upon promptly. Student representatives and the student governor play an active part in college decision making.
30. Support and guidance for students are good. Information and guidance are impartial and effective. Personal and welfare services are good and provided by a central support team including more specialist services such as behavioural therapy. A very effective anti-bullying strategy has challenged and improved unsatisfactory behaviour and has helped several students to continue their studies.
31. Tutorial provision is good. Course tutors use a core tutorial plan that is vocationally relevant. Every Child Matters themes are covered well through the core programme. An extensive range of materials on personal, social and career aspects are used at weekly group tutorials. Many students also attend centrally organised events on specialist topics, though the extent of interest and participation varies.
32. Initial and diagnostic assessments are timely and thorough. The college responds well, mostly through one-to-one appointments. Where support is taken up students make good progress and achieve well. A minority of students are reluctant to take up the support offered and there are occasional delays in coordinating arrangements between curriculum and support teams. A high level of well considered support is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

*Contributory grades:*

*Equality of opportunity*

*Good: Contributory Grade 2*

33. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and senior management team have rightly given priority to resolving the college's significant financial difficulties. Although progress has also been made in placing teaching and learning and student success at the heart of the college strategy and culture, improvement to the overall quality of provision has been insufficient. Although discernible improvements to students' outcomes are evident, there are too many courses where success rates remain low. Similarly, improvements to the quality of teaching and learning have not been sufficiently consistent.
34. A thoughtful reorganisation of senior and middle management roles has been successful in improving curriculum managers' direct oversight of groups of courses. In some areas of the college, curriculum managers are proving highly effective in securing an improved experience for students. However, the management of GCE A/AS provision, organised in conjunction with local schools, is weak. There remains a lack of clarity in the specific roles and responsibilities of some staff at both middle and senior management level, for example, in respect of precise responsibilities for quality and strategy.

35. The college's quality assurance procedures are sound, but variable in impact. Course reviews and self-assessment reports are thorough and broadly accurate. However, in some instances, an absence of critical analysis detracts from the effectiveness of action planning following self-assessment. At all levels of the college there are weaknesses in the collation, analysis and use of information to identify and tackle weaker aspects of provision and too much analysis is retrospective. The college recognises the need to improve its management information systems. Arrangements for improving the quality of teaching and learning include a comprehensive internal lesson observation scheme. This scheme has many merits, but these do not include a detailed analysis of the overall findings to identify the precise characteristics of pedagogy that can be disseminated to improve the rate of students' learning.
36. Staff development opportunities are good. The college has responded well to recent changes to the requirements for teaching qualifications.
37. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Whilst many of the buildings are unattractive, efforts to provide a good learning environment and resources within them have been largely successful. The centre at Common Leys provides very good specialist facilities for land-based activities. Some corridors and open areas are unnecessarily drab. The college is securing agreement for a major building project to improve accommodation.
38. Equality of opportunity is good, with many instances of effective cross-college initiatives. High priority is given to providing a safe and secure environment for students. Coverage of equality and diversity through the formal curriculum is less consistent. The college's response to legislation on special educational needs, disability and race relations is good and the college is compliant with statutory requirements. Policies and procedures for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are fully in place and staff have received appropriate training.
39. Governance is improved and is effective. Governors with suitable expertise provide the right balance of support and challenge to senior managers. Governors recognise that governance would be strengthened by the appointment of a governor with directly relevant educational expertise. Although the college remains in financial category 'C', tangible improvements in the financial health of the college and satisfactory student outcomes indicate that the college is providing satisfactory value for money.

## Sector subject reports

Horticulture, equine studies and animal care

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

40. The college offers a range of full- and part-time courses from level 1 to level H in horticulture, animal care, and horse management. There are 109 students aged 16 to 18 mostly studying full-time and 166 adults mostly studying part-time. Twenty-one work-based students are on training for apprenticeships in horticulture. There are also 49 students aged 14 to 19 on level 1 programmes.

### Strengths

- high success rates on level 1 courses
- good standards of practical work
- strong employer and business links
- very good effectively used specialist facilities.

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates on level 3 courses
- slow progress to rectify inadequate success rates.

### Achievement and standards

41. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates vary significantly between types of courses and levels of provision. Success rates on all national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 1 courses are high. However, at level 3, courses show low and/or declining success rates. At level 2, on the full-time horticulture national certificate and first diploma in animal care they are good but success rates on the NVQ in horse care are low. Overall success rates for apprentices have improved and are slightly above national averages. Most students' practical and occupational skills are good and have improved since the last inspection.

### Quality of provision

42. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers integrate theory well within practical activities. In the better lessons learners' progress is monitored frequently. For example, students are asked individual questions where the difficulty level is aimed to encourage or challenge according to each student's ability. However, some teaching fails to recognise individual learning needs sufficiently and students lose interest.
43. The needs and interests of students are appropriately met. Employer and business links are strong and the college responds flexibly to employer requests for courses. Students gain broad experience of employment by assisting at various national events such as the Para-Olympics. Guest speakers from industry and visits to national events enrich students' experience well. Most

students also develop employment related skills through valuable work placements. However, full-time students in horticulture do not benefit from similar work experience opportunities.

44. Recent improvements to support arrangements provide satisfactory support for students. Staff provide good one-to-one support and personal advice and guidance including useful information on career choices. Academic tutorials have recently improved. Students meet frequently with tutors to monitor and evaluate their progress. Improvement plans are particularly thorough in animal care and equine where, for example, attendance issues are followed up promptly.

#### Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection very good specialist facilities are used effectively to improve provision. Access for students with physical disabilities is good. Self-assessment is broadly accurate with most areas for improvement identified in the report. However, the college has made slow progress in addressing inadequate success rates. Managers identify issues and challenging targets are agreed with staff but course files and other documentation are not consistent or clear in identifying specific actions and subsequent monitoring is not routine. Managers do not share good practice sufficiently well. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good.

## Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

## Context

46. Courses are offered from level 1 to a foundation degree. At level 3, 119 students, mainly aged 16 to 18, study on full-time courses. A further 180 adults attend a range of part-time ICT user and practitioners' courses or specialist short ICT courses through the college's CoVE in ICT.

## Strengths

- high success rates on first diploma and new Computer Literacy and Information Technology qualification (CLAIT)
- good teaching of theory
- very good academic and pastoral support for students.

## Areas for improvement

- insufficient challenge for more able students within workshop and practical sessions
- insufficient vocational focus in most lessons.

## Achievement and standards

47. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates for most courses are above national averages. Success rates for the introductory diploma, first diploma and the new CLAIT certificate for IT users have been significantly above the national average for the last three years. Most students demonstrate good hardware and software skills and can talk confidently about ICT. The standard of students' assignment work is good. Attendance at lessons is very high.

## Quality of provision

48. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Theory teaching is good and better than teaching in workshops and practical sessions. In theory lessons, teachers use integrated learning technologies well during whole class presentation, explain concepts clearly and make effective use of questions to keep students interested. Students are able to access online useful handouts and assignments from college or home. In too many practical and workshop lessons, teachers do not vary their teaching methods enough and rely too much on whole class activities, offering few opportunities for more able students to be challenged by more demanding work. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are effective. Teachers mark work promptly and provide useful feedback.
49. Programmes and activities are satisfactory in meeting the needs and interest of students. The college has good progression routes for full-time students. Teachers effectively use examples of students who have progressed through the levels to motivate students starting out on the first diploma. The curriculum area has insufficient contact with employers and too few opportunities to engage students with real life work experiences. Teachers do not focus

sufficiently on vocational aspects, seldom mentioning the real applications of ICT to industry or business.

50. Guidance and support for students are good. All students receive a comprehensive induction at the start of their course which includes health and safety issues relating to ICT. Teachers and personal tutors provide very good personal and academic support. Students receive good advice about career or higher education options. Staff carry out a helpful progress review week with students, using software to predict final grades based on their present performance.

#### Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection the college has restructured the curriculum offer, reducing part-time provision in outreach centres. The college responded effectively during a recent period of unexpected and severe staffing shortages by providing appropriate cover. The team have an accurate view of where they need to improve but progress is slow. Learner feedback is used to inform the satisfactory self-assessment report but some significant weaknesses found at the last inspection still remain, particularly issues concerning teaching and learning and the challenge for the more able students. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

## Arts, media and publishing

Good: Grade 2

## Context

52. The college offers a range of programmes at levels 2 and 3, and part-time provision at level 1. There are 150 students studying courses on art and design, 110 on media courses and 130 on performing arts courses which include music technology. Most students are aged 16 to 18.

## Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- high standards of practical work on most courses
- much good teaching and learning
- successful range of enrichment activities
- good specialist accommodation and resources
- good curriculum management.

## Areas for improvement

- low success rates on GCE AS/A level art and design and national diploma in music technology
- insufficient development of communication and numeracy skills
- insufficient full-time provision at level 1.

## Achievement and standards

53. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on most courses and above national averages for the last three years. However, success rates on GCE AS and A2 art and design and the national diploma in music technology courses are low. Standards of students' work are very good across performing arts, art, design and media. Many students demonstrate very good expressive, technical and exploratory skills in the development of their performance and practical work. In music technology the standard of students' work is generally satisfactory. Students' communication and numeracy skills are not always sufficiently developed. Attendance is good.

## Quality of provision

54. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers provide a range of challenging tasks and activities and develop projects that ensure students learn effectively. In one outstanding lesson in musical theatre, students effectively understood the importance of professional commitment during a very challenging rehearsal. Many teachers make good use of ILT. Teachers in a few lessons do not use precise learning targets sufficiently. Assessment and the monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory.

55. The range of provision meets the needs and interests of most students. The subject area has a particularly good range of vocationally related enrichment



activities that successfully contribute to learning and achievement. However, the college offers no full-time provision at level 1.

56. Guidance and support for students are good with effective careers and pastoral support. The provision of additional learning support is satisfactory.

#### Leadership and management

57. Curriculum management is good. The organisation and structure of the area is well understood and supported by staff. The three programme area managers have a good overview and provide clear lines of communication. Monitoring of learner performance is good and managers make the best use of available information. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The self-assessment report is generally accurate and identifies most strengths and areas for improvement. It does not sufficiently evaluate teaching and learning or the good work being done in media to promote equality and diversity. Course reviews contain useful improvement plans. Staff successfully apply their up-to-date professional experience well to develop students' employability skills. Specialist accommodation and resources are good. A range of projects effectively cover Every Child Matters themes well. The area has maintained the strengths identified in the last inspection and made some progress on areas of improvement. Low success rates on a few courses remain an issue.

## Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

58. Currently 148 full-time and 48 part-time students, mostly aged 16 to 18, study on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 344 part-time students, mostly adults, studying at entry level to level 2 in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and 125 students on literacy and numeracy programmes. Across the college as a whole, 176 students study on key skills application of number and communication at level 1, and 307 at level 2.

### Strengths

- very good provision for students with severe learning difficulties
- high pass rates on learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ESOL qualifications
- good development of skills
- good work experience for students with learning difficulties
- high levels of skilled support.

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates on adult literacy and numeracy qualifications
- low success rates on key skills application of number
- insufficient planning for and checking of individual learning in ESOL
- slow progress in developing cross-college Skills for Life provision.

### Achievement and standards

59. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Pass rates are high on qualifications designed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Those students who take the constituent parts of the ESOL qualification also achieve very well. However, success rates on adult literacy and numeracy qualifications and in key skills application of number are low. Students develop good communication, work and personal skills and confidence.

### Quality of provision

60. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory. There is much good teaching on programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, ESOL teachers do not all plan sufficiently for individuals, or check learning frequently or well enough in lessons.
61. Overall, provision meets the needs and interests of students. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Students whose disabilities would normally require residential care away from home attend well organised day provision with a local partner. A well designed programme caters for students with profound and multiple needs through to

those with mild learning difficulties and/or disabilities on foundation programmes. Very effective work experience arrangements ensure that all students on this programme from step 3 onwards have a weekly placement throughout the year. The programme strongly promotes Every Child Matters themes.

62. The college has steadily increased the number of students working towards national targets for achieving Skills for Life qualifications to a current target nearly twice that of 2004/05. However, progress has been slow on developing a whole college approach to Skills for Life provision. Provision for ESOL does not meet the varied individual needs of all students sufficiently. Arrangements currently place all students together in learning sessions and individual needs are not met well enough. ESOL learners who wish to develop their language for the workplace are in the same class as students who wish to access higher education and students who are improving their language skills for citizenship tests. The degree of embedding and integration of key skills into main programmes is variable. Insufficient staff have literacy and numeracy and ESOL subject specialist qualifications at level 4.
63. Guidance and support are good. A high ratio of assistants to students ensures skilled learning support in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Tutorial support is generally effective. Students on main programmes receive good individual literacy and language support. However, this is not always sufficiently contextualised to their main areas of study.

#### Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Curriculum management of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The rigour and accuracy of grading in observations of teaching and learning is good in some programme areas but over generous in others. Too little use is made of data to inform self-assessment and critically analyse provision. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Some literacy, numeracy and ESOL teachers select material which extends students' experience of diversity but there is little active promotion of equality issues apart from in foundation programmes. Although some aspects of accommodation are unattractive, best use is made of some poor accommodation for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at one site through internal redecoration and the use of specialist equipment.

## Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

## Context

65. The college offers courses in business, administration and law and also provides training for employers, both on certificated courses and customised programmes. There are 636 students. Of these, 294 study full-time and 274 are 16 to 18. The remainder are adults studying part-time. GCE AS and A levels in accounting, law and business studies are offered to full-time 16 to 18 students. Professional part-time programmes for adults include management and accounting.

## Strengths

- high success rates on most programmes
- good standard of students' work
- particularly effective preparation for the world of work
- good academic and pastoral tutorial support
- good curriculum management.

## Areas for improvement

- low pass rates on AS law and accounting
- insufficient challenge in too many lessons
- insufficient access to ILT to support teaching and learning.

## Achievement and standards

66. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on most courses are high and consistently above the national average for the last three years. Pass rates on AS law and AS accounting are very low. Standards of students' work are good. Students develop a range of business related skills through successful completion of additional qualifications.

## Quality of provision

67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers plan effectively and students are well prepared for employment through realistic work related activities. For example, in a lesson about e-business, students were enthusiastically designing a web site for a business planning to expand into e-selling. Staff with specialist skills motivate students well. However, in too many lessons the more confident, able students are not sufficiently challenged. ILT is used effectively in some lessons. However, insufficient availability of ILT equipment in many rooms often prevents staff from using ILT to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers on vocational courses provide prompt and detailed feedback on assessed work.
68. Provision meets the needs and interests of most students well. Progression opportunities are good and students are well prepared for progression to higher levels of study within the college. For example, students studying NVQ 2 in

accounting are given very good training in the basics of accounting. The college provides flexible and responsive training for employers.

69. Academic and pastoral support are good. Induction activities help students to settle quickly to work. Tutorials provide students with very effective individual support and include helpful advice and guidance about progression and employment opportunities.

#### Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are good. Managers work well together to ensure a coordinated, well organised approach across most programmes. Staff have a good focus on students' achievement. Management of the A/AS level programmes is not as effective. Self-assessment is thorough and largely accurate. Managers completed a thorough action plan to take forward identified areas for development. Accommodation is adequate overall. Appraisal practice is well established and clearly linked to the observation of teaching and learning for all staff. Staff take up professional development opportunities well. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

## Learners' achievement

Table 1

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04-05	806	56	65	-9	2835	58	62	-4
	05-06	731	70	69	1	2501	51	65	-14
	06-07	776	78			661	74		
GNVQs	04-05	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	05-06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04-05	35	57	68	-11	36	56	66	-10
	05-06	91	48	72	-24	26	100	74	26
	06-07	47	72			16	88		
Other	04-05	771	56	64	-8	2799	58	62	-4
	05-06	640	73	69	4	2475	50	65	-15
	06-07	729	79			645	73		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04-05	712	68	61	7	1203	71	60	11
	05-06	688	75	66	9	1125	63	66	-3
	06-07	755	73			1009	53		
GCSEs	04-05	209	59	64	-5	96	75	63	12
	05-06	201	64	68	-4	50	78	67	11
	06-07	220	62			92	66		
GNVQs	04-05	16	100	67	33	7	86	75	11
	05-06	24	79	69	10	17	71	68	3
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04-05	126	71	57	14	135	73	60	13
	05-06	114	75	65	10	161	80	67	13
	06-07	127	72			429	26		
Other	04-05	361	71	61	10	965	70	59	11
	05-06	349	80	66	14	897	59	65	-6
	06-07	408	80			488	75		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04-05	1344	65	68	-3	1035	63	58	5
	05-06	1198	68	70	-2	809	71	63	8
	06-07	1323	70			715	76		
A/A2 Levels	04-05	215	84	86	-2	34	71	69	2
	05-06	201	84	87	-3	39	85	72	13
	06-07	259	84			53	68		
AS Levels	04-05	634	57	66	-9	108	51	52	-1
	05-06	503	56	67	-11	76	53	55	-2
	06-07	583	59			74	53		
GNVQs	04-05	81	78	61	17	25	60	54	6
	05-06	29	52	66	-14	18	39	57	-18
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04-05	41	78	63	15	146	73	56	17
	05-06	46	87	71	16	125	79	63	16
	06-07	52	83			145	84		
Other	04-05	373	64	60	4	722	63	59	4
	05-06	419	73	65	8	551	72	64	8
	06-07	429	75			443	78		

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college in 2004/05 and 2006/07

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Students *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2004/05	Apprenticeship	72	26	38	43	50
	Advanced	34	41	34	56	48
2005/06	Apprenticeship	113	58	53	65	58
	Advanced	39	54	44	64	54
2006/07	Apprenticeship	56	46	61	48	65
	Advanced	45	51	58	62	64

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

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

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