

# Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology

## Inspection report

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## Background information

## Inspection judgements

### Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

### Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, social care and childcare; hairdressing and beauty therapy; visual and performing arts; pre-foundation studies; and business, administration and finance.

## Description of the provider

1. Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology is a medium sized general further education college which serves the town of Shrewsbury, much of north Shropshire and parts of south Shropshire. It operates from two main campuses in London Road and Radbrook, in four main outreach centres and 15 community venues. It has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in construction. It also provides a course for GCE A level learners from the local sixth form college which is linked to the travel and tourism industry. The college offers a range of provision in all of the 15 sector subject areas. Most of the provision is vocational. Its mission is to 'work with partner institutions and employers to maximise opportunities for the widest range of learners to engage in vocational learning that matches their needs and abilities, and to support them in achieving their full potential'.
2. In 2006, the proportion of learners achieving five GCSE A\* to C grades in local schools was 60% which was 3% above the national average. Shrewsbury has the two highest ranking areas of deprivation in Shropshire and five in the top 30% nationally. About 30% of the economically active local population has no qualification at level 2, which is in line with both regional and the national average.
3. In 2006/2007, the college enrolled 9,200 learners, of whom 17% were on full-time courses and approximately 75% were adults. The proportion of female learners was about 53%. The proportion of learners from black and minority ethnic backgrounds was 2%, in line with the local population. Approximately 500 learners aged 14 to 16 studied at the college. In 2006/07, it had approximately 390 work-based and 260 Train to Gain learners. The college leads the Train to Gain consortium in the Shropshire area.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Satisfactory: contributory grade 3</i>

### Sector subject areas

Health, social care and childcare	Good: Grade 2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade 2
Visual and performing arts	Good: Grade 2
Pre-foundation studies	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and finance	Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The overall effectiveness of provision is satisfactory. This disagrees with the college's judgement of good. Achievement and standards are good. Most success rates have improved significantly over the last three years and are high, except for learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses. Work-based learning and Train to Gain success rates have also improved and most are at or above the national average. Most learners produce work of a high standard. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of good or better lessons is insufficient. In the best lessons, learners benefit from good planning and motivating and challenging activities. In the less effective lessons teachers do not make it clear what learners are expected to achieve, talk too much and fail to check whether learners have understood their work. The internal lesson observation system lacks accuracy and consistency and does not yet promote the sharing of good practice sufficiently. Assessment and internal verification are good. Practical skills training for work-based learners is good.
6. The approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college works closely and well with young people at risk of leaving education and with vulnerable adults. The response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The range of courses and levels is wide. Full-time learners have insufficient opportunity for full Skills for Life accreditation.
7. Learners receive good advice, guidance and support. Academic, personal and additional learning support are good. Initial information, advice and guidance are impartial and very effective. The target setting for full-time learners, in many cases, lacks challenge and clarity.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but good for work-based learning and Train to Gain provision. The principal gives strong internal and external leadership. Partnerships with schools and employers are very productive. Value for money is good. The implementation of the quality assurance system lacks rigour. Strategies to improve teaching and learning are yet to be effective.

### Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. The capacity of the college to improve its provision is satisfactory. Managers have concentrated on raising learners' achievement very successfully by improving the arrangements for monitoring retention and providing learning support. The college's quality assurance arrangements, however, are not sufficiently rigorous. Good appraisal and performance management inform a wide range of staff development opportunities, but the college does not monitor their effectiveness fully.

10. The college's self-assessment process is inclusive. The self-assessment report identifies certain key strengths and areas for improvement appropriately. Nevertheless, it is not sufficiently accurate, focused or analytical. Quality improvement plans do not address all the key areas for improvement and managers do not monitor the progress or impact of action plans sufficiently.

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

11. The college has made good progress in promoting improvement since the last inspection. Success rates on long courses have risen considerably and are high in most cases; although retention rates at level 3 for learners aged 16 to 18 are still low. In-year retention rates for 2007/08 indicate improvement. Success rates for key skills qualifications have increased at levels 1 and 2. Work-based learners achieve well and in good time. The use of information learning technology (ILT) is now well promoted and resourced, but with insufficient impact in some areas as yet. The quality of tutorials has improved, but learners' target setting is underdeveloped in some areas. Financial management has improved. Very effective strategic planning has strengthened the college's position, ensured productive collaboration with many partners and helped to secure plans for a new building.

### Key strengths

- high success rates
- significant improvement in success rates
- high standards of learners' work
- highly effective and impartial information, advice and guidance
- good personal, academic and additional learning support
- strong leadership
- very productive partnerships with schools and employers.

### Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- consistently low success rates by learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses
- insufficient progress made by learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses
- insufficient proportion of good or better lessons
- underdeveloped target setting for full-time learners
- insufficiently rigorous implementation of the quality assurance systems
- ineffective strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

12. Achievement and standards are good and this agrees with the college's self-assessed judgement. Most success rates by age, level and duration have improved significantly over the last three years. According to college data, all 2006/07 success rates improved considerably compared with 2005/06, except for learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses, which declined slightly. Most success rates are above the national average, except those for learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 provision which are well below. Retention rates have also improved and college data indicate that most are above national average, except those for learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 and adults on level 2 courses. Pass rates have also improved and are at or above the national average. The proportion of learners gaining high grades is below the national average. As the numbers of learners aged 14 to 16 has increased over the last three years, so has their success rate.
13. Learners in receipt of additional learning support (ALS) have higher retention rates than those not receiving ALS, but their pass rates are about the same. Whereas learners from most black and minority ethnic backgrounds succeed less well than those from white backgrounds, this is not significantly different from the national situation.
14. Many learners on level 3 courses do not make the progress expected of them, compared with their prior attainment, whereas the majority of learners on level 2 provision make satisfactory or better progress than expected.
15. In 2005/06, key skills success rates were well above the national average at levels 1 and 2, but below at level 3. Success rates improved marginally in 2006/07. Advanced apprenticeship framework success rates have improved for three years and are above the national average, but apprenticeship framework success rates declined in 2006/07. Timely completion success rates have improved to be above national average. The success rate on the Train to Gain provision has improved and, according to college data, is high.
16. The standard of learners' work is high, especially in hairdressing and beauty therapy and visual and performing arts. Most learners enjoy their studies and college life and behave well. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

#### *Contributory grades:*

*Work-based learning*  
*Train to Gain*

*Good: grade 2*  
*Good: grade 2*

17. The quality of provision is satisfactory; this differs from the college's own assessment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners work diligently



and enjoy their studies. Relationships between learners and teachers are very good. Most lessons are at least satisfactory and include good features. Along with good support for additional learning needs, teaching ensures that most learners make adequate progress. In the best lessons, teachers plan activities well to match learners' abilities. They manage the lesson at a brisk pace and motivate and challenge learners. In these lessons, teachers often use ILT very effectively. They link theory and practical topics productively and relate learning activities to realistic work-based settings. Training in practical skills, particularly in the workplace, for work-based learners is good.

18. The proportion of good or better lessons is insufficient. Too many lessons include too much direction by teachers. Teachers do not use questioning to check and extend learning sufficiently. Learning outcomes lack clarity. Staff development has raised the profile of ILT and the virtual learning environment (VLE) to aid learning, as well as giving most teachers the necessary skills to use the VLE. Nevertheless, their use is inconsistent.
19. The internal lesson observation system is underdeveloped and does not provide an accurate evaluation of the quality of learning. Managers do not standardise observers' practice and judgements sufficiently. More effective support to develop teaching techniques is now in place through the work of three advanced practitioners. The teaching of basic skills has improved and vocational tutors are more proficient at integrating this into vocational learning. The gathering of learners' views about the quality of learning is ineffective.
20. Assessment practices are well established and support good achievement on many courses. Internal verification is rigorous. The initial assessment of literacy and numeracy is prompt and teachers use it well to provide full profiles of individual learners to inform teaching strategies. The initial assessment of information technology (IT) skills is not yet in place but is being developed. Assessment of work-based learners uses a diverse range of evidence and supportive feedback enables apprentices to make good progress.
21. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The range of courses and levels is wide. Most full-time learners work towards one key or basic skills qualification per year. The college does not enable these learners to develop and gain accreditation to level 2 in all three skills areas, despite their low performance levels at initial assessment. Progression into further and higher education or employment is satisfactory. Managers lead partnerships with local schools very effectively. They also lead a partnership of training providers very well to address key training priorities and the needs of employers.
22. Full-time learners benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities linked to their main course, but participation in cross-college activities is low. Many learners undertake work experience or train within realistic work environments, but not all learners are able to do so. Learners have good access to resources and support for independent study, but those at the Radbrook site have insufficient access to computers at peak times. The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to life in and outside college is satisfactory.

23. The approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Learners can progress from entry level to level 3 in most curriculum areas. Managers are proactive in supporting learners aged 14 to 16 to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training. The college works hard to meet the needs of specific groups such as prisoners and low skilled workers.
24. Academic, personal and additional support for learners are good. The college assesses learners' needs at interview, and makes effective arrangements to support learners promptly. Success rates for learners receiving additional support are higher than for those not receiving support. Communication between learning support and teaching staff is good. Apprentices receive good support from their employers.
25. The college liaises closely with the local sixth form college to provide highly useful and impartial initial information, advice and guidance (IAG). All full-time applicants receive initial screening to assess their literacy and numeracy skills which leads to appropriate support where necessary.
26. The involvement of parents, carers and guardians is good. Induction arrangements are effective in informing learners of the support and opportunities available. Personal tutors monitor attendance closely and learners receive regular personal tutorials to review progress and agree targets. These targets, however, often provide insufficient challenge, are too vague and lack urgency. The group tutorials contain a wide range of sessions to address the Every Child Matters themes, which learners enjoy. Tutors' coverage of these themes is variable, however, resulting in an inconsistent experience for full-time learners. The extent to which learners adopt a healthy lifestyle is satisfactory. The college provides good support for learners to achieve economic well-being.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

*Contributory grades:*

*Equality of opportunity*

*Satisfactory: grade 3*

*Work-based learning*

*Good: grade 2*

*Train to Gain*

*Good: grade 2*

27. Leadership and management are satisfactory. This disagrees with the college's self-assessment. The principal provides strong leadership within the college and with external partners. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and communication is good. The governors understand and are confident in the work of the management team. They receive relevant data and information on learners' progress and achievement and challenge managers appropriately.
28. Managers have a clear strategy to develop provision in the area. Partnerships with schools and employers are very effective. The college leads initiatives to engage young people aged 14 to 19. It also leads the Train to Gain consortium. Leadership and management of work-based learning and Train to Gain are good. Managers have taken effective action to improve success and timely completion rates.

29. The retention and success rates of most learners have improved significantly. Managers have much better access to data on attendance, punctuality and retention. They monitor programmes frequently and take relevant action with poorly performing courses.
30. The college has some good refurbished accommodation and some industry-standard specialist resources. Other areas, however, remain adequate. Accommodation utilisation is low. Staff are appropriately qualified. Almost all teachers hold or are working towards teaching qualifications. Financial management is good. Value for money is good.
31. The implementation of the quality assurance systems lacks rigour. The observations of teaching and learning vary in quality, accuracy and impact and managers do not moderate the outcomes sufficiently. The strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning lacks effectiveness. Performance management and opportunities for staff development are good, but the college does not analyse outcomes fully. The self-assessment process is inclusive but the report, while it identifies some key strengths and areas for improvement, is overly descriptive rather than analytical.
32. The arrangements for equality and diversity are satisfactory. The college is compliant with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2002 (SENDA). Managers have not updated some documents, however, and progress in some long term plans is unclear. Most areas of the college are accessible to people with restricted mobility. Child protection procedures are appropriate. The extent to which the college enables learners to be safe is good. Appropriate health and safety policies are in place.

## Sector subject area

Health, social care and childcare

Good: Grade 2

## Context

33. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time health, childcare and care courses at the Radbrook campus. These include the national diplomas in care, and the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) programmes, which are offered at foundation, certificate and diploma levels. Over 250 learners are enrolled, approximately half of whom are aged 16 to 18. Fewer than 20 learners are male.

## Strengths

- significant improvement in success rates to above the national average
- high standards of learners' work
- well planned lessons to suit learners' needs
- good additional learning support
- very effective communication and team working.

## Areas for improvement

- insufficient use of ILT to aid learning
- ineffective quality assurance.

## Achievement and standards

34. Achievement and standards are good. The success rates on all programmes have improved, and those on levels 1 and 2 are at the national average or are well above. The success rates for the first diploma in the health and social care programme have risen significantly in the last three years. The success rates on level 3 courses have also increased considerably from their previously low rates. Attendance is high.
35. The standard of learners' work is high. Assignments show evidence of learners' clear understanding of relevant theories. Care learners link theories to personal experiences well when discussing the benefits of complementary therapies. Childcare learners use examples from work placements and current news stories well when discussing child safety matters. Learners in counselling lessons understand challenging concepts and demonstrate very good listening skills.

## Quality of provision

36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of good or better lessons is insufficient. Teachers use detailed information about learners' individual learning styles and additional support needs to plan lessons well. Teachers use a wide range of activities to make lessons interesting. Most learners are attentive and contribute freely to group tasks. In the best lessons, learners use

imaginative visual materials and link theory to practical tasks well. In the less effective lessons, teachers' use of ILT to make presentations more interesting and interactive is insufficient. In one lesson, inaccurate content undermined the learning. In another, learners interrupted learning by chatting and later lost concentration. Assessment of learners' work is fair. Learners receive appropriate feedback to enable them to make improvements.

37. The extent to which provision meets the needs and interest of learners is satisfactory. The range of courses offers sufficient progression opportunities. Learners can progress from levels 1 to 3 in childcare and care subjects. Learners join in an adequate range of enrichment activities.
38. Guidance and support are good. Additional learning support is good. The retention and success rates for learners who receive additional support have improved. Learners receive very effective individual support during lessons. The quality of target setting in tutorial reviews varies widely and in a few cases is insufficient.

#### Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are good. Communication and team working are very effective. Teachers make extensive use of e-mail, meetings and informal communication to share information about courses and learners. Managers have implemented the changes arising from a restructuring of the department in 2007 successfully. Teachers frequently discuss learners' progress and agree strategies to make improvements to courses. Resources are satisfactory. The college provides appropriate resources to support learners with dyslexia.
40. Quality assurance of the provision is ineffective. Observations of lessons do not include all programmes and levels delivered by each teacher systematically. Several areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report are not included in the quality improvement plan.

## Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good: Grade 2

### Context

41. The provision includes full- and part-time courses from levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapies and work-based learning. Of the 400 learners just over 200 attend part-time and nearly 200 are adults. Learners study national vocational qualifications (NVQs), apprenticeship frameworks and other vocational awards. About 30 learners are male. Nearly 60 learners aged 14 to 16 take the NVQ level 1 in hairdressing.

### Strengths

- high success rates on many courses
- high standards of learners' work
- good use of ILT to stimulate and support learning
- good additional learning support to aid learning
- wide range of programmes
- good external partnerships which extend learning opportunities.

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates on the NVQ level 3 in hairdressing and the NVQ level 1 school link programmes
- insufficient challenge and pace in a minority of lessons
- insufficient quality assurance of teaching and learning.

### Achievement and standards

42. Achievement and standards are good. The success rates on the NVQ level 3 beauty therapy course are outstanding. In 2006/07, nearly all learners on short, part-time beauty and holistic therapies programmes were successful. Hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes at NVQ levels 1 and 2 have high success rates, but those for the level 3 hairdressing course are low. The retention rate on the school link programme is high but success rates, though improving, are low.
43. Learners at all levels produce high standards of written work and many use good IT skills. Learners' practical skills are good. Some hairdressing learners on levels 2 and 3 courses exhibit particularly good creative skills.

### Quality of provision

44. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers use a good variety of activities and high quality learning materials. They make excellent presentations and frequently use ILT well to aid learning. The proportion of satisfactory lessons, however, is too high. In the less effective lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and learners experience insufficient challenges. Teachers do not check sufficiently that learning is taking place and that lesson objectives

are met. Assessment is satisfactory. The arrangements for identifying and supporting learners with additional learning needs, such as dyslexia, are good.

45. The extent to which the provision meets the needs of learners is good. The wide range of programmes caters well for all abilities, from levels 1 to 3. Specialist product manufacturers' training and additional qualifications are popular enrichment activities which widen learners' skills.
46. Guidance and support are good. Tutorials promote learners' progression well. They are well planned and incorporate the Every Child Matters themes, programme-related activities and systematic individual reviews of progress. Learners use the learning resource centre materials extensively for assignment research.

### Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Team work is good. Many staff use external and internal courses well to enhance their specialist knowledge and skills. Good external partnerships with employers extend learning opportunities well. Although arrangements to share good practice between staff exist, they are not systematic. Current quality assurance arrangements do not identify the broad variations in the quality of lessons, learning materials and lesson plans. Specialist resources in beauty and holistic therapies do not reflect commercial standards and the area is uninspiring. Self-assessment is inclusive, but managers make insufficient use of data to inform judgements in the area's self-assessment report.

## Visual and performing arts

Good: Grade 2

## Context

48. The college offers mainly full-time courses in performing arts, and art and design. Approximately 100 learners are on performing arts and 150 on art and design courses. One half of the enrolments is on level 2 courses and one third on level 3. Most learners are aged 16 to 18. Courses include starting in art and performance, first diplomas in art and design, performing arts and music, national certificate in visual studies, national diplomas in art and design, fashion, musical theatre, music technology, foundation studies in art and design, and part-time embroidery and drawing and painting courses.

## Strengths

- high success rates on many courses
- high standards of practical work
- very effective progress resulting from good teaching
- wide range of courses with high rates of progression
- highly effective leadership and management.

## Areas for improvement

- low achievement of key skills.

## Achievement and standards

49. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on first diploma and national diplomas in performing arts provision are high. Many learners achieve high grades. Success and pass rates on short courses are slightly below national average. Retention rates on level 3 courses have declined to around the national average. Pass rates in key skills application of number level 2 and communication level 3 are poor. Learners' practical work is of a high standard. Learners on the national diploma art and design courses make very good progress, compared with their prior attainment.

## Quality of provision

50. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to ensure learners make good progress. In the best lessons, teachers' insistence on professional standards of work and behaviour encourages learners to achieve the highest standards. These lessons contain lively activities which enable learners to progress well. In a music technology lesson, good targeted questioning consolidated learners' understanding. In art and design and dance lessons, learners improve the quality of their work quickly using evaluative feedback from teachers and peers.
51. The extent to which the provision meets the needs of learners is good. The range of courses and levels is wide. Learners' internal and external progression rates are high and many go on to higher education and work in the creative



industries. Learners benefit from a wide range of international, national and local visits that broaden their horizons and inform their creative practice well.

52. Learners' guidance and support are satisfactory. Proactive learning support tutors provide timely and flexible additional learning support. Learners receive good support to progress from level 2 to 3 through a very successful pilot bridging and mentoring project. Poor practice in the recruitment and initial guidance of learners in 2006/07 led to a low retention rate on the national diploma in fashion and fine art. Learners now benefit from a more rigorous interview and selection process.

### Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. Managers set clear directions and develop effective strategies to address areas of concern. They take appropriate actions to improve the quality of provision. Communication and team working are particularly good. Teachers make a valuable contribution to quality improvement and the development of the department. Learners benefit greatly from staff who are practitioners and showcase their work regularly. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report is accurate.

## Pre-foundation studies

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

54. Individual learning programmes are available, including accredited courses in a range of creative, practical and vocational subjects at pre-entry to entry level 3. Approximately 30 full-time and 40 part-time learners are aged 16 to 18 and 90 adult learners are part-time. Full-time learners take entry level certificates. Most of the provision is at the college's main site, but some is at Radbrook and community centres.

### Strengths

- high success rates on courses for adults
- good development of learners' self-confidence
- good systems to encourage learners' health and safety
- wide range of vocational and practical courses
- very effective personal support.

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates by learners aged 16 to 18
- underdeveloped recording and reporting of learners' progress
- insufficient planning of learning suited to individual learners' level of ability
- insufficient work experience opportunities
- insufficient rigour of internal lesson observations.

### Achievement and standards

55. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Adult learners achieve high success rates on courses in social, life and vocational skills. Success rates on courses for learners aged 16 to 18 are low. Learners progress from entry level to entry level 3 programmes appropriately, although only a few progress onto level 1 courses or gain employment. The recording and reporting of learners' progress in relation to targets contained within individual learning plans is underdeveloped. All learners make good gains in confidence, especially those with mental health needs who re-engage in learning successfully. The development of independence skills, however, is limited. Learners are well aware of health and safety issues.

### Quality of provision

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The very good relationships which exist between staff and learners contribute significantly to learners' enjoyment and high motivation levels. Learners make satisfactory progress with their communication skills. Too few lessons are good or better. Planning for learning does not take into account individual learners' ability levels. Learners have insufficient opportunities to direct their learning, or to develop their problem-solving skills.

57. The extent to which the provision meets learners' needs is satisfactory. Learners benefit from the good range of social, life, vocational and practical courses. They can take courses well linked to their individual learning plans and long term goals. The college accurately identifies that work experience opportunities are limited and is taking action to address this. The opportunities to reinforce and practise work-related skills within real working environments are insufficient. Provision for learners to improve their independence skills is limited.
58. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Personal support for learners is very effective. The level of support for those learners with complex learning difficulties or disabilities is high. Personal tutors use pre-entry and initial assessments to compile useful profiles which enable staff to support learners well. Transition arrangements for learners entering and leaving the college are in the process of development.

### Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Team work is effective and focuses clearly on improving provision. Actions to address the areas for improvement are being taken. Staff have a suitable range of skills and qualifications and participate well in the wide range of staff development and training opportunities. The quality assurance of lesson observations lacks rigour. The self-assessment process is inclusive, but the report does not include clearly stated strengths and a few areas for improvement identified during inspection. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The links with external support agencies and local schools are good, but the use of community facilities to extend learning opportunities is underdeveloped.

## Business, administration and finance

Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Context

60. Courses are available in business, management, accounting and administration. Approximately 200 learners are enrolled, most of whom are part-time adults. Nearly two thirds are on accounting courses. Two thirds are female. Nearly 30 advanced apprentices are on work-based learning accounting courses and 45 learners are on administration, management and team leading programmes through workforce development, Train to Gain and European Social Fund (ESF) funded programmes.

## Strengths

- high and improved success rates
- highly effective resources for learning
- good partnership activities to promote employer engagement.

## Areas for improvement

- narrow range of provision
- lack of rigour in quality improvement.

## Achievement and standards

61. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are high on the level 3 accounting course. Advanced accounting apprentices succeed well. Success rates for business administration learners in workforce development programmes are high. The retention rate on the level 2 accounting course declined in 2006/07. The success rate on the level 4 accounting courses declined to well below the national average. Most learners make satisfactory progress. They are punctual and attendance is satisfactory. Learners demonstrate good practical skills and respond to questioning confidently and accurately. They produce work of a good standard.

## Quality of provision

62. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most teachers provide learners with well planned activities which engage them appropriately. Learning materials are of a high standard and learners benefit from using improved ILT resources. Assessment and the identification of additional learning needs are satisfactory.
63. The extent to which provision meets learners' needs is satisfactory. The range of courses is narrow and this limits the choices learners have for progression. No short courses are available in accounting or administration. Level 1 courses are not available. In workforce development a wide range of flexible and responsive training options leads to administration, accounting and management qualifications which learners and employers value. Business learners benefit from direct experience of visits and interviews with young local entrepreneurs.

64. Guidance and support are good. Staff have a good understanding of their learners' needs and respond well to them. They monitor learners' progress, attendance and punctuality carefully and take prompt actions when additional support is required. Teachers meet the needs of the many part-time learners who are in full-time employment well and provide effective advice and guidance. Staff have improved how they review learners' progress by using better records and on-line recording.

#### Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have improved resources with a better range of classrooms and increased access to ILT. The leadership and management of the area have changed and are effective although it is too early to judge the full impact. Managers use self-assessment regularly to identify areas for improvement. The current self-assessment report, however, lacks sufficient analysis of areas for improvement and does not present convincing evidence to support the strengths. The quality improvement planning process lacks sufficient rigour and lacks any specific or measurable actions to improve retention and success rates. Partnerships with other training agencies and employers are good.

## Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared 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	775	61	65	-4	1597	64	62	2
	05/06	625	68	69	-1	913	72	65	7
	06/07	761	77	*	*	1095	77	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05								
	05/06								
	06/07								
NVQs	04/05	165	82	68	14	42	81	66	15
	05/06	79	75	72	3	39	85	74	11
	06/07	115	86	*	*	31	77	*	*
Other	04/05	610	56	64	-8	1555	64	62	2
	05/06	546	67	69	-2	874	72	65	7
	06/07	646	75	*	*	1064	77	*	*

\* The 2006/07 national success rates were not released at the time of this inspection.

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	680	59	61	-2	814	61	60	1
	05/06	778	67	66	1	839	62	66	-4
	06/07	918	73	*	*	1202	67	*	*
GCSEs	04/05	24	38	64	-26	58	53	63	-10
	05/06	33	67	68	-1	35	69	67	2
	06/07	7	86	*	*	33	48	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	29	69	67	2				
	05/06	19	47	69	-22				
	06/07								
NVQs	04/05	218	53	57	-4	300	68	60	8
	05/06	199	60	65	-5	291	62	67	-5
	06/07	245	77	*	*	580	66	*	*
Other	04/05	409	63	61	2	455	58	59	-1
	05/06	537	70	66	4	512	61	65	-4
	06/07	666	71	*	*	589	68	*	*

\* The 2006/07 national success rates were not released at the time of this inspection.

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	471	64	68	-4	635	56	58	-2
	05/06	397	66	70	-4	525	59	63	-4
	06/07	427	65	*	*	541	68	*	*
A/A2 Levels	04/05								
	05/06								
	06/07								
AS Levels	04/05	19	58	66	-8	32	25	52	-27
	05/06					20	55	55	0
	06/07	11	27	*	*	27	30	*	*
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	24	42	61	-19	18	56	54	2
	05/06					13	69	57	12
	06/07								
NVQs	04/05	46	65	63	2	146	50	56	-6
	05/06	26	65	71	-6	95	55	63	-8
	06/07	28	71	*	*	200	62	*	*
Other	04/05	380	65	60	5	430	60	59	1
	05/06	365	67	65	2	392	60	64	-4
	06/07	384	65	*	*	309	75	*	*

\* The 2006/07 national success rates were not released at the time of this inspection.

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2005 to 2007.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners *	College NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate **	College framework rate **	National framework rate **
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	75	48	48	36	34
		timely	71	37	31	28	21
	05/06	overall	93	55	54	49	44
		timely	107	39	34	33	27
	06/07	overall	102	66	***	59	***
		timely	105	46	***	40	***
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	107	61	50	50	38
		timely	127	5	29	5	22
	05/06	overall	84	65	58	63	53
		timely	45	16	38	13	33
	06/07	overall	158	67	***	56	***
		timely	149	48	***	40	***

\* 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'

\*\*\* National success rates were not released at the time of this inspection.

Table 5

Success rates on work-based learning 'Train to Gain' programmes managed by the college 2007 to 2008 (part year).

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2006-07	overall	102	62
		timely	58	57
	2007-08 (6 months)	overall	78	82
		timely	58	74

Note: 2007-08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first 3 months or greater of the LSC contract year

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

\*\*\* Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'Skills for Life'