Chichester College

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:
• *grade 1 – outstanding*
• *grade 2 – good*
• *grade 3 – satisfactory*
• *grade 4 – inadequate*

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

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 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.

Description of the provider

1. Chichester College is a large general further education college (GFE), located in the south-west of West Sussex. The main campus is on the edge of Chichester. In 2002, the college merged with Brinsbury College, a former specialist land-based college, which has now diversified into other curriculum areas, such as hairdressing and motor vehicle. There are outreach centres in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, and the college supports a vocational skills centre on the site of Bognor Regis Community College. The college's mission is to be world class.

2. The area around Chichester is generally affluent, but a few areas served by the college are considerably less prosperous, particularly along the coast to the south of the city. The main employment sectors are retail, manufacturing, education and health services. The proportion of school leavers in West Sussex with five or more GCSEs at A* to C, including maths and English, is above the national average. In 2006/07, 4.5% of the economically active population was unemployed, just above the average for the south-east as a whole.

3. Chichester College offers programmes in all 15 sector subject areas (SSAs) to 3,600 full-time learners aged 16-18, and to 4,673 adult learners. The largest curriculum areas by total learner numbers are health, public services and care; information and communication technology (ICT); retail and commercial services; arts, media and publishing; and preparation for life and work. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is small, but higher than for the local population as a whole. The difference is due to the significant recruitment of international learners who attend the college to study further and higher education courses. In 2006/07, more than 2,500 overseas learners enrolled at the college.

4. The college also holds large contracts for work-based learning apprenticeships and Train to Gain, particularly in health and care, land-based studies, engineering, construction, retail and commercial, and business. Over 1,000 learners aged 14-16 who are at school attend vocational courses at the college's two campuses. The college provides personal and community development learning to over 900 learners.

5. Chichester College has six Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) with a range of partners in care, construction, rural business, horticulture, sport and tourism. In 2005, the college gained the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in recognition of its international work. It has been accredited recently with the New Standard for employer responsiveness.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2

Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2

Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2

Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity	*Good: Contributory Grade 2*

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision   Good: Grade 2

6.   Chichester College is a good college with good capacity to improve, which is working well to meet the needs of its community. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners develop good personal and practical skills. Success rates for adult learners at level 1 are high and are consistently above national averages. They are broadly average or just above national averages for learners aged 16-18 and adults at all other levels. Success rates are high in some curriculum areas, such as arts, media and publishing and languages but there is too much variation in success rates across the range of the college's work. Retention rates are satisfactory in many areas of the college. Success rates for apprentices in work-based learning are poor, but have improved in 2007/08 to date. They are good for Train to Gain learners. Progression rates and success rates for learners aged 14-16 are good.

7.   The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are good. The lesson observation process provides a generally reliable view of the quality of lessons, but the quality assurance of the process in some areas is insufficient. The identification and provision of additional learning support are good. Target-setting to improve achievement and to extend learners is weak.

8.   The extent to which the college meets the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local community is outstanding. Partnership working is very strong and employer engagement is excellent. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. The range of courses is very good with clear entry and progression routes. The college targets many under represented groups of learners through its responsive and successful community work.

9.   Guidance and support are good, in particular the personal support that learners receive. Tutorials are effective overall but student tutors give insufficient attention to the monitoring of learners' progress in some parts of the college.

10.   Leadership and management are good. Senior managers and the governing body set a clear and inclusive strategic direction for the college, which is responsive to learners', employers' and staff needs. The college has a significant number of successful partnerships and is innovative and well respected. The college embeds and promotes equality of opportunity well. Quality improvement strategies have improved significantly in 2007/08 and are now good, but are not yet fully effective in a few areas of the provision. The self-assessment process is good. Performance management has improved significantly in 2007/08 following the fall in success rates last year.

Capacity to improve   Good: Grade 2

11.   The college's capacity to improve is good. Managers are committed to re-
       establishing the positive trend in success rates up until 2005/06 and have
       implemented a number of strategies which are starting to improve performance
       again in 2007/08. These actions are already having a positive effect on
       attendance and retention rates. The appointment of heads of studies has
       brought a more consistent approach to many areas of the provision. The self-
       assessment process is good. The most recent report identifies key strengths
       and areas for improvement accurately but the grades for a small number of
       areas do not always reflect that diagnosis, and in particular the effect of some
       poor performance. Managers are open, accepting and self-critical in identifying
       areas for improvement. College plans are consistent with local LSC objectives
       and are fully supported by the LSC, partners and employers.

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

12.   The college has made satisfactory progress in rectifying the areas for
       improvement noted in the last inspection report. Overall success rates improved
       significantly in 2005/06 to be above national averages for many learners, but
       have fallen in 2006/07. Teaching and learning are now good and leadership and
       management remain good. The college has not resolved fully some of the key
       areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Key strengths

   • learners' good personal and practical skills
   • high success rates in retail and commercial enterprise; arts, media and
     publishing; languages; and preparation for life and work
   • high success rates for Train to Gain
   • strong focus on improving teaching and learning
   • good additional learning and specialist support
   • outstanding range of provision
   • outstanding educational and social inclusion
   • good pastoral support for learners
   • clear vision and strategy for the college
   • good governance and financial management
   • college's role in its community and the very strong partnerships.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

   • retention rates
   • the poor overall and timely success rates for apprenticeships
   • the variation in success rates across the range of the college's work and the
     low success rates in construction, engineering and ICT

- the quality assurance of the lesson observation process
- target-setting and reviewing of learners' progress
- aspects of quality improvement.

Main findings

Achievement and standards   Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:
Work-based learning   *Inadequate: Grade 4*
Train to Gain   *Good: Grade 2*
Learners aged 14-16   *Good: Grade 2*

13.   Learners' achievement and standards overall are satisfactory, but good in Train to Gain and for learners aged 14-16. They are inadequate for work-based learners. This does not reflect accurately the more optimistic self-assessment judgement of the college. At the time of the last inspection, success rates for most learners on long courses were above average. There was a decline in performance in 2003/04, but then a considerable improvement between 2004/05 and 2005/06 when success rates in significant areas of the college's work were above average, particularly at level 1. Since then, the rate of progress has declined so that success rates for 2006/07 are broadly satisfactory.

14.   Unvalidated college data indicate that success rates for adult learners were high on level 1 courses in 2006/07 and for the preceding two years. They represent approximately one third of the total adult learners on long courses. Success rates were around the national average for this age group at levels 2 and 3. Success rates for learners aged 16-18 were at, or slightly above, the national average in 2006/07. There is too much variation in success rates across the range of the college's work in different curriculum areas. Success rates for Train to Gain have improved significantly over the last year and are now high. Similarly, apprenticeship success rates were low in 2006/07 and although they have improved this year, they are still below the national average for most apprentices. Not enough learners achieve their framework within the planned timescale. Progression rates and success rates for the large numbers of 14-16 learners are good.

15.   Learners enjoy their studies and make satisfactory progress. They develop good personal and practical skills. They demonstrate high levels of maturity and respect in lessons. The standard of their work is generally satisfactory. Attendance rates are satisfactory as are key skills success rates, which have improved significantly to 60% in 2006/07.

Quality of provision   Good: Grade 2

Contributory grades:
Work-based learning   *Satisfactory: Grade 3*

16.   The quality of provision is good overall, but satisfactory for work-based learners. The college's self assessment identifies these differences. Teaching and learning are good overall, but training is satisfactory for work-based and Train to Gain learners. The summary of lesson observations carried out by the

college in 2006/07 and 2007/08 shows a significant proportion of lessons that are good or better, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The college has a strong focus on teaching and learning and inspectors had sufficient confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the observations in most curriculum areas. The quality assurance of the lesson observation process is weak in some parts of the college. Some observers do not focus sufficiently on learning or on the judgements to support outstanding classes. The 'Chichester Learning Model' provides a rigorous structure for the planning and observation of lessons, with structured support for those tutors who receive satisfactory or inadequate grades. Curriculum teams and observers share good practice regularly and take part in well planned professional development sessions to improve teaching.

17.   Lesson planning is good. In the better classes, tutors stimulate learners' interest through a range of imaginative activities. Learners are confident and are very willing to contribute to discussions and to ask questions. The use of interactive learning technology (ILT) is good in many lessons and helps learners to extend their learning. The use of question and answer techniques to check understanding and to involve all learners is an area for improvement in some classes.

18.   The identification and provision for additional learning needs are good. The provision of this support is both timely and effective and learners report high levels of satisfaction with the support they receive. The individual support sessions are relevant to learners' needs and the subjects they are studying.

19.   The suitability and rigour of assessments are satisfactory. Some learners receive very detailed feedback on how to improve their assessments, but on other courses there is little encouragement and advice on how to improve. Target- setting for learners is not yet sufficiently rigorous and challenging. The college is aware of this area for improvement and is carrying out audits to identify areas for further staff training. The use of motivational targets to challenge more able learners and to improve value added is at a very early stage of development.

20.   The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is outstanding, as is its educational and social inclusion. The college offers an extensive range of provision across all levels and subjects. Entry and progression routes are clear. Managers use a wide range of data very well to develop the provision. The responsiveness to employers' training needs is excellent. Employers have access to a wide range of general and specialised courses. College managers take a leading role in local and area initiatives to integrate pre- and post-16 education and training. The six CoVEs enable the college to develop very good specialist resources and employer links.

21.   The college has a very successful programme for pupils aged 14-16 from a wide range of local schools. More than 1,000 school pupils study at the college each year on an extensive variety of courses. The college delivers much of this curriculum through successful strategies to diversify the provision at the Brinsbury campus.

22. Learners participate well in the wide enrichment programme. Activities link well with the *Every Child Matters* themes. Many programmes incorporate a rich variety of external speakers and course-related visits to enhance the curriculum successfully. The college has revised its key skills strategy, but this does not meet the needs of employers and higher education for learners with low GCSE results. The college does not have a formal strategy for gifted and talented learners to challenge and improve the performance of its more able learners.

23. The college's provision for the advice, guidance and support for learners is good. Induction arrangements are thorough. Pastoral and welfare support for all learners is good. The college has excellent residential facilities for learners. The student centre brings all support services together successfully in a very prominent location in the college. Particularly good support is available for learners with mental health issues and learners with disabilities. Learners receive appropriate careers advice and guidance, but the college has identified the need through self-assessment to integrate curriculum-based careers guidance and work experience with the central students' services.

24. The college has introduced a new system of student tutors in 2007/08. They monitor learners' attendance, punctuality and behaviour closely. Group tutorials are good. Some individual tutorials are less effective, as are the arrangements for the remainder of the group during one-to-one tutorial sessions. Some tutors do not use feedback from a wide range of sources sufficiently to review learners' progress thoroughly.

Leadership and management   Good: Grade 2

Contributory grades:
Equality of opportunity   *Good: Grade 2*
Work-based learning   *Satisfactory: Grade 3*

25. Leadership and management are good. The college self-assessment report judged leadership and management to be outstanding. Overall, college success rates improved in 2005/06 to be above the national average, but they fell in 2006/07 to be around the national rate for most age groups and levels. Senior managers and governors set a clear and inclusive strategic direction for the college. Governors are very knowledgeable about the college and external influences which determine change. After extensive consultation with staff and learners, the college has developed a set of clear core values to underpin its operations and strategies.

26. The college has a significant number of successful collaborative partnerships in and beyond Sussex. It is innovative and well respected for its commitment to new initiatives. The college is one of the first to gain the New Standard for employer responsiveness. It has experienced significant levels of growth in recent years and continues to diversify its target markets very effectively.

27. Internal communications are strong. The college has made exceptionally good use of its 'learner voice' strategies to improve communications and to involve

learners in assessing teaching and learning. The recent management restructure has improved communications among curriculum leaders and enabled heads of studies to rectify some areas for improvement across particular types of qualifications. The college plans staff development well to improve teaching and learning.

28.   Equality of opportunity is good. The response of the college to child protection legislation, gender and equality requirements and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 is good. The college welcomes learners from a very wide range of backgrounds and has extensive provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The effective integration of large numbers of international learners helps to raise awareness of cultural diversity. The monitoring of success rates for different groups of learners is under developed in some curriculum areas.

29.   Most accommodation and learning resources are good. The college has refurbished the entrance to the Chichester site to a high standard and improved the Brinsbury campus since the previous inspection. However, some classrooms are old and congested. Learners have access to high quality specialist resources. Financial management is strong and the college provides good value for money.

30.   Quality assurance arrangements are improving and are now good. Overall curriculum target-setting is improving and managers now have much better access to reliable data. Performance management has improved in the new management structure and attendance, retention and achievement meetings provide a useful focus for monitoring in-year data and trends. Some lesson observation reports are not sufficiently rigorous. Target-setting for individual managers to improve their own performance varies too much across the college.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04/05	1099	58	65	-7	1293	68	62	6
	05/06	2077	76	69	7	2252	72	65	7
	06/07	1973	69			1729	71		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	2	50	68	-18	…	…	…	…
	05/06	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
	06/07								
NVQs	04/05	130	79	68	11	47	81	66	15
	05/06	87	54	72	-18	81	70	74	-4
	06/07	109	73			80	80		
Other	04/05	967	55	64	-9	1246	67	62	5
	05/06	1990	77	69	8	2171	73	65	8
	06/07	1864	69			1649	71		

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04/05	1506	57	61	-4	1442	55	60	-5
	05/06	1797	68	66	2	1875	66	66	0
	06/07	1939	71			1938	67		
GCSEs	04/05	220	69	64	5	99	69	63	6
	05/06	243	69	68	1	82	82	67	15
	06/07	316	72			97	84		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	133	69	67	2	37	76	75	1
	05/06	150	77	69	8	45	76	68	8
	06/07	118	75			32	84		
NVQs	04/05	357	53	57	-4	405	55	60	-5
	05/06	392	68	65	3	449	68	67	1
	06/07	498	66			383	70		
Other	04/05	796	54	61	-7	901	52	59	-7
	05/06	1012	66	66	0	1299	64	65	-1
	06/07	1007	73			1426	64		

Table 3

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

		16-18				19+			
Notional Level	Exp End Year	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	*Diff*	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	*Diff*
3 Long	04/05	2568	66	68	-2	1376	66	58	8
	05/06	2585	69	70	-1	1263	67	63	4
	06/07	2710	73			1481	65		
A/A2 Levels	04/05	434	83	86	-3	90	81	69	12
	05/06	482	86	87	-1	121	83	72	11
	06/07	468	91			94	87		
AS Levels	04/05	1116	65	66	-1	156	68	52	16
	05/06	1120	65	67	-2	99	66	55	11
	06/07	1249	69			119	56		
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	101	46	61	-15				
	05/06	39	54	66	-12				
	06/07								
NVQs	04/05	51	82	63	19	237	59	56	3
	05/06	75	75	71	4	322	62	63	-1
	06/07	91	73			538	62		
Other	04/05	866	59	60	-1	877	66	59	7
	05/06	869	64	65	-1	708	67	64	3
	06/07	902	68			730	66		

College data for 2006/07 has yet to be validated for Tables 1, 2 and 3. Course areas
with low numbers have been omitted from the table for the benefit of clarity.

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	56	45	48	29	34
		timely	56	38	31	23	22
	05/06	overall	45	40	53	31	44
		timely	54	28	34	19	27
	06/07	overall	84	55	64	42	58
		timely	82	46	43	37	37
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	158	61	51	42	39
		timely	161	19	29	14	22
	05/06	overall	182	66	58	57	52
		timely	188	35	38	27	34
	06/07	overall	312	58	65	54	61
		timely	269	42	47	39	44
Adult training (long courses) ***	04/05	overall	…	…	…	…	…
		timely	…	…	…	…	…
	05/06	overall	…	…	…	…	…
		timely	…	…	…	…	…
	06/07	overall	33	45	…	…	…
		timely	33	45	…	…	…

*   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'