

Westminster Kingsway 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 students 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 child development; science and mathematics; hospitality and catering; visual and performing arts and media; English for speakers of other languages; literacy and numeracy; business, administration and law.

Description of the provider

1. Westminster Kingsway College (WKC) is a large general further education college situated in central London. The college operates on six main sites across Camden and the City of Westminster. The college also makes extensive provision in the community through a network of some 50 centres, mainly located in Camden, which it uses in partnership with the local authority, the libraries service, social services and community organisations.

The college is funded mainly by London Central Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

2. In 2006/07 the college enrolled 9,152 students who took 12,592 courses. The majority of these students are 19+ and just over half of all students study part-time. Two-thirds of the college's enrolments are at national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 or below. WKC offers courses in 13 of the 15 sector subject areas and approximately 32% of the college provision is dedicated to English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes, most of which are accredited. The number of basic education students, including refugees and asylum seekers, in 2006/07 is 38% of total enrolments. The college offers higher education to approximately 700 students annually and there is a small number of work-based students.
3. Half of all students define their ethnic origin as being other than white. Students represent over 60 nationalities and speak 54 different languages.
4. The college is currently building a replacement campus in Kings Cross that is due to open in Spring 2009. The college mission requires it to 'support all of its students in realising their ambitions as students within a diverse and fully inclusive educational community'.
5. Westminster and Camden are boroughs of sharp contrasts between wealth and poverty with some of the most expensive property in the capital as well as areas of deprivation. In both boroughs, the non-white ethnic communities comprise about 27% of the population. Unemployment rates in Camden and Westminster are 7.9% and 7.2% respectively.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and child development	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Hospitality and catering	Outstanding: Grade 1
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory : Grade 3
English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

6. Overall effectiveness is good. Westminster Kingsway College provides a good achievement and standard of education and training. Most aspects of the college's provision have improved rapidly over the last five years. The proportion of students who successfully complete their courses has improved and is now good. The standard of students' practical work and their vocational skills are good. However, their punctuality to lessons needs to be improved.
7. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Strategies to bring about improvements to the quality of lessons, including the college's lesson observation system, are increasingly effective. The better lessons are characterised by good use of information learning technology (ILT) and challenging activities; however, in too many lessons there is still insufficient attention paid to the range of students' individual needs.
8. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. The richness of London's cultural diversity is celebrated and students show respect and tolerance for one another regardless of background. The range of courses offered is good and is carefully geared to meet the needs and interests both of students and of the local economy. The range of provision offered to new migrants to the city is particularly impressive. The college's engagement with employers is highly successful.
9. Guidance and support for students are good. Students receive good advice, guidance and personal support. In most areas, tutorial provision is effective. The use of individual learning plans (ILPs) to help students to monitor their progress and take the next steps of learning is not consistently implemented.
10. Leadership and management are good. The clarity of vision promoted by the principal and senior leaders has been instrumental in bringing about significant improvement. Self-assessment is outstandingly astute and accurate. Quality assurance procedures are very rigorous, although there are some inconsistencies in the implementation of them in a minority of areas. Curriculum management is improving. Good financial management has brought about significant improvements to the college's financial position.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

11. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve. Much attention is given to the college's financial stability whilst planning to meet the needs of its potential students and the requirements of funding bodies. Students' success rates have risen significantly and measures to consolidate this improvement are secure. Quality assurance procedures are rigorous,

although some inconsistencies remain in their implementation. Although improvements to the overall quality of teaching and learning have been rather slow, middle managers increasingly recognise what they need to do to bring about change. The reliability and use of management information have improved, but there remains much to be done before the college can provide and make best use of sophisticated reporting systems on all aspects of students' progress. The rigour and accuracy of self-assessment bodes well for the future of the college.

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

12. The college has made good progress in addressing weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The proportion of students who successfully complete their courses has improved significantly. Students' attendance at lessons is better, although their punctuality remains a significant concern. The use of ILT to help students to learn is much improved. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning have met with limited success, although there are encouraging signs that lessons are improving in many areas. The quality of provision in key skills has improved in some curriculum areas, although there remains much to be done to improve success rates overall. Good financial management has led to more efficient deployment of resources and value for money is good. Curriculum management is now good in several areas and improving in others.

Key strengths

- improved and good success rates
- outstanding educational and social inclusion
- highly responsive provision
- good support for students
- outstanding provision in hospitality and catering
- highly successful employer engagement
- good strategic leadership and management
- outstanding self-assessment.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- students' poor punctuality at lessons
- low key skills success rates for college-based students
- insufficient proportion of good or better teaching and learning
- ineffective setting and monitoring of individual student targets
- not enough sharing of good practice
- slow implementation of plans to tackle areas of poor performance.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

13. Achievement and standards are good. Since the previous inspection the college has made significant progress in improving long course success rates. Over a four year period from 2003 to 2007, success rates have improved by 13%. Overall, success rates for long courses are above the national average. Success rates for 16 to 18 year old students at levels 1 and 2 and adult level 3 are significantly above national averages. Success rates in hospitality, information technology, business, travel and tourism, English and students with learning difficulties and/or disability are high. Success rates for vocational courses at all levels are generally good and A level and AS success rates have made satisfactory progress over time and are around the national average.
14. Most short courses are in ESOL and success rates are generally improving over time and are now satisfactory, and recently show a marked improvement. Minority ethnic students at 16 to 18 years old succeed above the national average, although adult students do not and are generally below the national average.
15. The development of vocational and personal skills and the standard of student work are good overall. Progression rates on to higher levels of study are satisfactory. Overall, attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Punctuality of students to lessons in some sector subject areas is weak.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

16. The overall quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The college's own observations of teaching and learning for 2006/07 show no increase in the proportion of good or better teaching since 2005/06. However, the teaching in some curriculum areas, for example science, has improved. There is still too much variation in the quality of teaching between different curriculum areas. Generally, the better teaching is at level 1, and in hospitality and catering, leisure, travel and tourism, business and on programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Overall, the quality of teaching is better in lessons taught by full-time employed teachers rather than part-time teachers or agency staff.
17. In the better lessons good use is made of ILT and activities are challenging and interesting. Weaker lessons are characterised by poor planning or choice of activities. Information from initial assessment is not used well enough to ensure that lessons successfully meet the needs of all students. Often there are insufficient checks on individual learning.
18. Key skills are taught very successfully in visual and performing arts and in discrete literacy and numeracy classes. However, in some curriculum areas,

- for example health and social care, key skills are not taught in a vocational context and students' attendance at key skills lessons is poor.
19. Initial assessment is thorough and prompt. Additional learning support is good. Most lessons at level 2 and below have some sessions where a learning support teacher works alongside the vocational teacher to provide individual learning support.
 20. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Policies and procedures for assessment are clear and comprehensive, with targets for the return of marked work. In most cases students receive good feedback which helps them to improve their work. Internal verification is thorough, well planned and rigorous.
 21. The range of provision is good with a wide curriculum offer and clear progression pathways from entry level to level 3 and beyond. In response to local need, the college priorities for curriculum development are in hospitality, creative industries and business and administration, ESOL and basic skills. The college works effectively with community groups and partners to offer a wider range of courses for 14 to 16 year old students. Relations with employers have rapidly developed over the past three years and the college runs a good number of bespoke programmes for businesses and employers. Of particular note are the innovative initiatives in creative industries and hospitality. However, the extent to which employers are engaged in a small number of curriculum areas like science is under-developed.
 22. The college has a good range of enrichment activities and additional qualifications to extend students and to engage their interest. Uptake on enrichment activities is variable, however, and in some areas the offer is narrow.
 23. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding. The college is a safe place in which to work and there is an obvious atmosphere of tolerance and respect. The breadth and depth of the college's curriculum is central to its commitment to social and educational inclusion. In addition to the full-time provision there is extensive part-time and community learning. The provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Throughout the college, diversity is celebrated by attractive displays and posters and through relevant activities, such as Black History Week.
 24. Support and guidance for students are good. Initial guidance and information are well organised. Prospectuses are informative, attractively designed and contain clear information on progression pathways. The college collaborates well with local schools and other partners to provide initial guidance and information. Students' additional learning needs are effectively diagnosed and additional support is good. Support for vulnerable students and those with a disability is good. Overall support for students through the tutorial programme is good, although some tutorial provision for full-time A level students aged 16 to 18 is inconsistently applied. The college

is aware of this weakness and has recently made progress in improving the provision. Tracking and monitoring of students' progress are good, particularly in hospitality and visual and performing arts and media. Students are generally set relevant and challenging targets to achieve and their progress is well recorded. However, ILPs are not equally well completed in all areas of the curriculum. Careers advice has been improved for those taking full-time advanced courses and the Aim Higher programme has successfully increased the success rate of university applications.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Good: Grade 2

25. Leadership and management are good. The principal and senior managers have promoted a clear and coherent strategy to bring about improvement in all aspects of the college's provision. Students' outcomes on long courses have improved significantly and are good. The college's financial position has been strengthened, the curriculum is frequently reviewed to anticipate future needs, and an ambitious accommodation strategy is coming to fruition. Progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning has been less impressive, but leaders at all levels are taking the necessary steps to ensure that classroom practice improves. The quality of provision in curriculum areas is good or satisfactory, except in hospitality where it is outstanding. College leaders have made significant progress in establishing a culture where staff teams take greater responsibility for their students' success.
26. The college has comprehensive and rigorous quality assurance systems that are driving up standards in most areas of the college. Management information is increasingly reliable and is used well to monitor most aspects of performance, although the implementation of arrangements for monitoring students' attendance and punctuality at lessons is inconsistent. College leaders recognise the need to improve further the range and accessibility of timely reports to monitor performance. Managers at all levels have made progress in improving communication and tightening lines of accountability, although in a small number of instances poor practice is neither identified nor challenged sufficiently swiftly.
27. Curriculum management is at least satisfactory in all areas and progress is being made in raising expectations of middle managers' performance. The college's lesson observation system has led to tangible improvements in teaching in several areas of the college, although leaders recognise that much work is needed before all students are guaranteed a high quality experience in lessons. The college knows itself well; self-assessment is both rigorous and accurate, and does not avoid identifying areas for improvement. Development plans to improve quality are sensibly focused on key issues, although targets for improvement are on occasion rather vague.

28. Resources are satisfactory in most areas and significant progress has been made in improving students' access to, and use of, ILT. Poor accommodation at some sites is being addressed through the accommodation strategy. Teaching staff are well qualified. Staff development is appropriately focused on a sensible blend of college and individual priorities. Performance reviews are thorough, although the associated paperwork is unnecessarily cumbersome.
29. The college works hard to promote equality of opportunity and meets its legislative responsibilities. Progress is being made in improving access to buildings for those with restricted mobility. Efforts to increase the cultural diversity of the college executive team to reflect the community served by the college have so far been unsuccessful. Particularly thorough analysis of data informs the college's approach to equal opportunities. The promotion of equality and diversity through the broader curriculum, and through marketing materials, is good. Staff and governors have completed child protection training and appropriate procedures are in place for vetting the suitability of staff to work with children and young people.
30. A diverse governing body, with an eclectic mix of skills and expertise, provides appropriate challenge and support to senior leaders and is keenly involved in charting the college's future strategy. The college's partnership work with employers is now a strength. The financial position of the college is much improved, and financial management is good. Currently, in the context of rising success rates for students, the college provides good value for money. Leaders recognise the complex financial environment they face over the next few years, and are deploying appropriate strategies to meet these challenges.

Sector subject area

Health, social care and child development

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

31. Full-time courses are offered in health and social care at levels 1, 2 and 3, mostly at the Highbury and King's Cross Centres. These include Next Steps courses which provide access at levels 1 and 2 for ESOL students. Part-time provision includes NVQs in child care and health and social care and level 3 pharmacy technician qualifications. Just over 200 students study full-time, 43 on level 1, 62 on level 2 and 116 on level 3 courses. Of these approximately half are aged 16 to 18. Around 360 adult students study part-time.

Strengths

- high success rates on level 2 full-time and NVQ level 2 childcare
- much good teaching and learning on adult courses
- particularly effective additional learning support on childcare courses.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient planning to meet the individual needs of students aged 16 to 18
- slow implementation of plans for improvement.

Achievement and standards

32. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on full-time level 2 and the NVQ in childcare courses are good and have been significantly above national rates for the past three years. All other courses are satisfactory, although success rates have declined in 2006/07. Standards of work are satisfactory. Part-time students develop and successfully extend their workplace skills. Written work is satisfactory. ESOL students effectively develop their language skills in a vocational context. Student progress to higher level courses within the college and to higher education is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

33. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Much of the teaching for adults is good. Lessons are well planned and effectively link theory and practice. However, lessons for 16 to 18 year olds are insufficiently planned to meet their needs. Individual student needs are not always met and more able students are not fully challenged. However, additional learning support workers provide good learning support. The use of ILT is satisfactory but mostly confined to PowerPoint presentations. This is particularly effective on the adult childcare courses. Assessment is satisfactory and students receive appropriate feedback.

34. The range of provision is satisfactory. Courses in access to nursing and social care, specialist pharmacy and care courses for ESOL students successfully meet local needs. However, the range of childcare courses is narrow. Links with employers are satisfactory and are being further developed with the local NHS. Enrichment activities are limited with few additional qualifications or activities. Some work placements are planned late and are not fully integrated into the course programmes.
35. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Students receive good individual support through personal tutors. Group tutorials appropriately support personal development. However, electronic ILPs for 16 to 18 year olds have not been completed by tutors and there is no record of review or target setting.

Leadership and management

36. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but there is slow implementation of actions for improvement. It is too early to assess the impact of recent changes in curriculum management. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Science and mathematics

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

37. Science and mathematics provision is offered at the King's Cross centre. Students may study GCE A levels in chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics and applied science (double award). Level 2 programmes are available in GCSE mathematics and BTEC First applied science. At the time of the inspection there are 331 students, with 283 aged 16 to 18 and 48 adults. Most students attend full-time and the gender mix is approximately even. The majority of students are from minority ethnic groups, mainly of Asian and African-Caribbean heritage.

Strengths:

- high success rates in advance mathematics courses
- effective use of a broad range of activities to consolidate learning
- effective management action to secure improvement.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates in AS chemistry and physics courses
- insufficiently thorough written feedback on students' work
- ineffective use of ILPs and target setting for students.

Achievement and standards

38. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Overall success rates for mathematics courses are high and above the national average. GCE AS and A-level mathematics show improvement over a three year period and have very good success rates. Success rates for AS biology are good; however, for AS chemistry and physics they are consistently low. The large majority of students who apply to university are successful in gaining a place.
39. The standards of work in mathematics and science are good. Students present their work well and mathematics students enjoy their studies and report that they find their lessons interesting. Attendance rates are satisfactory. In some classes, student punctuality to lessons is weak.

Quality of provision

40. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Schemes of work and lessons are generally well planned. Teachers use a broad range of activities to effectively consolidate learning. The use of ILT is satisfactory. Learning materials are of a high quality and these are frequently used by students during independent study. The individual needs of some students are not sufficiently met and some students lose interest, either due to a lack of challenge or not being able to understand parts of the task.

41. The range of provision is satisfactory. A new vocational course was introduced in the last academic year and clear progression pathways for students are available from level 2 and level 3 courses. Enrichment activities are improving and now include trips to museums and external lectures.
42. Support for students is satisfactory. Students' progress is reviewed regularly at individual meetings. However, students' targets are often too general and not specific enough. Communication between classroom teachers and tutors is not sufficiently developed to inform students of their progress in each subject. Homework is set regularly, although marking sometimes contains insufficient teacher comment to clearly indicate how students' work can be improved.

Leadership and management

43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-assessment reports for mathematics and science are accurate and self-critical. Curriculum managers rightly identified key issues that needed to be improved and have made good progress. For example, the quality of teaching and learning was highlighted as an area of concern; targeted staff training and support has now improved the quality of teaching and learning. Better admissions advice ensures students are enrolled to the most appropriate course and there is improved support for students, including language support to mathematics students. The students' voice is valued and class representatives meet with course teams in both science and mathematics.

Hospitality and catering

Outstanding: Grade 1

Context

44. The college provides a broad range of programmes from NVQ levels 1 to 3 and short courses. Students can gain these qualifications by enrolling onto full-time, part-time or work-based study. An access programme to higher education is available as are apprenticeship programmes. At the time of inspection there were 252 students aged 16 to 18 and 220 adult students on full-time programmes. Of the 338 part-time students, 306 were adult students and of all students, 60% were male.

Strengths

- high success rates in food preparation and cooking and for apprentices
- outstanding success rates at level 3 professional cookery
- very good teaching and learning
- excellent development of practical skills
- highly responsive and innovative employer engagement
- outstanding curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates in food service.

Achievement and standards

45. Achievement and standards are very good. Success rates are good or better in all food preparation and cookery courses and outstanding at level 3. Apprenticeship framework success rates are high. The success rates on level 2 food and drink service have declined over time and are below the national average. The college has recognised this and has put in place systems to improve course performance. Most full-time students on levels 1 and 2 food service will complete an intensive programme. The standards of practical kitchen work and restaurant service are excellent and students enjoy and participate eagerly in all lessons. Students succeed well in national and international competitions with some students completing work experience in top London venues or overseas.

Quality of provision

46. Teaching and learning are very good and outstanding in practical lessons. Students use a range of high quality processes, materials, equipment and ingredients to support learning. They are fully involved in their lessons and able to work independently. Students demonstrate confidence and subject knowledge above expected levels. Lessons are planned appropriately with a range of teaching and learning strategies identified. However, teachers provide little reference to meeting the needs of individual students or how this will be addressed in their planning.

47. Students are able to participate in a wide variety of enrichment activities. These include shows and exhibitions, and entry to national competitions. Some students achieved work experience prizes in Mexico and New Zealand.
48. The college has successfully engaged a wide range of excellent employers to support the development of programmes. Employers offer high quality work placements and employment opportunities. The college works with the hospitality industry to good effect to develop specific programmes.
49. Support for students with additional learning needs is good. The college has recently implemented electronic ILPs which are used effectively to monitor students' progress and set targets. Students are able to access this information through the college's virtual learning environment and propose topics for progress review meetings with teachers.

Leadership and management

50. Curriculum management is outstanding. Communication between managers and teachers is regular, effective and helps to maintain high standards. The self-assessment and internal verification procedures are robust and thorough. Lesson observation and staff appraisal lead to better teaching and provide excellent support for teachers to update their skills. Realistic work environments are well resourced and there is good management of work-based students. All of the strengths identified at the last inspection remain in place and in addition the college has successfully improved provision to include young apprenticeships for 14 to 16 year olds and commercial courses for employers.

Visual and performing arts and media

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

51. The college offers full-time courses in art and design at the Kentish Town Centre and music, performing arts and media at the Regent's Park Centre. A range of part-time courses is offered at a number of other sites. At the time of the inspection there were 386 students enrolled on full-time courses, the majority of whom are adults, and 411 students on part-time courses. Art and design courses include introductory, first and national diplomas in art and design. Performing arts courses include both first and national diplomas, AS and A-level drama and theatre studies. In media, a national diploma in media is offered as well as AS/A2 in media, AS communication studies and A-level film studies. Music provision consists of national diplomas in music practice and music technology. A young apprenticeship programme at level 1 has started recently in performing arts.

Strengths

- high success rates on first diploma in art and design and national diploma in performing arts
- good development of practical skills
- good development of key skills to enhance vocational progress
- particularly effective industry-based enrichment activities in performing arts.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on national diploma in music technology
- poor attendance and punctuality
- insufficiently challenging teaching in some lessons.

Achievement and standards

52. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on first diploma in art and design and national diploma in performing arts are high and consistently above the national average. Success rates on the national diploma in music technology are significantly below the national average. Students in all curriculum areas show a good development of practical skills. Value added scores for A-level media and film studies are low. Generally, progression to higher levels of study is satisfactory, although from AS to A level it is low. Students' attendance and punctuality are poor.

Quality of provision

53. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Key skills development is good and supports students' progression to higher education and employment. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The most successful lessons are where energetic and enthusiastic teachers are able to engage and sustain the interest of students with a series of well paced activities. Literacy

skills are encouraged and in one lesson a display of key words encouraged the development of a technical vocabulary. In less successful lessons, little provision is made for more able students to work on more challenging exercises. Learning outcomes are frequently not made explicit in lesson planning. Assessment is satisfactory, although written feedback does not always inform students clearly on how they can improve.

54. Industry-based enrichment activities are particularly effective in performing arts. The range of provision effectively meets the needs of the local community. Support for students is good and they value the frequent one-to-one progress reviews.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication is good and staff meetings often focus on teaching and learning. Internal observations of teaching are well established but overall the proportion of good or better lessons has declined. The self-assessment report is rigorous, analytical and mostly accurate. Curriculum team leaders make effective use of data to provide course teams with weekly reports on attendance and retention. Quality assurance systems are satisfactory and curriculum team reviews are becoming increasingly self-critical. Accommodation is poor in Kentish Town but is to be replaced within the academic year.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

56. ESOL courses form a significant proportion of the overall college provision, with 114 programmes from entry level 1 to level 2. Programmes are delivered on all main sites, in three community venues and for six employers. Most courses last 12 or 18 weeks, with most students attending 4 to 5 times per week. Out of the 2,900 students studying during inspection, most are based on the Victoria and Soho sites. Most students are adults.

Strengths

- good support for students to promote independent learning skills
- good development of curriculum to meet student needs
- successful strategies to improve retention and achievement.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient development of speaking and listening skills
- ineffective use of individual learning targets on some courses.

Achievement and standards

57. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates are generally satisfactory, although on speaking and listening programmes they are low but improving. Students develop a range of language, personal and study skills. They can self-assess well and report improved communication in private and professional lives. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Punctuality and attendance are much improved from 75% in 2005/06 to 80% in 2006/07.

Quality of provision

58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, activities relate directly to the everyday life and interests of the students. Tasks are skilfully staged with much student interaction, practise for pronunciation and systematic correction of errors. However, on some courses, students are not always given sufficient time to interact and practise oral and aural skills. In these lessons, language is not systematically modelled, rehearsed and drilled before role-plays and small group work and teachers often rely on the use of paper-based materials and activities to develop speaking and listening skills.
59. The use of individual learning targets on some courses is ineffective. For example, the results of the diagnostic assessment do not routinely support the setting of targets with students. Individual learning targets are not always used to inform planning of learning. Learning goals are not always related to language skills development and extension activities are not routinely planned for faster students.

60. The curriculum is well developed to meet the wide range of student needs. Programmes have been reviewed effectively to include clear progression routes to vocational courses, employability skills and citizenship. The timing and duration of courses have been carefully planned to suit the needs of all students, including shift-workers.
61. Students are well supported to develop their independent learning skills. They have good access to the virtual learning environment (VLE) either in the college's learning centres or from home. This encourages them to complete homework or missed work and to check their performance levels.

Leadership and management

62. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Most teachers have relevant subject qualifications. Comprehensive strategies for retention and achievement have led to much improved punctuality, attendance in lessons and at exams. Monitoring systems are well developed and supported by timely and highly effective action planning with students. Managers use data well to analyse performance across centres and course levels and review targets thoroughly for each course. Communication is effective and staff have good opportunities to share practice across centres. The observation of teaching and learning is robust, although action planning for further improvements can take too much time. Equality and diversity are well promoted. The self-assessment process is inclusive and thorough and identified all strengths and areas for improvement found during inspection.

Literacy and numeracy

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

63. At the time of inspection 2,258 students are enrolled, of whom the majority are aged 16 to 18. The college offers full-time entry level courses in literacy and numeracy for 92 students aged 16 to 18. Part-time courses at entry level, level 1 and level 2 are offered in literacy and numeracy to 285 adult students. Communication and application of number in key skills at levels 1 and 2 enrol over 1,800 students in each subject. In addition, 620 students are in receipt of additional learning support.

Strengths

- high success rates on entry level and level 1 long courses
- good programme of workplace literacy and numeracy
- particularly effective in-class literacy and numeracy support.

Areas for improvement

- very low success rates in key skills application of number at level 2
- insufficient flexibility of part-time adult discrete literacy and numeracy courses.

Achievement and standards

64. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for entry level and long level 1 literacy and numeracy courses are high. Success rates are satisfactory in key skills at level 1 and communication at level 2, but they are very low for application of number at level 2, with falling retention and a variable pass rate over a three year period.
65. Students make satisfactory progress in lessons and the standard of students' work is good. Students enjoy their lessons, although attendance rates to some key skill classes are low.

Quality of provision

66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In most lessons teachers ensure the outcomes of initial and diagnostic assessments inform learning. In many lessons, discussions with students are lively and managed well by teachers. In weaker lessons, opportunities to engage students and develop skills using ILT are missed. Key skills lessons are vocationally relevant. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress is satisfactory. Learning resources are satisfactory overall but accommodation is of mixed quality.
67. The range of programmes and activities is satisfactory. A programme of workplace literacy and numeracy courses is good. However, there is insufficient flexibility of part-time programmes. Opportunities for adults to improve their literacy and numeracy skills are limited.

68. Guidance and support for students are good. Students receive good personal, academic and dyslexia support. An extended programme of in-class support across the college is particularly effective. Support teachers generally teach vocationally-based key skills to the same student group. This has led to a more coherent approach to the teaching of underpinning skills and the number of students supported has increased.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. Since the previous inspection, there has been significant change in the management of support and key skills. This has led to a positive focus on improving achievement. Support for students has much improved; however, the overall improvement in key skills results is too gradual. The college has responded well to requests for the introduction of literacy and numeracy courses for 14 to 16 year old students at entry level.
70. Embedding literacy and numeracy is a strategic priority. Links with employers are good and work experience is in place for entry level courses. However, there is no overarching Skills for Life policy or identification of local need. Staff are trained and qualified and many have specialist qualifications or are working towards them. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and areas for improvement are being addressed.

Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

Context

71. The college offers full- and part-time courses at levels 1 to 3. Qualifications include introductory, first and national diplomas, NVQs, GCE A levels, access to higher education programmes, and various awards in text processing and business administration. There are 306 students aged 16 to 18 and 264 aged 19 years and over. Most students study full-time or on substantial part-time courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- good teaching and learning
- good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on GCE A-level accounting and NVQ customer service
- low key skills success rates.

Achievement and standards

72. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are often high, especially in 2006/07. For example, on the national diploma and on the modular access law programme they are 78%, having improved consistently over the last three years. Success rates on the modular secretarial diploma course are also high, especially in text processing. Success rates are very low on both years of GCE A-level accounting, having consistently declined over the last three years, and on the NVQ customer services.
73. Overall success rates in key skills for 2006/07 are low in both centres. However, the improved management of key skills provides a firm basis for improvement in 2007/08.
74. Students often achieve good standards in their work and make good progress in their understanding of business. They contribute well in lessons. Students' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. National diploma and access students make excellent progress to higher education; well over 90% for national diploma students in 2006/07.

Quality of provision

75. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are often well planned. Teachers expertly detail in lesson plans their approaches to meeting students' particular needs. In lessons, they successfully use these approaches. Teaching often engages students well, with interesting and topical activities, drawing on contemporary business and legal issues. The use of ILT by

teachers and students is good and much improved since the last inspection. Students comment positively on its use. All rooms provide good access to ILT and the well developed VLE. Students have satisfactory opportunities for work experience.

76. Teachers are appropriately qualified. The previous inspection reported insufficient commercial updating by teachers; this issue has now been successfully addressed. Staff development is well planned and carried out. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory. Other resources to support learning are good.
77. Assessment and the monitoring of students' progress are good. These are much helped by the active participation of students through the VLE. Teachers monitor students' progress regularly and give them clear and constructive feedback.
78. Provision successfully meets the needs and interests of students. The range and levels of courses facilitate students' significant progression.
79. Guidance and support for students are good. Initial guidance is good. Appropriate testing of literacy and numeracy identifies and effectively plans for students with additional support needs. Students value the tutorial programme. Tutorials are well structured, addressing both group and individual needs. Individual tutorials have a clear focus on students' targets and performance. The programme to prepare students for entry to higher education is particularly good.

Leadership and management

80. Leadership and management are good. Managers have a good understanding of the work of the area and successfully promote improvement. Quality assurance and improvement are good. Improvements are significant since the last inspection, especially in success rates and in teaching and learning. Self-assessment is rigorous and accurate.
81. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Teachers take particular care to address this in their teaching.

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 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04/05	912	84	62	22	1967	64	62	2
	05/06	946	75	68	7	1141	70	67	3
	06/07	717	82	NA	-	730	72	NA	-
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	127	90	64	26	4	100	NA	-
	05/06	129	89	70	19	7	71	NA	-
	06/07	0	0	NA	-	0	0	NA	-
NVQs	04/05	93	89	66	23	264	75	71	4
	05/06	96	80	70	10	132	74	72	2
	06/07	81	74	NA	-	109	67	NA	-
Other	04/05	692	83	61	22	1699	63	61	2
	05/06	721	71	67	4	1002	69	67	2
	06/07	636	83	NA	-	621	72	NA	-

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 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04/05	1074	67	61	6	1639	69	60	9
	05/06	1011	65	65	0	1214	59	66	-7
	06/07	700	76	NA	-	818	72	NA	-
GCSEs	04/05	237	77	66	11	177	70	64	6
	05/06	229	71	69	2	168	66	67	-1
	06/07	180	81	NA	-	98	67	NA	-
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	149	81	67	14	10	60	65	-5
	05/06	152	76	66	10	20	80	65	15
	06/07	14	NA	NA	-	1	100	NA	-
NVQs	04/05	221	60	56	4	478	68	62	6
	05/06	146	60	64	-4	400	54	69	-15
	06/07	144	61	NA	-	392	69	NA	-
Other	04/05	467	60	59	1	974	70	58	12
	05/06	484	60	63	-3	626	61	65	-4
	06/07	362	80	NA	-	327	76	NA	-

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.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04/05	1690	65	66	-1	1379	62	57	5
	05/06	1649	67	68	-1	999	66	63	3
	06/07	1633	71	NA	-	895	74	NA	-
A/A2 Levels	04/05	411	81	85	-4	175	68	74	-6
	05/06	429	81	86	-5	176	71	74	-3
	06/07	359	86	NA	-	109	80	NA	-
AS Levels	04/05	782	61	64	-3	149	58	53	5
	05/06	793	59	64	-5	140	49	57	-8
	06/07	774	66	NA	-	88	60	NA	-
Access	04/05				-	281	72	NA	-
	05/06				-	287	67	NA	-
	06/07				-	0	0	NA	-
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	147	63	60	3	20	60	52	8
	05/06	140	71	68	3	17	59	54	5
	06/07	0	0	NA	-	0	0	NA	-
NVQs	04/05	89	61	54	7	219	47	55	-8
	05/06	37	68	66	2	105	74	65	9
	06/07	65	83	NA	-	92	88	NA	-
Other	04/05	261	58	57	1	816	65	57	8
	05/06	250	64	62	2	561	68	62	6
	06/07	435	66	NA	-	606	73	NA	-

NA = Not available

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of students *	College NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate **	College framework rate **	National framework rate **
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	11	73	48	45	34
		timely	11	73	31	50	22
	05/06	overall	2	0	53	0	44
		timely	2	0	34	0	28
	06/07	overall	21	95	64	76	56
		timely	21	NA	-	-	-
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	15	60	51	33	39
		timely	15	60	29	33	22
	05/06	overall	33	73	58	67	52
		timely	33	70	38	67	34
	06/07	overall	28	86	65	75	60
		timely	28	NA	-	-	-

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