

Hastings 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.

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
- specialist provision in: engineering; construction; information and communication technology (ICT); hair and beauty; art, performing arts and media; and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Description of the provider

1. Hastings College of Arts and Technology (HCAT) is a medium-sized, general further education college. It provides general further education for Hastings and the surrounding rural area in Rother District. The college is based in St Leonards on Sea and consists of the main campus and a sixth form centre and Enterprise centres. The college has a residential conference centre and delivers adult education through a range of venues. The mission statement is 'high quality education and training, in partnership'.

2. The college serves two very different local areas in social and demographic terms. Hastings is noted for its poor infrastructure and transport links, with high unemployment and seasonal low-wage economies. Part of Hastings is a designated Neighbourhood Renewal Area and it is the only part of Sussex in receipt of Objective Two European Union structural funding. The district of Rother has an economy that is rurally based. The area has a high percentage of small businesses with 85% of Hastings businesses having fewer than 10 employees.
3. The college offers a range of courses to meet local community needs. Of the 15 subject sector areas, the college offers 14 of them. The college is expanding the work-based learning programmes for young people and adults and offers a range of adult and community learning courses. It also delivers full-cost international and higher education courses.
4. In 2006/07, the college enrolled around 1,916 full-time and 464 part-time 16-18-year-old enrolments and around 9,514 adult enrolments. Many of these are on part-time courses, some of whom are funded via non-LSC sources.
5. The current principal joined the college in September 2006. Since then the college has appointed a new senior management team and at the time of the inspection the college was re-structuring most management teams. The college is currently in the middle of a new build on two new sites. Strategic planning of the new build will ensure that both campuses will be more accessible to the local community with much improved access to local transport facilities. The college governors recently approved the re-naming of the college to Sussex Coast College, Hastings.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

Engineering	Good: Grade 2
Construction	Inadequate: Grade 4
Information and communication technology (ICT)	Good: Grade 2
Hair and beauty	Good: Grade 2
Art, performing arts and media	Outstanding: Grade 1
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for the three years following the previous inspection remained just under the national average. However, in 2006/07 overall success rates for long courses made good improvements. Retention rates for the current year are encouraging. The acquisition of workplace skills for many students is good. The standard of students' work, attendance and progression on to further study is satisfactory.
7. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Strategies to bring about improvements to the quality of lessons, including the internal lesson observation system, are increasingly effective. The college has significantly reduced the level of inadequate teaching and learning. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Arrangements to monitor learners' progress in literacy and numeracy are underdeveloped.
8. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Since the previous inspection the college has effectively increased partnership arrangements to support the economic and social regeneration of Hastings. The breadth of provision reflects the needs of the local community. Good progress is being made to work with employers.
9. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. The co-ordination of advice and guidance has recently been improved. Additional learning support is good for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pastoral and welfare support is effective. The tutorial programme is satisfactory.
10. Leadership and management are good. Actions to improve since the arrival of the current principal have been good. A newly appointed senior management team is in place and at the time of the inspection the college was partly through a major management re-structure. The college has a clearly defined strategic direction and this is well communicated to stakeholders. The transformation of the college and the management of change are good. Signs of improvement are clearly evident. The college recognises the need to improve the links between strategic targets and operational plans. Quality assurance arrangements are improving and are satisfactory overall. Financial management is good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

11. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve. Learners' success rates have risen and most are now at or above the national average. Quality assurance and management of key performance indicators have significantly improved, although it is too early to judge the impact of some of these revised procedures. Senior managers have a very clear understanding of what needs to

be achieved and are well supported by governors. The strength and determination to improve provision are apparent. Re-structuring aims to place the college in a better position to tackle the challenges identified. The college has started to further develop a coherent curriculum suitable for delivery in the new accommodation. The self-assessment report is accurate and generally reflected the findings of the inspection team.

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

12. Overall, the college has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Most of the strengths have been maintained. The one unsatisfactory curriculum area was re-inspected and found to be satisfactory and the curriculum has been re-designed to tackle poor provision and provide clear progression routes for all learners. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved and unsatisfactory teaching sessions are significantly reduced. Literacy, numeracy and language support for full-time students is improving. Although some accommodation continues to be unsatisfactory, the college maintains the current site to a good standard and plans to move into new accommodation in 2009. Quality assurance is now satisfactory or better in all curriculum areas.

Key strengths

- strong leadership and good management of change
- clear strategic direction
- good and developing partnership working
- good success rates for adult students on level 1 courses
- outstanding art and design provision.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates for level 2 learners aged 16-18
- continue to increase the amount of good or better teaching and learning
- further develop links between strategic targets and operational plans
- implement equality schemes and diversity impact measures
- inadequate construction provision
- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress in literacy and numeracy.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

*Adult and community learning
Learners aged 14-16*

*Good: Grade 2
Good: Grade 2*

13. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Following the previous inspection and up to 2006, the college maintained overall long course success rates in line with sector improvements at just below the national average. However, in 2006/07, overall long success rates improved by 7% to 72%. Adult and 16-18-year-old success rates in this year improved by 12% and 2% to 76% and 68% respectively.
14. Adult long course success rates at level 1 are high and significantly above the national average. Level 2 success rates were at the 2005/06 national average; however, they made little improvement in 2006/07. Level 3 success rates were below the 2005/06 national average of 63% by 2 percentage points but made an 8% improvement in 2006/07.
15. Success rates for 16-18-year-old learners at level 1 and now level 3 are satisfactory at 73% and 72%. However, level 2 success rates are low. In 2006/07, success rates declined to 61%. In-year retention rates for 2007/08 long courses are encouragingly good. Success rates for learners aged 14-16 are high, as are the achievement rates for adult and community learning. Overall key skills success rates are satisfactory, although there is great variation between sector subject areas. Work-based learning success rates were low but have recently much improved and are now generally satisfactory.
16. The acquisition of workplace skills is good for many learners; for example, in art and design, and hair and beauty. Overall, the standard of learners' work is satisfactory, as are learners' attendance and progression onto further courses of study.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The college has successfully implemented a strategy to significantly reduce inadequate teaching, although too much teaching remains no better than satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, teaching has improved on preparation for life programmes and remains strong in art and design, and hair and beauty. The college has accurately assessed the need to improve teaching and learning in particular sector subject areas.
18. Teachers are supportive of learners and promote learning in a safe environment. In the better lessons teachers plan teaching and learning well. They use information learning technology (ILT) creatively to engage learners.

Photographic evidence and practical demonstration are used well. Learners with different needs are challenged to test their knowledge and understanding.

19. In the least successful lessons, teachers often supply the answers to questions too soon. Learners' lateness or poor attendance is disruptive. The use of ILT is underdeveloped and sometimes cramped accommodation limits learning activities. Teachers pay insufficient attention to different learning styles and some lessons are too rigid and slow to motivate learners who learn at a faster pace.
20. The college has improved arrangements for observing teaching and learning. Senior managers have a better understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and carefully use the information from lesson observations to evaluate teachers' needs. Good arrangements exist to improve satisfactory or inadequate teaching and teachers particularly value this support. Trained observers implement the college's teaching and learning policy adequately and written findings are satisfactorily moderated. However, too many observations contain insufficient information on the teachers' skills in developing sector skills or the quality of learners' work. Most observation records contain no information about the promotion and integration of equality and diversity or basic and key skills.
21. Assessment and internal verification for vocational, work-based learning and adult and community programmes are satisfactory. The identification of learning needs is good. However, arrangements for the monitoring of students' literacy, language and numeracy needs are unclear. Written and verbal feedback to learners is generally satisfactory.
22. The college provides a good range of programmes to meet the needs and interests of students. Since the last inspection the college has adapted its curriculum offer to take more account of learners' starting points. A range of courses from entry level upwards is offered in most sector subject areas, and curriculum planning is coherent. The college has recently opened a new sixth form centre. Students have a range of good opportunities to follow courses that enrich the curriculum, although the quality and organisation of these courses is inconsistent.
23. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. An innovative programme, developed through effective working with other local agencies, has had significant early success in attracting young people not in education, training or employment back into further education. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is extensive. The college is appropriately involved in curriculum initiatives for students aged 14-19 in the area, including specialist diplomas. The college is making good progress in improving both the range and the quality of its work with employers.
24. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Arrangements for initial advice and guidance have recently become better co-ordinated and links with local schools are being strengthened. Students who are identified as needing additional learning support, and all those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive good quality support throughout their time at college.

25. The tutorial programme is satisfactory. Students are entitled to regular individual progress reviews, although in a minority of cases these are insufficiently frequent. Individual learning plans arising from these reviews are usually good but a few are cursory, with insufficient attention paid to identifying precisely what students need to do to improve their prospects of success. Group tutorials pay particularly good attention to the five themes encapsulated in the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda, although again not all students benefit equally from high quality group tutorials. The college is aware that its arrangements for quality assuring tutorial provision across the college lack rigour.
26. Students value highly the pastoral and welfare support they receive. Students throughout the college feel safe and any bullying or similar incidents are dealt with highly effectively; students commented on the high profile of the principal on the rare occasions where incidents required rapid intervention.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: Grade 3

27. Leadership and management are good. The principal and senior management team have established a very clear vision, mission and strategy to raise aspirations of students and improve the quality of provision. All staff, through effective presentations, development activities and one-to-one sessions with the principal, contribute to clearly defined core principles and shared values. These support the development of a shared culture at the college focused on achieving excellence. This is beginning to pay dividends in most curriculum areas. Governance is good. The governors have a good range of skills, knowledge and experience.
28. The new principal and senior management team are providing strong leadership and the college is progressing well through the transformational programme. High levels of accountability and improved teamwork are apparent. At the time of the inspection the college was part way through a major restructure to improve provision and respond to national, regional and local demands. Good marketing and communication strategies ensure that stakeholders, including staff and students, are aware of all developments. The college has significantly increased the range and number of external organisations it links with and is increasingly responsive to local needs.
29. Quality assurance arrangements have been strengthened recently. There has been considerable investment in raising the quality of teaching and learning. Effective systems are used to disseminate innovative and advanced teaching practices.
30. More accurate and reliable management information is increasingly used to monitor learners' performance and plan for improvements. Curriculum area reviews have recently been re-designed and performance is now measured

against an appropriate range of performance indicators. Operational targets are starting to be linked to the overall strategic targets, although some targets for student success rates are not always sufficiently challenging.

31. Curriculum management is at least satisfactory and is generally improving. Course reviews and curriculum self-assessments are mainly satisfactory and accurate. However, they do not clearly identify the aspects of teaching and learning that contribute most to learners' success, or lack of it. The full impact of new strategies has not yet been realised in all areas of the college.
32. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Statutory obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA) are fulfilled. Equality schemes have been published, although they are not fully implemented. Monitoring of equality data is good. The promotion of equality and diversity overall is satisfactory, although in some curriculum areas it is underdeveloped. The college has started to develop equality and diversity impact measures for each curriculum area. Procedures for safeguarding learners are in place.
33. Teaching staff are generally well qualified and most have appropriate occupational expertise. Current accommodation and resources are generally satisfactory. The college is scheduled to relocate to a new site in the centre of Hastings in 2009, as part of a major project contributing to the regeneration of the town. The project is being particularly well managed, with staff at all levels contributing to future planning. Financial management is good and value for money is satisfactory.

Sector subject area

Engineering

Good: Grade 2

Context

34. At the time of the inspection, 222 learners attended a range of vocational and work-based learning programmes at levels 1 to 3. In addition there are 44 learners aged 14-16 attending college to complete the practical aspects of their GCSE or achieve a level 1 unit. Female learners account for 6% of current enrolments.

Strengths

- high success rates on long programmes at levels 1 and 2
- good links with employers
- good pastoral and additional support
- effective strategies to improve quality of provision.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on level 2 electrotechnical programme
- insufficient challenge to meet individual needs in theory lessons.

Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on many courses have improved considerably in 2006/07. Success rates are particularly high on the level 1 performing engineering operations, and high on the level 2 performing engineering operations and level 3 electrotechnical programme. The success rate on the level 2 electrical programme is low and declining and the progress of some learners is slow. Key skill success rates are now good. The standard of learners' theory and practical work is satisfactory. Progression for all learners at all levels is good.

Quality of provision

36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and managed; the better lessons use a range of teaching and learning strategies to continually engage the learner. In fabrication and welding practical lessons learners agree targets at the beginning and evaluate progress at the end of the session. Overall, the standard of learning materials is satisfactory, although tutors in materials lessons make good use of photographic evidence to show the effect of heat treatment on material structures. In some theory lessons there is insufficient challenge to meet individual learning needs; sessions are too tutor centred and lack effective use of question and answer to probe understanding and develop the topic further. Accommodation is satisfactory. However, the workshops for fabrication, welding and electrical installation are cramped. Assessment at college and in the workplace is satisfactory.

37. Links with employers are good. The college delivers customised short courses and arranges apprenticeships programmes with local companies.
38. The range and responsiveness of the curriculum are satisfactory to meet local needs. Learners' success is celebrated at an annual awards evening.
39. Full-time learners benefit from good pastoral and additional support. All learners with additional needs are retained and achieve high success rates. Staff ensure all learner needs are responded to well. The individual tutorial process is particularly effective in monitoring learner progress and developing learners' confidence.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are good. Effective strategies have been implemented to improve the quality of provision and improve success rates. Communication within the department is good. Resources overall are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and new staff are encouraged to develop their skills further. Management information is used well to monitor and improve performance. Course reviews are satisfactory and the self-assessment report is broadly accurate. The quality improvement plan accurately reflects priority areas for improvement. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Construction

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

41. The college provides full-time and part-time craft courses in bricklaying, wood occupations, painting and decorating. Learners progress from entry level to level 3 in all craft areas. In addition, plumbing and technician courses are provided at levels 2 and 3. Of the 590 learners attending college courses, 250 are 16-18-year-olds, 40 are women, 47 are on apprenticeship programmes, 34 are from minority ethnic groups and 44 are aged 14-16.

Strengths

- high success rate on the national diploma course in construction and NVQ2 plumbing
- good practical standards of work in plumbing.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on craft foundation, intermediate and NVQ carpentry courses
- insufficient challenge to learners' understanding and knowledge
- poor use of space in carpentry and bricklaying.

Achievement and standards

42. Overall, achievement and standards are inadequate. Success rates on the national diploma course in construction and the NVQ2 in plumbing are high. In-year retention on one-year courses is high. However, success rates on the full-time foundation, intermediate construction awards and the NVQ2 in carpentry are low. Framework completions have much improved recently and are close to a low national average.
43. The overall standard of learners' work in lessons is satisfactory, although in plumbing the standard is good as learners are able to accurately set out, cut and fix steel pipe work well.

Quality of provision

44. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Following recent improvements, lessons are well planned and carefully thought out. Teachers are able to manage learner behaviour well. However, apart from painting and decorating lessons, learners are not sufficiently challenged in either reinforcing or developing their learning. For example, teachers often answer their own questions or provide too much information that does not probe or extend learning. Extension activities to stretch the more able are not always used. In practical lessons teachers are keen to provide effective practical demonstrations from which learners benefit greatly. However, the benefits of demonstrations in carpentry and bricklaying are greatly reduced as workshop space allocated to specific

tasks is cramped. For example, in a carpentry lesson learners were working in groups setting out a pitch roof that was too small to effectively develop skills.

45. Learner tracking is robust. Learners are aware of what they need to do to complete their qualifications. Portfolios are enhanced by individual learner tracking that is updated on a regular basis. Assessment is satisfactory. Learners are provided with clear assessment tasks and criteria. Written feedback on learners' work, although positive, does not provide for constructive comments that would enable future learner reflections and developments. One-to-one academic tutorials set specific learner targets that directly relate to learners' own progress on the course whilst also considering personal problems.

Leadership and Management

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent actions are improving the provision. A new manager is in post. A very clear improvement plan, coupled with a mixture of external and internal support, is being used to address areas for improvement. For example, advanced teaching practitioners and subject learning coaches are being used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Regular meetings with targeted actions ensure improvement plans are monitored well. All staff are actively involved with improving the provision. However, it is too early to evaluate its full impact on learning. Manual handling of some heavy materials by staff are not sufficiently risk assessed.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

Good: Grade 2

Context

47. At the time of the inspection there were 452 learners on vocational ICT programmes. Of these, 150 are 16-18-year-old learners generally on full-time courses and 302 part-time adult learners. The college is a regional Cisco Academy centre. The college offers a range of courses from entry level 3 to level 3. These include the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT), European Computer Driving License (ECDL) at levels 1 and 2 and BTEC qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

Strengths

- high success rates on the majority of courses
- good use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to support learning
- effective strategies to ensure students succeed.

Areas for improvement

- low and declining success rates on level 2 courses for learners aged 16-18
- insufficient pace and enjoyment in many lessons.

Achievement and standards

48. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on the majority of full-time courses have much improved in 2006/07 and compare well against the sector national average. Success rates for 16-18-year-old learners at level 1 have been consistently high for a number of years and are improving further. Success rates on the BTEC National Diploma are satisfactory. Success rates for 16-18-year-old learners at level 2 are low and declining.

49. The standard of most learners' work is satisfactory. Most learners acquire appropriate and relevant workplace skills; for example, one learner has set up an IT solutions company whilst still at college. Progression to further study is good. Learners on the BTEC National Diploma acquire additional industry sector qualifications. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

50. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The recording and monitoring of students' progress are good. Learning and understanding are effectively checked during lessons. The planning of lessons and the use of learning resources are satisfactory. Learners are well disciplined and generally have a good relationship with teaching staff.

51. In a few lessons, imaginative use is made of ILT. For example, entry level learners were asked to experiment with different graphing formats to display information. The use of ILT is well developed outside lessons. There is insufficient pace and enjoyment in many lessons. Teaching does not always

meet the needs of the full range of learners' differing ability levels. Opportunities for learners to develop their literacy and numeracy skills are often missed as is the promotion of equality and diversity.

52. The range and levels of ICT courses are good and effectively meet the needs of learners and employers. There are good opportunities for learners to progress from entry to higher level programmes and to employment. In partnership with local schools the college will be offering the new ICT Diploma for learners aged 14-19 from September 2008.
53. Support and guidance for learners are good. Tutors are approachable and learners value the support they receive. Assessment and target setting for learners are satisfactory. However, action plans often lack challenge. Full- and part-time learners' reviews of progress are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Many effective strategies have been introduced since the last inspection to improve learner success rates and the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are suitably qualified, although the updating of staff vocational skills is underdeveloped. Accommodation and ICT resources are good. The use of management information for target setting and monitoring performance at course team level is satisfactory. The self-assessment report accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement but lacks rigour in evaluating teaching and learning.

Hair and beauty therapy

Good: Grade 2

Context

55. The college offers full-time courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy at levels 1, 2 and 3. Part-time courses are also offered in hair, barbering, beauty therapy and holistic therapies such as Indian head massage and Swedish body massage. The college also offers curriculum provision for 14-16-year-old learners and on the young apprentice programmes for work-based learners. There are currently 214 full-time and 136 part-time learners. There are 201 learners aged 16-18 and 149 adults. Thirteen learners aged 14-16 are currently on the increased flexibility programme (IFP).

Strengths

- very high success rates for NVQ2 beauty therapy
- high success rates on levels 1 and 2 hairdressing
- good development of practical skills of students
- extensive enrichment activities
- good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on level 1 beauty therapy.

Achievement and standards

56. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on many courses, particularly level 1 hairdressing at 100% and beauty therapy at level 2. Key skills success rates are good. However, there are low success rates on beauty therapy level 1 and apprenticeship programmes.
57. Learners develop high standards of practical skills and place appropriate emphasis on health and safety and client care. Learners are confident and competent in the performance of treatments.

Quality of provision

58. Generally, teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and there are good working relationships between teachers and learners. Students participate well in the sessions and there is good use of peer teaching.
59. Practical assessment of learners is good and written and verbal feedback is detailed, identifying how further improvements can be made. However, feedback on theory work is less detailed and is variable in quality and quantity.
60. There are extensive enrichment activities in both hair and beauty. Students visit trade exhibitions and have demonstrations from specialist companies on skills, such as Thai massage techniques. Students undertake a variety of community activities, such as visiting homes for the elderly and meeting with young mums

to give them treatments. They also undertake fund-raising activities for charity. Progression routes for both hair and beauty learners are good and more recently there has been the introduction of the pre-foundation level programme for hairdressing.

61. Learners receive good support. Their needs are accurately identified through initial assessment prior to interview. Support arrangements are managed and communicated well. Learning support assistants are used effectively. Weekly tutorials effectively develop individual learner action plans and set appropriate targets for learners.

Leadership and management

62. Leadership and management are good. Communication and teamwork are effective and there is rigorous monitoring of student data at both team and faculty level. There is good planning of the curriculum to ensure effective use of the accommodation and to provide the most suitable lecturers to deliver the curriculum.
63. Internal verification is comprehensive, although aspects of the planning of internal verification are underdeveloped. All staff take part in the self-assessment process and are fully aware of how this feeds into the overall college self-assessment. Self-assessment of the area is broadly accurate.

Arts, media and publishing

Outstanding: Grade 1

Context

64. The college offers vocational qualifications at all levels in art and design, graphic design, fashion design and media at levels 1, 2 and 3. Courses are mostly full-time. The provision has 219 learners. Of these, 144 learners are aged 16-18 and 75 are adult learners.

Strengths

- very high success rates on most courses
- high attainment of knowledge and practical skills
- outstanding teaching and learning
- excellent enrichment and external links
- outstanding leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- no significant areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

65. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates are high on most programmes. Progression rates are very high, including good progression of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners' knowledge and practical attainment is high on all courses with many learners achieving high grades. Learners' attendance and punctuality are good and their behaviour and conduct are excellent. Key skills success rates are low, although clear strategies to improve them are now in place.

Quality of provision

66. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons and tutorials are well planned and teaching materials are of a very high quality. Teachers consistently challenge learners to consider new ideas and to evaluate their learning. Literacy development in lessons is good and there is effective enrichment of vocabulary and language. Learners develop good critical skills through peer assessment. Teaching and learning of contextual studies is innovative and fun with good opportunities for learners to explore theory through practical work. Excellent work is shown to learners to help them identify what they need to do to succeed. Teaching is differentiated successfully for each level of learning and for individual learners. The provision of additional learning support is managed effectively. In the minority of lessons, opportunities are sometimes missed for learners to independently check their learning.
67. The range of provision provides good choice and the level 1 courses are highly inclusive. Performing arts courses are not currently offered but the college plans to offer this provision in September 2008.

68. Links with community and visual arts organisations are strong and provide learners with valuable experiences of the industry. Learners organise exhibitions, make and sell work and undertake work experience in a local gallery. Links with practicing artists, voluntary organisations and schools are strong and provide good workplace skills. There is good work with other educational providers, such as Saturday art classes delivered to local young people, including primary schools.
69. Support for learners is good. Learners are closely monitored and receive regular formal and informal assessment feedback. Individual learning plans have recently been introduced and although they are used effectively on some courses there is not yet consistency. Learners are very positive about the support provided by teachers and tutors and they enjoy their courses. Parents and carers of young people are given regular formal and informal opportunities to meet with teachers and tutors.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers are committed to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Dissemination of good teaching and learning practices is good and there is highly effective subject learning coaching. Self-assessment is accurate. The recording of improvement actions and how they are monitored is underdeveloped and does not fully capture the actions being taken. Accommodation is old but is in good order and there are good displays of learners' work. Equality of opportunity is outstanding.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context:

71. The college offers 36 long literacy, numeracy and ESOL discrete programmes, including 13 courses at entry level. Courses are run on the college main site, six community venues and for one employer. Out of the 418 students studying since September 2007, 70% are ESOL learners and 85% were aged over 19.

Strengths

- very high success rates in entry and level 1 literacy and short numeracy courses
- good use of relevant contemporary topics in ESOL to support learning
- highly effective employer engagement on ESOL provision.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates in level 2 literacy, long numeracy courses and key skills communication
- insufficiently thorough target-setting with learners
- insufficient use of ILT in lessons.

Achievement and standards

72. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on entry level 1 literacy courses are significantly above the national average and short numeracy courses have 100% success rates. However, adult literacy courses at level 2 and long numeracy courses are significantly below the national average. Key skills communication success rates have fallen. ESOL success rates are satisfactory overall but are below the national average on entry level courses.
73. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners are developing their confidence and their communication skills well. They are able to apply their new skills in their everyday life. Learners are well focused on their activities and keen to complete their work. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learning in ESOL is well planned in everyday life and work contexts with regular work on topical and contemporary issues, such as healthy life-styles, social and political issues, and crime rates. In good lessons, learners enjoy working together and develop their skills well through a challenging pace and a range of interactive and individualised activities. In other lessons, there are missed opportunities to link learning with individual goals and some learners are not sufficiently stretched. The lack of computers on the main site in the literacy, numeracy and ESOL rooms prevents learners from accessing valuable learning activities and materials in a timely manner. In some lessons activities are too tutor led and there is insufficient interaction between learners. The setting of targets with learners is not

sufficiently thorough with learners' individual goals not always specific and time bound.

75. There has been very effective engagement with employers for employees with language needs, for the past two years. The quality of the two ESOL courses in the workplace is good and learners are able to attend their courses during their paid work time.
76. Accommodation and learning materials are satisfactory. Staff have suitable expertise and are updating their professional skills. The curriculum offer is satisfactory, although there is no literacy and numeracy provision in the workplace and no weekend provision. Support and advice for learners are satisfactory and the initial and diagnostic assessments are sufficiently robust to inform planning of learning.

Leadership and management

77. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Changes have been introduced successfully and communications are good. Staff morale and motivation are high. Staff are encouraged to share good practice through regular and well focused meetings. The observation of teaching and learning is sufficiently robust and informs staff development and support. The curriculum offer is being developed. Access to ILT in the classroom is not sufficient to meet the individual needs of learners. Data are now used to monitor some aspects of the provision. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory and ECM themes are well embedded on ESOL programmes. However, it is too soon to judge how the new improvement measures are impacting on the learner experience. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative in some key aspects.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 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	03/04	548	54	61	-7	1,116	53	59	-6
	04/05	734	64	65	-1	955	65	62	3
	05/06	698	71	69	2	986	63	65	-2
	06/07*	633	73	N/A		575	91	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	04/05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	05/06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	06/07*			N/A				N/A	
NVQs	03/04	42	74	61	13	17	71	62	9
	04/05	136	79	68	11	27	56	66	-10
	05/06	133	71	73	-2	51	84	74	10
	06/07*	128	79	N/A		49	84	N/A	
Other	03/04	506	53	60	-7	1,099	52	59	-7
	04/05	598	60	64	-4	928	65	62	3
	05/06	565	71	69	2	935	62	65	-3
	06/07*	505	72	N/A		526	92	N/A	

* college data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

N.B. three year outcomes are used: 03/04-05/06 (where 06/07 data incomplete) or 04/05-06/07 (where 06/07 data judged complete and reliable)

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 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	03/04	780	59	56	3	1122	58	54	4
	04/05	657	55	61	-6	1032	58	60	-2
	05/06	859	63	66	-3	717	66	66	0
	06/07*	799	61	N/A		787	67	N/A	
GCSEs	03/04	192	60	61	-1	127	58	59	-1
	04/05	36	81	64	17	48	52	63	-11
	05/06	44	64	68	-4	22	73	67	6
	06/07*	52	56	N/A		65	72	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	12	75	63	12	-	-	-	-
	04/05	20	80	67	13	8	88	75	13
	05/06	39	67	69	-2	7	86	68	18
	06/07*	49	71	N/A		7	71	N/A	
NVQs	03/04	267	58	51	7	200	45	53	-8
	04/05	209	57	57	0	140	49	61	-12
	05/06	320	63	65	-2	220	68	67	1
	06/07*	236	69	N/A		211	67	N/A	
Other	03/04	309	59	55	4	795	61	53	8
	04/05	392	49	61	-12	836	60	60	0
	05/06	465	63	66	-3	468	65	65	0
	06/07*	462	57	N/A		504	66	N/A	

* college data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

N.B. three year outcomes are used: 03/04-05/06 (where 06/07 data incomplete) or 04/05-06/07 (where 06/07 data judged complete and reliable)

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 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	03/04	499	58	65	-7	833	57	54	3
	04/05	459	66	68	-2	821	59	58	1
	05/06	364	60	71	-11	668	61	63	-2
	06/07*	380	72	N/A		520	69	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	03/04	24	63	84	-21	37	51	66	-15
	04/05	29	66	86	-20	19	68	69	-1
	05/06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	06/07*			N/A				N/A	
AS Levels	03/04	124	36	63	-27	50	26	50	-24
	04/05	11	36	66	-30	54	50	52	-2
	05/06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	06/07*			N/A				N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	138	55	53	2	44	50	45	5
	04/05	27	4	61	-57	5	40	54	-14
	05/06	15	47	66	-19	9	56	57	-1
	06/07*	22	68	N/A		6	50	N/A	
NVQs	03/04	45	69	54	15	127	44	48	-4
	04/05	34	74	63	11	173	47	56	-9
	05/06	36	50	71	-21	203	67	63	4
	06/07*	51	88	N/A		181	63	N/A	
Other	03/04	168	73	57	16	575	64	56	8
	04/05	358	71	60	11	570	64	59	5
	05/06	313	62	65	-3	456	59	64	-5
	06/07*	307	70	N/A		333	73	N/A	

* college data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

N.B. three year outcomes are used: 03/04-05/06 (where 06/07 data incomplete) or 04/05-06/07 (where 06/07 data judged complete and reliable)

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning 'apprenticeship' programmes managed by the provider/college 2005 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider /college NVO rate **	National NVO rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	22	23	48	0	34
		timely	22	14	31	0	22
	05/06	overall	21	19	53	14	44
		timely	20	15	34	10	27
	06/07	overall	19	21	64	11	58
		timely	24	4	43	4	37
	07/08 8 mnths	overall	13	54	N/A	46	N/A
		timely	11	27	N/A	18	N/A
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	37	38	51	22	39
		timely	42	21	29	14	22
	05/06	overall	49	47	58	43	52
		timely	68	39	38	33	34
	06/07	overall	72	49	65	39	61
		timely	28	32	47	25	44
	07/08 8 mnths	overall	23	70	N/A	70	N/A
		timely	28	46	N/A	39	N/A

Note 'At the time of the inspection - LSC data for 2006/07 had yet to be fully validated'

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

Table 5

Success rates on work-based learning 'Train to Gain' programmes managed by the provider/college 2007 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVO rate**
Train to Gain ***	2006/07	overall	23	30
		timely	n/a	n/a
	2007/08 (8 months)	overall	28	89
		timely	n/a	n/a

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 NVO provision, but not 'Skills for Life'

Equality and diversity

2006-07	All Ethnic Groups	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese /Other	Mixed	Not Known	White
Enrolments	4990	163	100	76	102	350	4199
Completion rate (%)	84	94	82	83	81	90	84
Achievement rate (%)	89	85	82	95	87	90	90
Success rate (%)	75	80	67	79	71	81	75
Withdrawal rate (%)	16	6	18	17	19	10	16