

East Durham College

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: construction, information and communication technology (ICT), hairdressing and beauty, Skills for Life.

Description of the provider

1. East Durham College is a medium-sized further education college with three main centres: Burnhope Way, Howletch in Peterlee and the Houghall site (formerly Durham College of Agriculture and Horticulture) in the city of Durham. Courses are also provided at a number of community venues in East Durham and there is a significant amount of delivery within the workplace. There is provision in 14 of the 15 sector subject areas funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college had 2,864 full-time enrolments and 7,400 part-time enrolments in 2006/07. Around 80% of the full-time students and 7% of the part-time students were aged 16 to 18. Approximately 83% of enrolments of 16 to 18 year olds and 84% of those of adults were on courses at levels 1 and 2. The college has 169 work-based learners, of whom 16% are advanced apprentices and 84% apprentices. There are no work-based learning (WBL) students following a national vocational qualification (NVQ) course only route. The apprentices and advanced apprentices are training in land-based industries, engineering and manufacturing technology, business administration and management, bricklaying, joinery and hairdressing. There have been 105 Entry to Employment (E2E) starts with an average of 27 on the programme at any one time.
2. The provision in Peterlee primarily serves the population in the eastern part of the county. Within that area there are five 11 to 16 schools, a 5 to 18 special school and an 11 to 18 denominational Roman Catholic secondary school. The land-based provision at the Houghall centre in Durham serves the region as a whole. The college's extensive workforce development activities are regionally focused, with specialisation in the care sector and in food manufacture and processing. East Durham is one of the most deprived areas in England and suffered severely from the demise of the coal mining industry. Academic achievement at Key Stage 4 in County Durham is low. The college's mission is: "Delivering Excellence in Learning". A new and extensive college building project will be complete in January 2009.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: Contributory Grade 2</i>

Sector subject areas

Construction	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Hairdressing and beauty	Good: Grade 2
Skills for Life (literacy and numeracy)	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

3. This is a good college with a number of outstanding features. Since the last inspection the principal and senior management team have driven an improvement agenda. The central focus has been on accelerating learner success rates. Key changes to the management structure have been instigated to seek and sustain improved achievement for learners; for example, a strong focus has been placed on induction procedures to enable full-time learners to be placed on courses that pertain to their abilities, aptitudes and needs.
4. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates have increased between 2004/05 and 2006/07 to significantly above the national average for similar colleges. Workforce development, WBL and E2E programmes have seen significant improvements to learners' achievement and now offer outstanding provision. Success rates for both 16 to 18 and 19+ learners at all levels are well above the national average when compared to similar colleges.
5. Teaching is good and improving. In particular the college has been successful in improving the ratio of good or better teaching. Much teaching is lively, purposeful and committed. Learners enjoy their studies. Regular assessment includes good feedback to learners. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are well assessed and good and timely support is provided. There is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) in teaching and learning.
6. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. The curriculum offer meets the needs and interests of learners, employers and community partners. Courses offered to these groups are both of high quality and are successful. Innovative programmes have been successfully developed to respond to the low levels of attainment and aspiration in the community. Partnerships with secondary schools are exemplary and among the many key improvements since the last inspection.
7. Care, guidance and support are good. Transition and induction arrangements are well managed. Tutorial support is good and aptly promotes the Every Child Matters agenda. Learners settle into college life quickly. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. There is good and speedy support for learners who are causing concern or in need of additional support. Arrangements for the initial assessment of part-time learners are not sufficiently developed.
8. Leadership and management are good, with a number of outstanding features. A clear strategic direction has been established by the governors and senior management. The principal has driven the improvement agenda and established a new and energetic management team. Inspectors agree with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report which confirms the college's realistic approach to grading and quality assurance. However, the report was too descriptive and in part lacked clarity and sharpness. Quality

assurance processes have been strengthened and have impacted on achievement. While curriculum management has improved there are some areas where it is less effective. A new accommodation strategy will result in the opening of a new campus in January 2009. Governance of the college is good and governors closely monitor a range of performance indicators.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

9. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. Raising aspirations and improving the success of learners is central to the college's improvement strategy. Success, pass and retention rates have improved significantly over the last four years to well above the national average. Achievement and provision on work-based learning, workforce development and E2E programmes are outstanding. Collaborative partnerships that respond to local learning needs are outstanding. Quality assurance systems have improved and are now good. Robust strategies and operational plans are in place to promote further and sustained improvement. Self-assessment is generally accurate and self-critical. Performance is monitored thoroughly. Strong leadership from senior management and governors makes a significant contribution to the promotion of high quality outcomes. The college is highly responsive to local community and employer needs.

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

10. The college has made very good progress in tackling the key issues raised in the last inspection report. Strengths noted in that report have been maintained and many have significantly improved. Success rates have continued to improve and are well above the national average. The proportion of good or better teaching has increased. There has been significant improvement in the number of learners who gain key skills qualifications and for those who have achieved modern apprenticeships. Partnerships with secondary schools are now excellent. Provision is now more appropriate to local learning needs and the recruitment of learners onto appropriate courses has improved significantly. The college is about to move into new buildings providing excellent accommodation and resources. However, the use of ILT still remains limited across the curriculum.

Key strengths

- high and sustained success rates
- clear focus on improving teaching and learning
- provision which meets the needs of the community exceptionally well
- outstanding WBL and workforce development programmes
- outstanding links with employers and schools
- outstanding provision for 14 to 16 learners
- good individual support for learners
- strong and effective management focus on raising achievement and standards
- clear vision and strategic direction
- outstanding capacity to improve.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- improve use of ILT in teaching
- arrangements for initial assessment for part-time learners
- clarity and sharpness of the self-assessment report
- curriculum management in some areas.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning

Outstanding: Grade 1

Train to Gain

Good: Grade 2

Entry to Employment

Outstanding: Grade 1

Learners aged 14 to 16

Outstanding: Grade 1

11. Achievement and standards are outstanding. The judgement matches the college's own evaluation. Over a period of four years the college has demonstrated year-on-year improvement in success rates for both 16 to 18 and 19+ learners; for example, for the 16 to 18 cohort at level 1 success rates have improved from 2003/04 to 2006/07 by 17%; and at levels 2 and 3 by 12% in each case. For learners 19+ at levels 1 and 2 success rates have increased by 21% respectively. In 2006/07, the college success rates placed it well into the top quartile for similar colleges at levels 1, 2 and 3 for 16 to 18-year-olds and at levels 1 and 2 for 19+ learners. It remains at the top quartile for adults at level 3. Success rates for learners receiving additional learning support and those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties reflect the generally strong college improvement trend. The college recognises that there is a need to improve the percentage of high grade achievement across a number of courses. Progression rates for 14 to 16-year-olds are outstanding. Overall success rates are high in land-based programmes, engineering, hairdressing and beauty, sports and leisure, care and early years and business; for example, on land-based programmes success rates have improved from 73% in 2004/05 to 86% in 2006/07.
12. Success rates on workforce development programmes are significantly above the national average. Overall success rates for apprenticeships are outstanding with significant year-on-year improvement. For advanced apprentices overall success rates in 2005/06 were 50%, and increased to 61% in 2006/07. The overall success rate for current advanced apprentices in 2007/08 is 86%. Apprentices' overall success rates have increased from 61% in 2005/06 to 71% in 2006/07. For current apprentices in 2007/08 the success rate is 77%. Timely success rates for most apprenticeships are good. Success rates for key skills in work-based learning are excellent at 91%. For most learners the standard of portfolio work is very good. Progression for E2E learners is excellent. E2E progression rates have increased year-on-year from 63% in 2004/05 to 88% in 2006/07. Success rates for Train to Gain learners are good with a rate of 76% in 2006/07. Key skills success rates are good and improving.
13. The standard of learners' work is good and practical work is often of a high standard. Learners work safely in studios and workshops. Assessment of learners' work is fair and accurate. There is good progression to employment and to further and higher education.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

14. The quality of provision is good and is in agreement with the college's own judgement in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good and improving. The better lessons are characterised by a variety of activity with a strong focus on individual learning and attainment. Lessons are well paced and challenging. Practical activities are effectively linked to theory sessions and learning is reinforced through well structured revision tasks. Teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning methods and keep all learners fully engaged. Group work is effectively used. Learners are confident in contributing to discussions because tutors are skilful in building confidence and encouraging all to participate. The less successful lessons lack pace and individual learner needs are met less well. Some lesson plans and schemes of work lack sufficient reference to the development of key skills. There is limited use of ILT to enhance teaching and learning. The college's virtual learning environment (VLE) is not currently being used effectively.
15. There is a robust system for assuring the quality of teaching and learning. Internal observations lead to detailed feedback and clear action plans for improvement. Staff development activities have a strong focus on supporting teachers and improving teaching and learning. Tutors are very well supported by advanced teaching practitioners (ATP). The college has a clear and successful focus on improving the proportion of good and better teaching. Assessment is well planned. Feedback is generally clear and detailed and offers guidance on how to improve. Learners receive a timely initial assessment which is shared with tutors to inform individual learning goals. The college has a strong sense of what is required to elicit further improvements to teaching and learning.
16. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. Since the last inspection the college has developed a wide and varied curriculum especially at levels 1 and 2. Partnership working is strong. The college is responsive and innovative in meeting the needs of employers. Workforce development programmes are innovative, well organised and highly successful. Skills for Life provision in the community are delivered in employers' and community venues and have success rates which are outstanding. The college has excellent relationships with community organisations and meets the needs of the community exceptionally well; for example, the innovative work of the community sports liaison officer successfully widens participation and engages learners not traditionally involved in learning. There are strong links with the University of Sunderland. Parents, carers and employers are well informed about learners' progress. Links with partner schools are excellent; there is an outstanding vocational programme for students aged 14 to 16. Progression at age 16 onto college programmes is good and outstanding in hairdressing. There is a well developed and successful 'Aim Higher' programme. The college has developed innovative programmes to respond to the needs of learners not in employment, education or training (NEET). These programmes have had significant impact in reducing local NEET numbers by 13% over a three year period.

17. Care, guidance and support are good. Learners benefit from good individual support. The tutorial programme meets the needs of learners well. It is flexible and well managed. Group tutorials cover the Every Child Matters agenda comprehensively. One-to-one tutorials monitor learner progress and provide good support. Tutors, mentors and teachers communicate well in monitoring the progress and development of learners. Data are used to set targets and monitor learners' progress. The college recognises that some of the targets set for learners are insufficiently detailed or challenging. Those learners at risk of leaving and underachieving are well monitored and supported. Attendance is well monitored. Information, advice and guidance prior to enrolment are good. Induction programmes are effective and help learners settle into their courses quickly. Careers advice is good. Counselling and welfare services are well promoted. Full-time learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are assessed on entry to the programmes and outcomes used to inform individual learning plans. Only a small number of part-time learners undertake initial assessment and subsequent learning support. The college acknowledges the need to improve arrangements for initial assessment for part-time learners. The college provides good support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A specialist unit provides effective educational programmes for learners aged 14 to 19 who are not engaging fully in mainstream education and learners on mainstream provision who benefit from support to improve their behaviour.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Work-based learning

Train to Gain

Entry to Employment

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: Grade 2

Outstanding: Grade 1

Outstanding: Grade 1

Outstanding: Grade 1

Outstanding: Grade 1

18. Leadership and management are good with a number of outstanding features; matching the judgement in the college's self-assessment report. The focus on raising achievement and standards is strong and effective. Success rates across the college have risen year-on-year. The strategic planning process is inclusive and there is a high degree of ownership of the strategic and operational plans. Since the last inspection, curriculum areas have developed operational plans which clearly link to the college's strategic aims and objectives. The college has extended its senior management team and developed a new structure for managing curriculum delivery.
19. The college quality improvement system is comprehensive and effective. Managers accurately identify underperforming areas and they have introduced effective strategies to improve learner performance. Management information systems are good, and reports are accurate and timely. Since the last inspection, the self-assessment process has become more inclusive and moderation of judgements has been improved. While the lack of rigour in curriculum reports has been tackled some sections of the self-assessment

report are still too descriptive and lack clarity and focus. The management of curriculum areas is good overall; however, in a small number of areas curriculum management is less effective. The management of work-based learning, Train to Gain, Entry to Employment and 14 to 16 programmes are outstanding. The management of these areas are characterised by high success rates, strong quality assurance, innovative planning of programme delivery and very good support for learners. The staff development programme is extensive and well resourced. Staff have clear development targets, and participation in training is closely monitored. The effectiveness of all training is thoroughly evaluated. The college has introduced a management development programme for new and aspiring managers.

20. The college has established outstanding links with a wide range of external partners and plays a key role in widening participation to education and training. Strategic relationships with local secondary schools have improved very significantly. College staff are working with a number of other colleges in the region on a peer review and development initiative. The college works highly effectively with a very large and growing number of employers and community organisations.
21. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The performance of different groups of learners is closely monitored. Recruitment of learners from minority ethnic groups is higher than expected when compared to the ethnic profile of the area. Diversity is celebrated through a range of local, regional and international events. The college's response to child protection is good. It meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2002.
22. Governors work closely with senior managers to ensure the college has sound finances and a clear strategic direction. They have played a key role in planning the new college. They are well informed about curriculum developments and closely monitor a range of performance indicators, including learner achievement. Clerking arrangements are good. Accommodation overall is currently satisfactory, although this will change dramatically with the opening of the new college campus in January 2009. The college has made significant investment at its Houghall site since the last inspection. Financial management is good and the college provides good value for money.

Sector subject areas

Construction

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

23. Construction courses are run in trowel trades, wood occupations and painting and decorating. The college has recently developed its work-based learning programmes to include plastering, wall and floor tiling, electrical and gas courses. There are approximately 300 students and the majority are full-time 16 to 18-year-olds. There is a small and expanding apprenticeship programme and a substantial 14 to 16-year-old provision. Most courses are at levels 1 and 2.

Strengths

- high success rates
- effective learning support arrangements.

Areas for improvement:

- inadequate arrangements to meet the employability needs of many learners
- weak management of key aspects of the provision.

Achievement and standards

24. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on level 1 and 2 courses. The 2006/07 success rates for these courses were 82% and 70% respectively and above national rates. Work-based learning apprenticeship success rates are high at 71% in 2006/07. Key skills success rates are satisfactory averaging around 60% for the last two years. There is good progress from 14 to 16 programmes onto full-time courses. Many foundation learners progress onto level 2 programmes but too few learners progress onto level 3 programmes. The overall standard of learners' written and practical work is satisfactory with some good examples of practical decorative, plastering and brickwork. In work-based learning there are regular checks on learners' progress and well planned work-based assessments.

Quality of provision

25. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The more effective learning sessions benefit from enthusiastic, well organised activities and clear and authoritative instruction. The less effective sessions fail to sufficiently account for different learning styles and learner support needs. The assessment and the monitoring of learner progress are satisfactory.
26. Much of the full-time provision does not effectively meet learners' employability needs. The area is developing a new range of industrially relevant vocational courses that aim to redress this situation. However, most current full-time provision does not lead to industrially recognised qualifications. Most full-time

learners do not have any planned work or industrial experience as a feature of their training. There is insufficient structured or coherent job search and/or work preparedness skills development built into the programmes.

27. The provision and arrangements for tutor guidance and additional learning support is good. Tutors provide learners with regular support to help with course work. Specialist support staff work closely with tutors to provide group and individual support that is effective in improving learners' success. Tutorial sessions are interesting and productive. Enrichment activities at curriculum level are well organised by tutors. Few construction learners engage in centrally organised enrichment activities.

Leadership and management

28. Leadership and curriculum management are satisfactory. The stronger features include the support and development of a successful 14 to 16 provision and the development of new employer facing vocational programmes. However, there is some weak management and coordination of key aspects of the provision; for example, most of the full-time provision is not providing learners with industrially relevant qualifications or planned work experience. Key skills are not mapped across all craft areas. There is insufficient destination monitoring. Self-assessment is satisfactory and includes the analysis of feedback from staff and learners to inform judgements. The quality improvement plan is adequate. Arrangements for the promotion and development of learners' understanding of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Resources are adequate.

Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

Context

29. Courses offer progression from entry level to level 3 and include the City and Guilds (CGLI) E-Quals 7,266 and the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). Courses are also offered in the community at entry level to level 3. About 495 adult learners attend part-time courses, mainly through flexible learning workshops in the facilitated learning centre at the main college site; 43 learners study on courses based in their workplace and 41 learners study on four full-time courses at levels 2 and 3.

Strengths

- high and improving success rates
- good teaching and learning
- good individual support for learners to raise aspirations
- good curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient recording of learners' progress on part-time courses
- limited curriculum offer for some full-time learners.

Achievement and standards

30. Learners' achievement is good and improving. Success rates for adult part-time learners on long level 2 courses have improved from 3% above national average in 2005/06 to 20% above in 2006/07. Success rates for 16 to 18-year-olds learners on long courses at level 1 have improved from significantly below the national average in 2005/06 to 30% above in 2006/07. The success rate for adults on short courses has improved from 6% below the national average in 2005/06 to 7% above in 2006/07. Retention is good; in 2006/07 retention for all ICT learners was 87% and is currently at 98%. Learners' attendance is good. Progression is satisfactory with part-time learners now frequently progressing from level 1 to level 2.

Quality of provision

31. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. In the better lessons teaching is well planned, interactive and engaging. Tutors display comprehensive knowledge of their subject. Learners participate well in class discussions and enjoy their learning. Teachers use effective questioning techniques to develop learner understanding. Activities are varied and hold learners' attention. Learners acquire confidence and gain useful skills. Assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. Part-time learners are not sufficiently involved in recording their progress.

32. The curriculum offer for full-time learners is satisfactory, although limited in scope; however, there are advanced plans for its extension next academic year. Enrichment opportunities for full-time learners are satisfactory. Individual support for learners is good. Tutors work with learners of all ages to raise aspirations. Learning styles assessments identify additional learning support needs. Learners on full-time courses receive effective additional learning support.

Leadership and management

33. Leadership and management are good. The management of this curriculum area has changed since the previous inspection. Managers have successfully improved retention and achievement on most courses to significantly above the national average. The well developed teaching and learning observation programme has raised standards of teaching. Staff morale is high. Staff with specialist industrial experience have been recruited. Teachers benefit from good personal development opportunities. The self-assessment process is inclusive and broadly accurate. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Currently some resources for learning are limited. Chairs used in the community centres are not always appropriate for use with computers. The college intranet is not used effectively for all courses, workbooks in the facilitated learning centre require updating and some textbooks are in short supply.

Hairdressing and beauty

Good: Grade 2

Context

34. The college offers hairdressing and beauty therapy from levels 1 to 3. There are 91 full-time, 49 part-time and 8 apprentices on hairdressing. On beauty therapy courses there are 25 full-time, 144 part-time learners and one apprentice. There are also 53 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools enrolled on level 1 courses, of whom 45 are completing hairdressing.

Strengths

- high success rates on many programmes
- good development of learners' skills
- good monitoring of learners' progress and achievement
- comprehensive educational and occupational enrichment provision
- very effective initial assessment arrangements
- good curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient re-enforcement of aspects of health and safety during practical sessions
- insufficient opportunity for work placement.

Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are good with some outstanding features. Success rates on substantial beauty therapy programmes are consistently at or above the national average. Success rates on beauty therapy NVQ level 2 and 3 programmes have been outstanding at 20% above the national average over a three year period. However, retention has declined during 2007/08. Success rates on hairdressing level 1 programmes have improved to 89% during 2006/07. Success rates on hairdressing NVQ level 2 programmes have improved considerably and are currently at the national average. Success rates on the Year 10 and 11 programmes are outstanding; between 2005/06 and 2007/08 success rates have been 93%, 100% and 96% respectively. The newly introduced hairdressing apprenticeships have very high success rates; both overall and timely success rates are 85%, some 26% and 40% above the national average. Progress rates for 14 to 16-year-olds into post-16 hairdressing and beauty programmes is good at 64% as are progression rates onto higher level programmes. Attendance is good.
36. Learners are very professional, completing client services to a high commercial standard. Some of the long hair work completed by Year 10 and 11 learners is outstanding. Assignments are well presented.

Quality of provision

37. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Most teaching is well planned and matched to learners' individual needs. Tutors employ a variety of techniques and activities to support learning and motivate learners. Learners receive particularly good individual support and many tutors make good use of questioning to check understanding. A number of tutors effectively incorporate information technology into their classes. Characteristics of less effective teaching include the lack of challenge for the more able learners. Health and safety is effectively promoted in theory but it is not always sufficiently re-enforced during practical sessions.
38. Assessment processes and the monitoring of achievement are very thorough. Extensive initial and diagnostic assessment arrangements are used effectively to provide timely additional support. Opportunities for work placement are limited. There is no formal process of screening employers to ensure they effectively support learners placed with them. Learners benefit from an extensive range of enrichment activities. Many learners achieve key skills at one and sometimes two levels higher than their initial assessment grade. Guidance and support are good. Tutorials are supportive and effective in providing good information, advice and guidance.

Leadership and management

39. Curriculum and programme management are good. All staff are familiar with programme targets and there is good performance monitoring. Managers failed to identify some inconsistencies in the mapping of key skills to schemes of work and lesson plans. Good communication is supported through frequent and purposeful departmental meetings. Staff development is effective in addressing areas for improvement and preparing staff for new initiatives. Self-assessment is inclusive and informed through course reviews. Employer engagement is much improved. Existing resources adequately meet the needs of learners. Internal verification is well embedded, systematic and thorough.

Skills for Life

Good: Grade 2

Context

40. The college offers Skills for Life in a range of settings including college centres, employer premises and community venues. In Skills for Life there are 618 long enrolments of which 244 are 16 to 18 and 571 short enrolments of which 282 are 16 to 18. In key skills there are 640 enrolments in application of number (AON), 632 in communication and 325 in information and communication technology (ICT).

Strengths

- outstanding success rates in level 1 key skills, AON and communication
- high success rates in level 1 certificate in adult literacy and numeracy and level 2 literacy
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of flexible provision
- effective initial and diagnostic assessment
- good curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates in key skills ICT and entry level literacy and numeracy
- insufficient rigour in target setting for quality improvement at course team level.

Achievement and standards

41. Achievement and standards are good. Key skills communication and application of number level 1 success rates are outstanding. Although there has been a decline in level 2 success rates they are well above the national average. Success rates in level 1 adult certificate in literacy and numeracy and level 2 literacy are high. Success rates in entry level Skills for Life and levels 1 and 2 key skills ICT are below the national average. Managers have undertaken a review of these courses and current evidence indicates a significant improvement to pass rates in 2007/08. The standard of learners' work is good.

Quality of provision

42. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Detailed lesson plans, individual learning plans, accurate monitoring and recording of progress impact positively on learning. In the better lessons, teachers use a good range of activities. Teachers extend learning and check understanding through paired and whole group work, active questioning and discussion. Learners aged 16 to 18 are well motivated and make excellent progress in key skills communication and application of number. Learning materials are relevant and of a good standard. Teaching is well paced. Work files are well organised and learners contribute to recording their own progress.

43. In a minority of lessons teachers do not give sufficient time for learners to respond to questions nor to reflect on learning. Students have little opportunity to use ILT to extend their skills. An increasing range of good and flexible provision is available. Initial and diagnostic assessment is thorough. Guidance and support are good. Learning plans identify individual learning needs and set clear targets that help achieve good learning outcomes. Assessment of learners' work is fair and accurate. Additional support is effective in helping learners to achieve their goals.

Leadership and management

44. Curriculum management is good. A new management team has made improvements in assessment, teaching and learning strategies and curriculum review and development. This has had a positive impact on the quality of provision and success rates. Improved communication has led to sharing of good practice across Skills for Life, key skills and workforce development teams. Staff are well qualified and are appreciative of the professional development opportunities. The internal observation judgements are accurate and action is effective in improving lesson planning and teaching. The self-assessment report judgements are broadly accurate. Target setting for improvement at course level is not sufficiently rigorous. Managers have developed a comprehensive strategy for essential skills.

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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	03/04	498	67	59	8	1,538	64	59	5
	04/05	609	65	62	3	904	72	61	11
	05/06	808	79	68	11	720	80	67	13
	06/07*	711	84			646	85		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	10	50	63	-13	-	-	-	-
	04/05	10	80	64	16	-	-	-	-
	05/06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	06/07*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NVQs	03/04	81	72	61	11	36	78	66	12
	04/05	58	83	66	17	103	89	71	18
	05/06	116	76	70	6	96	82	72	10
	06/07*	107	79			128	90		
Other	03/04	407	66	59	7	1,501	64	56	8
	04/05	541	62	61	1	799	70	61	9
	05/06	692	79	67	12	624	80	67	13
	06/07*	604	85			518	84		

* college data

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	486	66	56	10	1,308	61	54	7
	04/05	453	70	61	9	1,386	70	60	10
	05/06	536	77	65	12	1,967	80	66	14
	06/07*	432	78			2,030	82		
GCSEs	03/04	66	54	63	-9	86	69	58	11
	04/05	21	71	66	5	81	54	63	-9
	05/06	24	75	69	6	27	74	67	7
	06/07*	9	78			20	70		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	99	80	59	21	42	76	59	17
	04/05	63	79	66	13	41	66	65	1
	05/06	66	82	66	16	33	64	65	-1
	06/07*	61	87			29	72		
NVQs	03/04	154	66	49	17	672	65	54	11
	04/05	143	73	56	17	824	74	62	12
	05/06	168	76	64	12	1,012	82	69	13
	06/07*	142	79			968	82		
Other	03/04	167	61	53	8	508	53	53	0
	04/05	226	66	59	7	440	65	58	7
	05/06	278	77	63	14	895	79	65	14
	06/07*	220	76			1,013	82		

* college data

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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	03/04	698	66	61	5	833	67	53	14
	04/05	592	70	65	5	866	65	57	8
	05/06	487	77	68	9	894	73	62	11
	06/07*	450	78			854	71		
A/A2 Levels	03/04	160	80	84	-4	36	61	69	-8
	04/05	102	88	85	3	**	**	**	**
	05/06	46	87	86	1	**	**	**	**
	06/07*	50	80						
AS Levels	03/04	227	65	60	5	38	42	50	-8
	04/05	104	65	64	1	70	37	53	-16
	05/06	102	63	64	-1	**	**	**	**
	06/07*	41	49			**12			
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	106	58	51	7	11	55	43	12
	04/05	132	64	60	4	-	-	-	-
	05/06	56	91	68	23	-	-	-	-
	06/07*	22	77			**	**		
NVQs	03/04	12	68	50	18	204	64	49	15
	04/05	25	60	54	6	204	65	55	10
	05/06	29	62	66	-4	264	74	65	9
	06/07*	32	84			357	76		
Other	03/04	193	61	51	10	544	70	54	16
	04/05	229	69	57	12	569	68	57	11
	05/06	254	79	62	17	597	74	62	12
	06/07*	305	81			477	69		

* college data

** numbers too low to present meaningful success rates

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	18	33%	48	22%	34
		timely	16	25%	31	6%	22
	05/06	overall	26	62%	53	50%	44
		timely	21	43%	34	38%	27
	06/07	overall	23	74%	64	61%	58
		timely	25	48%	43	44%	37
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	46	74%	51	65%	39
		timely	40	38%	29	38%	22
	05/06	overall	88	68%	58	61%	52
		timely	83	43%	38	40%	34
	06/07	overall	109	73%	65	71%	61
		timely	108	65%	47	62%	44

Note

- * 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'