

Oxford & Cherwell Valley College

Inspection report

Provider reference	134153
Published date	December 2008

Audience	Post-sixteen
Published date	December 2008
Provider reference	134153

Contents

Background information	3
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Key strengths and areas for improvement	7
Main findings	9
Sector subject area reports	13

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
- graded specialist provision in: science and mathematics; engineering; art, design and media; literacy and numeracy; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and business, administration and law.

Description of the provider

1. Oxford and Cherwell Valley College is a large general further education college that draws learners from most areas across Oxfordshire and significant numbers from Oxford city and north Oxfordshire. The college operates from four sites: Oxford, Blackbird Leys, Banbury and Bicester and a number of workplace and community venues. Provision for learners is offered in all sector subject areas except land-based industries. The college offers substantial full- and part-time provision from foundation level to higher education. Academic, vocational and part-time courses are on offer along with specialist provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are around 6,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) learners at the college, half of whom attend

the Oxford campus. Over 2,700 full-time learners aged 16 to 18 are currently enrolled and a further 280 are part time. There are around 4,000 adult part-time learners and a further 800 who are full time. The college has approximately 500 work-based learners on both young apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes. In addition there is a small Entry to Employment and a considerable Train to Gain provision of around 600 learners. In collaboration with local secondary schools the college offers part-time vocational programmes to over 500 pupils. The college mission is: 'To be inspirational and innovative, to foster personal development through learning and to be of value and economic significance to our communities'.

2. Attainment in local secondary schools is below national average and in 2008 57% of Year 11 pupils achieved 5 A* to C grade passes at GCSE. In Oxford about 12% of the population are of minority ethnic origin, a proportion largely replicated in the current student body of the college. Across the county, however, the proportion of the population with a minority ethnic heritage is much lower at around 5%. Oxfordshire is a prosperous county and unemployment rates have been consistently below national average over the past few years.

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	Good : Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good : Grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

Sector subject areas

Science and mathematics	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Engineering	Good: Grade 2
Art, design and media	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy and numeracy	Good: Grade 2
English for speakers of other languages	Good: Grade 2
Business, administration and law	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

3. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates at all levels have improved steadily over the past four years and have been at or above the recent national average for the past two years. Of particular note is the strong development of vocational and personal skills. Learners generally make progress in line with that expected from their prior attainment. The college self-assessment recognises that making better use of measures of progress is an area for development.
4. Teaching and learning are good. Most teaching is stimulating and effectively develops learners' knowledge and skills. However, in some lessons not all learners are actively engaged or challenged sufficiently. Lesson observation is well developed and inspectors agreed with the college's view of the key features of teaching and learning. However, some lessons have been graded too generously and the areas for improvement not always rigorously identified. Arrangements to identify additional learning needs are very effective. Assessment is good.
5. There is good progression through the levels of the curriculum. The college works well with a wide range of employers, schools and local support agencies. Educational and social inclusion are good. The college has made very effective use of its strong partnerships to recruit learners from groups who may not otherwise take part in education and training. Support for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties is good.
6. Guidance and support are good. The college has made significant improvements to its arrangements for tutorial support and provides a consistent offer to all learners. Initial assessment is reliable and timely in identifying additional learning support needs. However, some individual learning plans do not contain sharp enough targets.
7. Leadership and management are good. Leadership at all levels has made good progress developing strong accountability and empowerment. Engineering, work-based learning and Train to Gain provision were judged to be good. The literacy and numeracy and ESOL provision were also found to be good. Science and mathematics; art, design and media; and business, administration and law were graded as satisfactory.
8. The college has comprehensive quality assurance systems that are raising standards. The impact of self-assessment is strong and managers are aware of those areas where sharper evaluation is needed. Judgements made through the self-assessment process are rigorously moderated and improvement plans identify key issues.
9. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, although the provision of information and learning technology (ILT) resources across the college is

uneven. College leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively and financial management is good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

10. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve. Learners' outcomes have improved and management action to tackle remaining areas of weakness is increasingly effective. Rigorous quality assurance procedures are now firmly embedded and the evaluation of the college's work is thorough. Teaching is improving, as is curriculum management. Good progress has been made to embed a culture focused on achieving excellence through all staff taking personal responsibility for student success. Self-assessment is accurate and development plans set a clear agenda for improvement. The financial position of the college is improving.

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

11. The college has made good progress in addressing weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Learners' outcomes have continued to improve, partly as a consequence of the college's effective focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Increasingly rigorous quality assurance procedures and more effective curriculum management have led to improvements in the quality of provision. The management of both work-based learning and of key skills provision is now good. There is no unsatisfactory provision in the college. Learners' attendance at lessons has improved and is satisfactory. Although weaknesses in accommodation and resources remain, reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that the constraints of the learning environment do not hinder learners' progress.

Key strengths

- strong leadership and clear strategic direction
- effective actions to bring about improvements to outcomes for learners
- high success rates for level 1 programmes for adult learners and level 2 programmes for learners aged 16 to 18
- very good provision for pupils aged 14 to 16
- good development of personal and vocational skills
- strong and responsive employer engagement
- good guidance and support for learners
- tolerant and respectful ethos in the college community.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- access to and use of ILT for learning
- improvements to accommodation
- the inconsistent use of measures to assess learners' progress
- inconsistencies in the quality of both curriculum provision and between college sites.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

12. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates at all levels have improved steadily over the past four years. In 2007/08 success rates on long courses were at or above the recent national average. However, success rates for adult learners at level 1, 16-18-year-old learners at level 2 and part-time 14-16-year-olds were significantly above national average. In addition success rates for work-based apprentices also improved and were good in 2007/08. Learners enjoy their work and show growing confidence in, and understanding of, their programmes of study. Of particular note is the strength of development of their occupational and personal skills on vocational programmes and Train to Gain.
13. Learners generally make progress with their programmes in line with that expected from their prior attainment. The college self-assessment recognises that making better use of measures of progress is an area for development.
14. Retention rates at all levels have improved and were generally at or above the recent national average in 2007/08. Pass rates have improved over four years on long courses at level 2 and 3 for both adult learners and those aged 16 to 18. At level 1 pass rates have improved for adult learners and were good in 2007/08. However for 16-18-year-old learners pass rates at level 1 declined slightly in 2007/08. The achievement of male learners has improved markedly over the past few years and was broadly in line with those of female learners in 2007/08. Attainment of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has also improved in line with overall college averages. Learners from minority ethnic heritage make the same overall progress as other groups. However, 2007/08 college data show that male learners from Pakistani and Black Caribbean backgrounds make slightly less progress than their peers. The college is aware of this and is taking remedial action.
15. Key skills success rates have improved considerably over the past two years and were good in 2007/08. Pass rates on application of number and communication key skills at level 1 and 2 were good and were higher than those for information and communication technology (ICT).
16. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. During the inspection attendance was 84% which is line with the college's data. Learners show good awareness of health and safety procedures. Safe working was observed in laboratories, studios and workshops during the inspection.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

17. Teaching and learning are good. Most teaching is stimulating and effectively develops learners' knowledge and skills. Learners enjoy their studies. Teachers

- give thoughtful and incisive advice to individuals during practical sessions. Attainment is good, particularly for 14-16-year-olds and those on work-based programmes. Classroom management is strong and teachers are adept at designing activities and planning learning that meet the needs of the wide range of learners. However, in some lessons not all learners are actively engaged or challenged sufficiently. A minority of teachers talk too much without noticing that learners are distracted or uninterested. Teachers' checks on understanding, following whole group teaching or demonstrations, are too general and insufficiently focused. The use of learning resources varies across the college sites. Whilst ILT is beginning to be used effectively in some subjects, access to, and use of these technologies is not well developed in all areas of the college. This is recognised in the college's self-assessment report.
18. Lesson observation is well developed and inspectors broadly agreed with the college's view of the key features of teaching and learning. Managers have improved the rigour of moderation procedures and have focused effectively on staff development to improve teaching and learning. For example, the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons observed has decreased since the last inspection. However, some lessons were graded too generously and the areas for improvement were not always rigorously identified.
 19. Arrangements to identify additional learning needs are very effective. Comprehensive initial assessment accurately diagnoses learners' specific needs. A wide range of appropriate support is provided enabling these learners to succeed. A well-qualified support team coordinates and liaises very effectively with curriculum staff. Assessment is good. Awarding body requirements are well met and on-the-job assessment of apprentices is rigorous. Learners receive timely written feedback and individual target setting has recently been strengthened. However, some individual learning plans do not contain sharp enough targets. Tracking and monitoring of learners' progress are good and centralised records are kept up to date.
 20. Responsiveness to the needs and interests of learners, employers and external partners is good. The college works well with a wide range of employers, schools and local support agencies. There is good progression to further study at a higher level. Good collaborative work with schools has been highly effective in the development of successful programmes for learners aged 14 to 16 and diplomas for learners aged 14 to 19. The college has strong links with local, regional and national businesses. Enrichment is good overall but the range of course-related activities is variable across sector subject areas. Programmes provide opportunities to develop new skills, build confidence and, in some cases, to gain accreditation, such as in peer mentoring. Educational and social inclusion are good. The college has made very effective use of its strong partnerships to recruit learners from groups who may not otherwise take part in education and training. Support for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties is good. The college uses learners' views well to inform the continuing improvement of their experience at the college.
 21. Guidance and support are good. The college provides information, advice and guidance that enable potential learners to make appropriate and well-informed

course choices through accessible and attractively produced marketing materials. Induction prepares learners well for the requirements of their programmes. Initial assessment is reliable and timely in identifying additional learning support needs. Learners value highly the quality and promptness of this support. The college provides a good range of support services including counselling, support for mental health problems and child care. Learners at risk of leaving programmes before completion are identified early and supported well. Learners can access effective advice and guidance for progression to further education and training, employment or higher education. Links with specialist agencies such as Connexions are good. The college has made significant improvements to its arrangements for tutorial support, to provide a consistent offer to all learners, including the use of individual learning plans to set targets for learners' progress. However, as the college has identified, these arrangements are not yet fully embedded across the college. Precise initial assessment has played a key role in improving key skills' success rates to above the national average in literacy and numeracy by ensuring that learners are enrolled at an appropriate award level to match their prior attainment.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

22. Leadership and management are good. The principal, well supported by senior managers and governors, has succeeded in communicating a clear vision and strategic direction for the college that is recognised and valued by staff. Leadership at all levels has made good progress in seeking to develop a staff culture characterised by a judicious balance of empowerment and effective accountability. Learners' outcomes are improving and are now good, and the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. The quality of provision in most curriculum areas is good or better but in a minority of areas it is no better than satisfactory. Managers recognise the need to improve the consistency in the quality of provision both between curriculum areas and between college sites. The financial position of the college is improving. College leaders are confident that their plans to redevelop the college estate in order to provide a much improved learning environment will come to fruition.
23. The college has comprehensive quality assurance systems that are increasingly effective in raising standards. The development of a sophisticated electronic system for self-assessment, improvement planning and monitoring progress is beginning to have a tangible impact on the quality of evaluation of the college's work. Management information is reliable and data are used well to monitor most aspects of performance, although the use of value-added measures to assess learners' progress remains underdeveloped. The quality and impact of self-assessment are strong in most areas and managers are aware of those areas where more precise evaluation is needed. Judgements made through the self-assessment process are rigorously moderated and are

accurate. Improvement plans generally identify accurately the key issues for attention. The college's internal lesson observation scheme provides much useful information about the quality of teaching and the improvements needed, although inspection evidence shows that the judgements made about lessons are on occasion over generous.

24. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, although there are significant discrepancies both between and within college sites. Learners benefit from excellent resources in some areas but other areas of the estate are tired and sometimes barely fit for purpose. The provision of ILT resources across the college is uneven. Teaching staff are well qualified and the college has responded well to recent initiatives designed to improve the qualifications and professional development of staff. There are ample opportunities for staff to benefit from appropriate, relevant training opportunities. Performance reviews are increasingly effective in identifying teachers' personal development needs.
25. College leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity. There is a tolerant and respectful culture in the college community. The college meets all its legislative responsibilities and has a wide range of detailed policies, procedures and action plans that are monitored closely. Data on the achievement of different groups of learners are analysed, although the findings are not always acted upon. Some imaginative cross-college initiatives to explore and promote diversity have been implemented. Equality and diversity are promoted well in some curriculum areas, although the college's quality assurance and lesson observation procedures do not capture enough evidence to make secure judgements about this aspect of the college's work. Learners of all backgrounds feel safe in the college, and they have good opportunities to make their voice heard. 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.
26. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively. They have a good range of skills and support and challenge senior leaders constructively. The college works well with employers and other partners. Financial management is good and the college has made steady progress in recovering from a fragile financial position. Ambitious plans to redevelop the college estate are soundly based on educational imperatives. In the context of rising success rates for learners and prudent financial management, the college offers good value for money.

Sector subject area

Science and mathematics

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

27. There are 686 enrolments on science and mathematics courses. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18. Courses include GCSE in science and mathematics and GCE AS and A level in biology, chemistry, physics, psychology and mathematics. A forensic science National Diploma and access to higher education courses are offered at Oxford and an Advanced National Award at Banbury. Several GCE AS courses and GCSE mathematics are also offered as part-time evening provision.

Strengths

- high standards achieved in AS and A2 biology
- vocational science courses that effectively meet learners' needs
- good individual support for learners.

Areas for improvement

- low proportion of high grades in GCE AS and A-level psychology
- insufficient challenge in lessons
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Achievement and standards

28. Learners' achievement is satisfactory. Success rates have improved and with the exception of A-level chemistry were at or above national average in 2007/08. In biology, learners show a good understanding of the relationships between theory and practical work. They reach high standards in their GCE AS and A level examinations. Learners achieve grades in most advanced courses that would be expected from their previous GCSE performance. However, in 2007/08 learners achieved lower grades than expected in AS mathematics and AS psychology. High grade pass rates in GCSE mathematics improved considerably in 2007/08 and were satisfactory. However, high grade passes in GCE AS and A-level psychology were disappointing. Pass rates for adult learners in 2007/08 were close to the national average. Retention has improved and was above the national average in 2007/08. Learners' attendance is satisfactory. Learners work well collaboratively and effectively develop their understanding in discussions and practical investigations.

Quality of provision

29. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned, lively and stimulate learners' interest. However, in some lessons there is insufficient challenge to ensure effective progress for all learners. Schemes of work do not

always plan sufficiently for the full range of learners' ability. Some teachers do not question learners enough to check their understanding, particularly towards the end of lessons. Assessment is regular and gives learners useful feedback about progress and highlights what they need to do to improve. Additional learning needs are clearly identified and acted upon. There is appropriate support in literacy and numeracy, and specialist support where English is a second language. Accommodation and learning resources are good. The use of computer based resources is increasing and is particularly strong in biology. Teachers are well qualified.

30. The range of vocational courses in addition to AS and A level programmes is effective in meeting local needs and providing wider routes to higher education. Progression to employment, further and higher education is good. Guidance and support for learners are good. Care is taken to ensure that learners are on appropriate courses. Learners' progress is well tracked and monitored and interventions are well timed and effective. Learners receive very good individual support from their personal tutors that helps them to clarify what they need to do to succeed. Learners also receive helpful advice about career opportunities and higher education applications.

Leadership and management

31. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed. Self-assessment is accurate and becoming more thorough. This is beginning to be reflected in the quality of teaching and in the achievement of students. Through appraisal, individual professional needs are identified and observation of teaching and learning is thorough. These in turn effectively inform continuous professional development. However, the sharing of good practice is not sufficiently well coordinated to meet the needs of all of the teachers. Equality and diversity are actively promoted within the curriculum as opportunities arise. Examination results are analysed for different ethnic groups and gender and inform management decisions.

Engineering

Good: Grade 2

Context

32. The college offers programmes in engineering, motor vehicle, motor sports, furniture production and manufacturing at Oxford, Bicester, Banbury and Blackbird Leys. Provision ranges from entry level to level 4. Of the current 879 learners, 221 are full time and 658 are part time. Around a third are adults, a fifth are 14-16-year-olds and the rest are 16-18-year-olds. There are 149 learners on Train to Gain programmes and 178 work-based learners, 142 of whom are advanced apprentices. There are 164 learners aged 14 to 16 from local partner schools following engineering and motor vehicle courses at entry level or level 1 and at level 2 for the young apprentice programme.

Strengths

- high success rates on many programmes
- good development of learners' occupational and personal skills
- good use of practical activities to reinforce learning
- strong employer engagement.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on the first diploma in engineering
- inadequate ILT opportunities at Oxford.

Achievement and standards

33. Learners' achievement is good. In 2007/08 success rates were high on long level 1 and level 3 courses. Success rates were also high on 14 to 16 vocational courses and the young apprentices programme. Overall and timely framework success rates for apprenticeships improved significantly in the last two years and were particularly good for advanced apprentices in engineering and motor vehicle. Success rates on Train to Gain programmes in manufacturing were above the recent national average in 2007/08. Success rates on the first diploma in engineering were low.
34. Learners demonstrate a high standard of competency in practical assessments and projects in the workplace. They develop very good specialist skills reflecting the high standards expected in the engineering and manufacturing industries. Learners are confident and developing good interpersonal skills relevant to their occupations.

Quality of provision

35. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons include imaginative practical activities that clearly demonstrate theoretical principles. However, a minority of lessons have insufficient challenge for more able learners. On-the-job training is well-structured and carefully planned. Good use is made of virtual

learning environments in motor sport. However, this is not well-developed in engineering. Assessments and feedback on assignments are satisfactory. Effective systems are used to monitor and track learners' progress. Tutorials and reviews of learners' progress are satisfactory.

36. A good and wide range of programmes meets the needs of learners and employers. Advanced apprentices often complete relevant additional NVO units. In 2007/08 a large proportion of learners at level 1 progressed to advanced apprenticeships in motor vehicle. National Diploma learners in motor sport also demonstrated good progression to further training, employment or higher education. Manufacturing sessions are carefully structured to reflect industry practice and are delivered in locations and at times that meet employers' needs.
37. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners benefit from the up-to-date experience and knowledge of motor vehicle and furniture manufacturing teachers. Young people are given good advice and guidance when selecting courses and making decisions about further training. Train to Gain learners have insufficient support for literacy and numeracy.

Leadership and management

38. Leadership and management are good. All programmes are well managed and effective action is taken to bring about improvements. Management of work-based learning has improved significantly since the last inspection and has a clear focus on timely completion of frameworks. Links with employers are very strong. A good and varied range of development activities ensure teachers maintain good industry expertise and knowledge. There are particularly good specialist facilities for motor sport, motor vehicle and furniture production. Workshops are equipped with high quality industry standard tools and technology. The availability and use of ILT in engineering at Oxford is inadequate. Learners work in safe and supportive environments.

Art, design and media

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

39. The college offers full- and part-time courses in art and design, media and performing arts at levels 1, 2 and 3 at Oxford and Banbury. Of the current 965 learners, 831 are aged 16 to 18. National Diploma and national award courses at level 3 account for 81% of all enrolments. Around 60% of enrolments are in art and design, 22% in performing arts and 18% in media. In 2007/08, 9.5% of learners were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Strengths

- high success rates on BTEC Visual Arts and National Diploma Graphic Design
- good individualised teaching to support learning
- good performance monitoring and management to promote improvement.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on GCE AS, A level and National Award art and design courses
- insufficient use of ILT to enhance teaching
- insufficient analysis and action planning to improve the performance of black and minority ethnic learners.

Achievement and standards

40. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates improved on most courses to around national rates in 2007/08 having declined between 2004/05 and 2006/07. Success rates were high on the BTEC Award in visual arts and the National Diploma in graphic design. Success rates on GCE AS, A level and the National Award in art and design were low. Art and design A level courses have been discontinued. Success rates on other art and design courses have improved.
41. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Fashion learners' drawing and research skills are good and are used well to develop garment and textile designs. Graphic design learners' work is generally well-crafted and innovative in scope and execution. Some websites produced by electronic media learners demonstrate good understanding of market research and creative use of relevant software. In art and design, learners' work is satisfactory. The generally high motivation and clarity of purpose of learners on more specialist courses is not always reflected by learners taking general art and design courses.

Quality of provision

42. Teaching and learning are good. An increasingly strong focus on individualised teaching supports learning in studios and workshops. Learners' technical and

creative expertise and independent learning skills are well developed over time. Tutors provide good academic and personal support which is highly valued by learners. Learners' detailed individual learning plans include clear targets to achieve short term, realistic goals. Enrichment opportunities are varied and appreciated by learners.

43. Insufficient use is made of ILT to enhance teaching and learning. Too few art and design classrooms are equipped with the appropriate technology. Knowledge of how best to use ILT varies widely across the curriculum area. Assessment is rigorous, challenging and well-planned. Teaching accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The curriculum range and progression pathways for learners are satisfactory. The college recognises that it needs to develop attractive options for learners at entry level and level 1.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A comprehensive annual cycle of performance monitoring and management is promoting improvement. Formal observations of teaching and learning and tutorials are detailed and developmental. Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. Learners' awareness of equality and diversity issues is developed within the curriculum through a range of interesting assignments and visits. The monitoring and analysis of the performance of black and minority ethnic learners is insufficient. This was identified by the college but it is not part of current action plans.

Literacy and numeracy

Good: Grade 2

Context

45. About 2,450 learners study key skills communication and application of number as part of their full-time academic or vocational programmes. Some 830 take functional skills qualifications. A further 1,047 learners attend literacy and numeracy courses alongside their main programmes. Just over 300 attend part-time discrete courses. Around a third of all learners are adults and a third are women.

Strengths

- high success rates on key skills application of number and communication levels 1 and 2
- very effective use of community links to meet learners' needs
- very thorough initial assessment
- good personal and learning support for learners
- strong leadership of key skills quality improvement programme.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient planning for individual learners' needs in group activities
- insufficient access to and use of ILT.

Achievement and standards

46. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on key skills application of number and communication at levels 1 and 2 in 2007/08 are significantly above national average. Success rates on adult literacy certificates at entry level and level 2 and numeracy level 2 are also high. Rates on all other programmes are satisfactory. The standard of work in lessons is generally satisfactory. Progression to further study is good.

Quality of provision

47. The quality of provision is good. Learning and teaching are satisfactory overall. Teaching is often lively and good humoured with a variety of activities which involve learners. However, teachers do not all plan appropriately for learners' individual needs in group activities. Access to and use of ILT is insufficiently developed in lessons. Many lessons take place in rooms without access to electronic media. Where interactive white boards are installed they are often not effectively used.
48. The college makes very good use of its wide range of community links to provide for large numbers of new learners. Cooperative working with Oxford County Council adult learning service ensures good provision for local people. Within college, key skills are taught well using a variety of approaches.

Learners make good progress from the foundation programme to study on more advanced programmes.

49. Guidance and support are good. Key skills initial assessment is very thorough. It includes a written passage marked by specialist skills for life staff for more accurate placement and identifying additional support needs. A new electronic system is now used to generate individual learning plans with specific targets for foundation learners. It is also used in Train to Gain, for additional support diagnosis and to support staff skills development.
50. Learning support and personal support for learners are very good. A rich range of specialist support provides for learners' additional needs including those with hearing impairments. Assistive technologies are readily available. Teachers of foundation courses have a good range of strategies to help learners manage their own behaviour.

Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership of the key skills quality improvement programme has ensured its success. Teaching staff have good professional development opportunities and there is much sharing of good practice. Communication and support for staff are good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.
52. Quality assurance is good and the well-designed quality systems are regularly reviewed and are bringing about improvements. Self-assessment is inclusive and rigorous. Lesson observations are thorough but sometimes rather generously graded.
53. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Most staff challenge discriminatory behaviour effectively but promotion of diversity through the curriculum is not sufficiently widespread. Data on ethnicity and gender are collected but not always routinely analysed for success rates of different groups.

English for speakers of other languages

Good: Grade 2

Context

54. There are 374 learners enrolled on nationally accredited ESOL courses. A further 157 learners are enrolled on adult literacy, numeracy, ICT programmes or progression awards. Courses are offered from entry level through to level 2, both during the day and in the evening. The provision is located mainly at Oxford, Banbury and Bicester and ranges from full time to part time. The majority of learners study at entry level on part-time programmes.

Strengths

- good success rates on most courses in 2007/08
- good learner progression to further study
- very good support for learners' personal and academic development
- effective action to improve the quality of provision.

Areas for improvement

- insufficiently specific target-setting with full-time learners
- insufficient use of ILT to enhance learning.

Achievement and standards

55. Achievement and standards are good. Learners develop a wide range of skills and make good progress. Success rates improved significantly and were above national average in 2007/08 on most courses. Over half of the learners achieved full ESOL qualifications in 2007/08, an improvement on 2006/07. However, success rates declined to below national average on short entry level speaking and listening programmes. Attendance during inspection was low at 77%. However, poor punctuality and attendance are followed up effectively.

Quality of provision

56. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Language learning is set in a wide range of meaningful life and work contexts. Citizenship and Every Child Matters themes are very well embedded in classroom and enrichment activities. Learners, from a wide range of cultures, enjoy sharing experiences and support each other well. In most lessons, activities are well-paced. Learners take part enthusiastically in discussions that improve pronunciation and accuracy. Literacy is well developed. In some lessons, however, more able learners are not sufficiently challenged. A minority of activities do not involve learners enough, resulting in insufficient practice of speaking skills. Teachers set a good range of specific targets for study skills. However, learners on full-time programmes are not systematically focused on the development of language skills at a sufficiently early stage and

clear targets are not always set. ILT is not sufficiently integrated to enhance learning, resulting in an over reliance on paper-based activities and slow pace for more able learners.

57. Programmes are well planned and respond well to fast changing local needs. Full-time learners access comprehensive programmes, including literacy, numeracy and IT Skills for Life accreditation and employability modules. Progression routes are clear and taster courses provide effective pathways.
58. Learners are well supported through a very comprehensive induction programme. Learners speak highly of their supportive teachers and have a very good understanding of the learning rules. An atmosphere of respect for all is in evidence in all programmes and makes a significant contribution to learners' confidence. The well-established Bridging Project in partnership with Oxford Council provides very effective support for young and vulnerable learners.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are good. The quality of provision and success rates has improved. Managers have taken effective steps to improve retention. Curriculum planning now reflects more closely the various needs of learners and provides learners with good opportunities to learn and progress. Learner referral to and from other providers is effective and timely. Teaching staff are well qualified. Observation of teaching and learning is well established. Learners are well aware of their rights and responsibilities and of the college's commitment to equality and diversity. The self-assessment report is generally accurate.

Business, administration and law

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

60. The college offers vocational courses in business and accounts at levels 2, 3 and 4. In addition law and NVQ management programmes are offered at levels 3 and 4. The provision is located at Oxford and Banbury. Most management NVQ programmes are part-time evening provision as are some accounts courses. There are currently 709 management learners, 230 of whom are in higher education, 49 are 14-16-year-olds and 430 are aged 16 to 18. The majority of business learners are also aged 16 to 18. There are around 100 work-based learners working towards management NVQ qualifications.

Strengths

- good acquisition of skills and knowledge by younger learners
- high success rates in accounts at level 2 and 3
- productive links with local employers.

Areas for improvement

- low retention on the certificate in business administration, GCE AS law, AS business studies and NVQ level 3 management in 2007/08
- slow pace of learning in some lessons
- insufficient use of ILT to enhance learning.

Achievement and standards

61. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates at level 2 improved slightly in 2007/08 and were broadly satisfactory. Level 3 success rates in 2007/08 were also satisfactory with the exception of A-level law and NVQ level 3 accounting which were good. Retention is satisfactory on most courses but in 2007/08 was below national average for the level 2 Certificate in Business Administration, AS law, AS Business Studies and NVQ level 3 Management. Pass rates overall were also broadly satisfactory in 2007/08, but were good on accounts programmes at level 2 and 3, the BTEC First Certificate in Business and BTEC National Diploma in Business Studies. Students aged 16 to 18 acquire good skills and knowledge and use relevant technical vocabulary confidently.

Quality of provision

62. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers and learners treat each other with respect. In most business lessons, teachers manage groups well and provide a variety of activities to meet the needs of different learners. However, in some lessons for adult learners, there is too much tutor exposition and unclear and unimaginative

task setting. The pace of some lessons is too slow, and the needs of all learners are not effectively met. There is insufficient individual support for learners who have English as a second language.

63. Teachers use ILT confidently in some lessons to stimulate learners, to maintain the pace of lessons and to show learners exactly what they are expected to do. However, in other lessons, learners waste time copying from the whiteboard. At Oxford not all of the classrooms are equipped with electronic media. At both Oxford and Banbury the Visual Learning Environment (VLE) is under-used by both staff and learners.
64. The curriculum range is satisfactory. There are strong links with local employers. Managers have worked closely with large local employers to design work-based management programmes. Staff at Banbury and Oxford work closely with employers to ensure a suitable range of courses with good opportunities to progress is available to learners.
65. Learners have satisfactory advice about their courses and tutorial and target-setting arrangements are satisfactory. However, there is not enough ESOL support for some learners, particularly in adult classes.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers self-assess critically and there is a robust system for reviewing courses and feeding the results into self-assessment. Opportunities for sharing good practice are limited by the distance between the sites and the high number of part-time staff. Weaknesses from the last inspection have largely been addressed but recent improvements in the quality of the provision have been slowed by the high staff turnover.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, 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	05/06	1,455	68	69	-1	1,329	67	65	2
	06/07	1,625	84	74	10	1,119	68	70	-2
	07/08*	1,749	81			1,166	84		
NVQs	05/06	156	76	72	4	25	96	74	22
	06/07	249	82	75	7	72	60	75	-15
	07/08*	172	79			35	54		
Other	05/06	1,285	67	69	-2	1,302	67	65	2
	06/07	1,376	84	74	10	1,047	68	70	-2
	07/08*	1,577	81			1,131	85		

* college data

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, 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>
2 Long	05/06	1677	68	66	2	1190	71	66	5
	06/07	1327	70	70	0	1044	72	69	3
	07/08*	1448	77			803	75		
GCSEs	05/06	308	65	68	-3	190	69	67	2
	06/07	195	62	71	-9	225	67	70	-3
	07/08*	233	76			101	78		
NVQs	05/06	477	65	65	0	456	79	68	11
	06/07	315	61	68	-7	429	71	69	2
	07/08*	339	74			286	72		
Other	05/06	862	71	66	5	544	65	65	0
	06/07	814	76	70	6	390	75	69	6
	07/08*	870	79			416	75		

* college data

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, 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	05/06	2276	72	71	1	1502	62	64	-2
	06/07	2230	72	73	-1	1428	69	68	1
	07/08*	2167	75			1117	73		
A/A2 Levels	05/06	353	82	87	-5	125	62	72	-10
	06/07	378	80	87	-7	116	80	76	4
	07/08*	327	90			116	80		
AS Levels	05/06	894	63	67	-4	179	56	55	1
	06/07	723	67	69	-2	149	67	59	8
	07/08*	691	74			112	72		
NVQs	05/06	44	75	71	4	175	59	63	-4
	06/07	64	92	74	18	234	70	69	1
	07/08*	102	76			208	74		
Other	05/06	917	77	65	12	1008	63	64	-1
	06/07	1065	71	70	1	929	68	69	-1
	07/08*	1047	71			681	72		

* college data

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by the college, 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	192	64	54	49	44
		timely	197	61	34	46	27
	06/07	overall	199	69	64	62	58
		timely	197	61	43	55	37
	07/08	overall	136	75		74	
		timely	132	73		66	
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	226	45	59	34	53
		timely	211	37	38	29	34
	06/07	overall	284	61	65	55	61
		timely	288	57	50	50	44
	07/08	Overall	296	69		67	
		timely	303	61		58	

* 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 (ILR)

Table 5a

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the college, 2006 to 2008.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	245	94
		timely	245	94
	2007/08	overall	502	85
		timely	502	85

* 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

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college/provider prior to inspection

Table 5b

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain skills for life programmes managed by the college, 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider skills for life rate**
Train to Gain (skills for life)	2006/07	overall	29	90
		timely	29	90
	2007/08	overall	85	80
		timely	85	80

* 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

** Skills for life qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college/provider prior to inspection