

Bromley College of Further and Higher Education

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: science and mathematics; engineering and manufacturing technologies; information and communication technology (ICT); hairdressing and beauty therapy; literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); and business and management.

Description of the provider

1. Bromley College of Further and Higher Education is a general further education college located in the London Borough of Bromley in outer, south east London. The college operates from three sites: the main site in Rookery Lane and two smaller local centres in Beckenham and Penge. Bromley is a relatively prosperous area, although it has substantial pockets of social deprivation. Unemployment in 2007/08 was relatively low at 4.2%. There are 17 secondary schools in Bromley plus seven independent schools, all but one of which have sixth forms. In 2007, 55% of school pupils achieved 5 or more grades A*-C including English and mathematics.

2. The college recruits many learners from London, with only one half of learners aged 16 to 18 living in the borough of Bromley itself. Around one third of learners are from areas of relatively high deprivation. Only 51% of the college's learners classify themselves as White British, compared to 86% of the local population. In the academic year 2007/08, there were 9,204 enrolments on further education courses and of these, 37% were aged 16 to 18. The total number of learners at the college, not including those on work-based learning or higher education programmes, was 5,677. Some 1,713 learners were aged 16 to 18 and the remainder were adults, with 2,307 people of all ages studying full time.
3. The college provides education and training in almost all vocational areas of learning, with courses ranging from entry level to higher education. Enrolments are highest in: preparation for life and work; ICT; business; health, public services and care; and engineering programmes. The college works directly with local employers and employer organisations and is currently providing work-based learning programmes for 143 apprentices, 107 advanced apprentices and 230 Train to Gain learners. It also provides vocational learning programmes for 200 pupils aged 14 to 16, in collaboration with local schools. In 2007/08, 48% of further education enrolments were at level 1 or below; 28% were at level 2; 21% at level 3; and 3% on 'other' or higher level courses. In addition to the further education enrolments, there were around 750 learners on higher education courses, mainly funded through the University of Greenwich.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

Science and mathematics	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade 2
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The overall effectiveness of the college is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are improving at a faster rate than nationally, although they are still below the national average for similar colleges. Retention rates are generally strong but pass rates are low on many courses. Work-based learning provision is successful with good success rates. There is low attendance and a lack of punctuality in some curriculum areas.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good vocational skills but too many lessons do not meet the full range of learners' needs and are no better than satisfactory. Additional learning support is very good, especially where integrated into lessons. Assessment is satisfactory.
6. Meeting the needs and interests of learners is good. The range of provision is good, offering progression from entry level to higher levels of study and employment. There is insufficient work experience for learners in some curriculum areas. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good.
7. Guidance and support for learners are good. Group tutorials are purposeful but individual targets set for learners are sometimes unrealistic or lack challenge.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strong governance and clear strategic management shape the college's distinctive vocational mission. The self-assessment report is mainly accurate, with close attention paid to the quality of learners' experiences. Curriculum management is generally effective and good in some areas. Financial management is strong and the college is improving its standards of accommodation. Equality of opportunity is good.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. The college has satisfactory capacity to improve its provision. Success rates have improved steadily over the past four years but remain below the national average. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. The thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but provides an over-generous view of the standard of teaching and learning. The strategic direction of the college is clear and understood by staff. It focuses strongly on local needs. Communication is good and there is a shared commitment among staff to improve performance.

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

10. The college has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Retention rates for adults on level 1 courses have risen since the last inspection and are

comparable to the national average. Unsatisfactory provision in media has been discontinued and the unsatisfactory provision in ESOL is now satisfactory. There have been significant improvements to the standard of accommodation, with much of the poor accommodation being taken out of use. Pass rates on key skills qualifications have improved and are now high. Tutorial work is stronger and there are more effective systems to track learners' progress. Quality assurance at course team level has improved. The proportion of good or better teaching and learning remains an issue for the college. Attendance and punctuality have improved since the last inspection, but still remain a problem.

Key strengths

- inclusive and welcoming ethos
- clear and distinctive vocational mission with a broad range of provision
- strong governance
- effective collaboration and partnership work
- successful work-based learning provision
- good personal and academic support for learners.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- learners' pass rates
- the high proportion of teaching and learning that is no better than satisfactory
- the over-generous assessment of the quality of teaching and learning
- learners' attendance and punctuality
- the rigour and appropriateness of individual target setting.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Work-based learning

Good: Grade 2

11. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Overall success rates are improving at a faster rate than seen nationally. Success rates on long courses at levels 2 and 3 are below the national average for similar colleges; at level 1 they are comparable for adult learners and above for 16 to 18 year-olds. Retention rates are strong, apart from on level 3 programmes; they increased by 4% for long courses in 2007/08. As acknowledged by the college in its self-assessment, pass rates are below the national average for learners at all levels. Success rates for short courses in 2007/08 were 82%, which is at the national average.
12. The college has increased its enrolment of work-based learners and achievement is very good. In 2007/08, the timely framework success rates for apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships were 56% and 83% respectively. They are above the national average in all curriculum areas offering this provision. For Train to Gain, overall success rates in 2007/08 were high at 91% but the timely rate was only 60%.
13. The overall success rate for learners of minority ethnic heritage was 64% in 2007/08; 2% below that recorded for white learners. Overall success rates for males are above females, with 16 to 18 year old males recording success rates 5% higher than females. Pass rates for key skills are high, increasing to 81% in 2007/08. Success by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high with good achievement against individual personal targets.
14. Learners enjoy their studies and attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection to 81%. However, despite strenuous efforts by staff to further improve the situation, the picture is inconsistent across the college, with low attendance and a lack of punctuality in some curriculum areas.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as noted in the college's self-assessment report. Teachers have widespread vocational knowledge and expertise from which learners gain valuable skills and insight. Lessons are planned thoroughly and provide a suitably broad variety of activities. Many teachers use information and learning technology (ILT) well to enliven their subject. Direct questioning to individual learners during lessons effectively checks learning. However, too many lessons are no better than satisfactory. This was also a key weakness in the last inspection report. In these lessons, teachers do not address the full range of learners' abilities; they provide insufficient challenge to more able learners or demand too much from those less able, who struggle to keep up. The college's assessment of the

quality of teaching and learning is over-generous. Recorded judgments focus too much on the teacher's activity and too little on the quality of learning and what learners achieve in lessons. The college recognises this and a more rigorous system of lesson observation was introduced recently.

16. Assessment is satisfactory. A rigorous approach to assignment design has improved the relevance and coordination of written assessments. Criteria for achievement are clear and closely related to the requirements of qualifications. Where appropriate, opportunities to accredit key skills are incorporated well into assignment briefs. However, in some subjects, written feedback is not detailed enough to help learners to improve. Assessment of apprentices' skills at work is effective and learners benefit from well qualified and experienced assessors. Strong relationships exist with employers, who are well informed about learners' progress.
17. Additional learning support is very good. Initial assessment for full-time learners is thorough and rigorous. The college has improved its use to match learners to the most appropriate course and support is available when required. Communication between support staff and teachers is good. In the better sessions, support staff work seamlessly with teachers to help learners progress and these learners achieve better than learners not receiving this support. Subject teachers integrate support for literacy and numeracy effectively into their lessons. The college offers diagnostic testing for dyslexia and assessments by an educational psychologist. A centre to support sensory loss has been established in the learning resource centre, which offers a wide range of assistive technology. Learners with disabilities are very well supported and the college is easily accessible by students with mobility difficulties.
18. The college's approach to meeting the needs and interests of learners is good. The provision reflects the college's vocational mission, with a clear focus on skills and qualifications for working life. The curriculum offers a wide range of progression routes from entry level to higher levels of study and employment in most subjects. There is good provision for learners aged 14 to 16, particularly in engineering. A broad range of work-based learning programmes provides flexible provision that meets the needs of employers well. Arrangements for work experience are broadly satisfactory but not well developed across all full-time programmes. The college offers interesting and well publicised enrichment activities. Promotional and marketing activities are very good and the college has a high profile in the local community.
19. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Strong links and collaborative work with community partners have successfully widened participation from under-represented groups. A particularly successful project on life coaching focuses on raising achievement for learners from black and minority ethnic heritage.
20. Guidance and support for learners are good. The college provides clear initial advice and guidance. Very good pastoral support is in place for social, career, health and financial issues. Careers guidance is freely available and learners

receive very good support with applications to higher education institutions. In 2007/08, over 300 students applied and over 90% were successful.

21. Group tutorials are well structured and purposeful, and supported by high quality learning resources. Tutorials are closely linked to the *Every Child Matters* themes. Tutors adapt activities carefully to meet learners' needs whilst ensuring that themes such as citizenship, diversity, being healthy and personal safety are included. Strong links with external partners are used effectively to provide interesting activities, such as theatre work and visits by the local authorities' Road Safety Traffic team. Full-time learners meet individually with personal tutors regularly to plan and review their progress. A new electronic monitoring system effectively coordinates all elements of the learner's programme. Staff and learners can access it readily from home and it enables staff to communicate more easily when parents enquire about their children. Target setting with learners varies in quality; although some tutors do this well, too often targets lack precision or can be insufficiently or too challenging.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:
Equality of opportunity

Good: Grade 2

22. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers have set a clear and distinctive vocational mission for the college that effectively shapes the curriculum. The college recruits high numbers of learners with low prior attainment onto its vocational provision to fulfil its mission. Strategic planning is effective but some targets that are set are not specific enough which makes progress towards them less easy to monitor. Communication is good and the college's role is understood well by staff. Governance is strong. Governors are very well informed and pay close attention to the college's performance and the views of learners. The college works well with its local community partners. There has been a sustained and largely successful focus on improving standards and achievement over the last four years. The college's success rates have risen from a low base and now approach the national average for similar colleges. However, pass rates still remain below the national average.
23. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. Courses are reviewed regularly and effective action is generally taken to address any areas that need improvement. The college is very responsive to the views of learners which are carefully gathered and acted upon. A well developed learner involvement strategy includes an annual student conference. Any concerns or complaints raised by learners are responded to promptly and effectively. The range and quality of support for learners are good. The quality of teaching and learning is closely monitored but the college's lesson observation system is over-generous in its assessment of standards of teaching and learning. Good appraisal and staff development arrangements are in place to support teaching and learning and have proved effective in some curriculum areas. Teachers are suitably qualified for their work and either hold or are working towards a teaching qualification.

24. Curriculum management is generally effective. Much of the provision inspected was judged to be satisfactory. Operational planning for work-based learning and Train to Gain are good and business, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and engineering are well managed. In motor vehicle studies performance is outstanding but this level of performance is not matched in a sufficient number of curriculum areas.
25. The college provides an inclusive and welcoming ethos. It pays close attention to equality and diversity issues and equality of opportunity is good. The performance of learners from different minority ethnic backgrounds is analysed carefully, although the understanding and use of this data to effect improvements is less well developed in some areas of the college. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic heritage is significantly higher than in the local community. College staff have a good understanding of the backgrounds of their learners and celebrate different cultural activities to promote community cohesion. The new diploma course in engineering has been developed with a local girls' school and is effectively introducing girls into engineering. Good support is provided for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college provides learners with a safe environment and meets government requirements for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. It meets its obligations under race relations, gender and disability legislation.
26. The college's accommodation has improved but is still of mixed quality. A new building includes high quality teaching accommodation and a learning resource centre. A new technology building is soon to open. The older accommodation is functional but unattractive. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, and in engineering, some of the rooms are overcrowded. Accommodation at the college's sites in Penge and Beckenham is satisfactory. There is good access to computers and most classrooms and practical areas are appropriately equipped and furnished.
27. Financial management is strong. Resources are clearly targeted to underpin strategic decisions and support curriculum developments. Financial systems are well understood by managers who receive clear and accurate reports on their staffing and budgetary positions. Learners' attendance and retention are closely monitored but attendance remains too low in some curriculum areas and learners are not always punctual to lessons. Retention rates have improved across the college. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Sector subject area

Science and mathematics

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

28. The area offers first and national diplomas in applied science and general certificate of education (GCE) A2 chemistry, biology and mathematics. There are 87 full-time and 15 part-time learners, of whom 34 are adults. Two thirds of learners are female. Around 59% have a minority ethnic background.

Strengths

- excellent A2 success rates
- consistently high proportion of high grades
- strong links with universities and high progression rates to higher education
- good additional learning support in lessons
- effective quality assurance and rigorous self-assessment to improve provision.

Areas for improvement

- poor pass rate for the first diploma in applied science
- insufficient use of ILT
- lack of provision at level 1.

Achievement and standards

29. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. In 2007/08, there was a decline in success rates. Retention on the national diploma fell, due to poor progression between Year 1 and 2, and the pass rate of the first diploma dropped significantly. The A2 provision continued to be successful, with a 100% success rate in chemistry. The proportion of learners who achieve high grades is above national figures for most courses. Learners on A2 subjects make good progress relative to prior achievement. The large majority of A2 learners, together with nearly all Year 2 national diploma learners, progress to university. Learners receiving additional learning support achieve significantly better than those that do not.

Quality of provision

30. The quality of provision and of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners enjoy their studies. Key skills assignments are becoming increasingly relevant and of value in supporting the vocational provision. The needs of learners requiring additional support are met well, especially for first diploma learners. In too many lessons, the teaching of theory is uninspiring and does not engage all learners. Checks on learning are not always effective. There is insufficient use of ILT to enhance learning, a weakness identified in the last inspection.

Homework is set regularly and marked constructively and learners are clear about what they have to do to improve.

31. The programmes meet the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. Progression routes in science are available from level 2 to level 3 and beyond, but the level 1 programme was recently withdrawn. Employers help to ensure that course content is relevant to the world of work but work experience to enhance the employability skills of learners in science is not available. There are close links with universities to promote progression to higher education.
32. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners value their tutorials. Predicted examination grades are used to monitor progress and all full-time learners have individual learning plans. However, learning targets are not always sufficiently personalised.

Leadership and management

33. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Effective quality assurance and self-assessment involving all staff have resulted in action to address the decline in success rates last year. Underperformance by learners is now dealt with more rigorously. Mandatory assessment workshops have been recently introduced for all vocational provision which are appreciated by learners. Equality of opportunity is good. Staff are highly qualified and well supported, but there is insufficient emphasis on the development of teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: Grade 2

Context

34. Motor vehicle repair, basic engineering competencies and electronic engineering are available at entry level to level 4, along with national certificates, apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships. There are 282 full-time and 98 part-time learners, with 13 on work-based learning programmes. Thirteen learners are female. The majority are aged 16 to 18. There are 28 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools studying the new diploma in engineering. Ten learners are on Train to Gain programmes.

Strengths

- outstanding provision in motor vehicle engineering
- high success rates for most courses
- highly innovative use of ILT to support teaching and learning in motor vehicle lessons
- broad range of courses which widen participation
- strong collaboration with local schools to deliver diploma programmes
- good curriculum leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- consistently low retention rate on national diploma in electrical/electronic engineering
- low attendance to mechanical engineering sessions.

Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are good. In 2007/08, the overall success rate was 93% and they are high on most courses, particularly motor vehicle programmes. They are outstanding on motor vehicle advanced apprenticeship programmes and satisfactory for apprenticeship programmes. Retention has been consistently below the national average for the past three years for the national diploma in electrical and electronic engineering.
36. The standard of learners' work is good on all courses. Learners on motor vehicle programmes have made well constructed rigs to house engines and adapted the engines for fault diagnosis. Engineering learners make tools, such as adjustable spanners and plumb bobs, with care and precision. In electronics, learners construct complex circuit boards with confidence. Attendance is satisfactory on most courses but erratic in mechanical engineering sessions.

Quality of provision

37. The quality of provision and of teaching and learning is good. In motor vehicle engineering it is outstanding. In these lessons, teachers use innovative ILT very well. Highly effective animation is used for fault diagnosis to explore the

operation of complex vehicle components and systems. Key skills teaching is contextualised, fully integrated into courses and extremely well taught.

38. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are good. Practical and written work is assessed frequently. Results of marked assignments and tests are used during tutorials to identify opportunities for improvement.
39. Meeting the needs and interests of learners is good. A broad range of courses, from entry level to level 4, meets the needs of learners and widens participation. There is consistently good progression between programmes. Excellent collaboration takes place with local schools and the college is offering the new engineering diploma. A group of pupils from a local girls' school are making good progress and other pupils aged 14 to 16 also attend the college for engineering courses. These courses are well supported and attendance and punctuality are particularly good.
40. The guidance and support of learners are good. Support for learners with additional literacy and numeracy needs is particularly effective. It is delivered in a vocational context; for example, using calculations of the ratio of anti freeze to coolant in relation to the cubic capacity of an engine. Initial assessment results are used effectively to plan learning. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well.

Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are good. The management of the motor vehicle programme area is excellent. Curriculum managers work exceptionally well together and with teachers. The self-assessment accurately identifies the strengths and areas for improvement. Areas for development are supported by a strong staff development programme. Course monitoring and review processes are thorough and frequent analysis provides managers with information on learners' progress and ensures appropriate support is provided. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff make best use of the current accommodation and resources. The move to new buildings for engineering is planned for 2009/10 and aims to further improve resources.

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

42. Courses for information technology (IT) practitioners and IT users offer progression opportunities from entry level 3 to higher education. Full-time provision includes IT at work, diplomas in digital applications, and first and national diplomas for IT practitioners. Part-time courses include the national vocational qualification for IT users (ITQ), certificate and diploma for IT users and other short courses. Provision is spread over two sites with the full-time provision on the main site. There are 176 learners aged 16 to 18 and 280 adult learners.

Strengths

- high success rates on first and national diploma and European Computer Driving License (ECDL) part 2 courses
- highly effective use of the virtual learning environment
- broad range of full-time vocational routes at all levels
- good additional learning support.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on adult programmes
- learners' unpunctuality
- too much teaching that is no better than satisfactory
- insufficiently challenging targets set for learners.

Achievement and standards

43. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are high on full-time vocational courses at levels 2 and 3, and on the ECDL part 2 part-time programme. They are low on courses taken mainly by adults, such as the level 1 certificate for IT users and the level 2 diploma for IT users.
44. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Adults gain confidence whilst learning new skills for employment. Attendance is satisfactory but too many learners are unpunctual for lessons.

Quality of provision

45. The quality of provision and of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and include the development of key skills. In good lessons, the needs of individual learners are met well. Learners collaborate and display good team work. Less effective lessons have insufficient checking of learning and a lack of challenge for able learners. Too many lessons are no better than satisfactory.
46. Teachers make good use of the college's virtual learning environment (VLE), and the many learning resources and documents available, to enhance and

shape learning effectively. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Assignments ensure learners develop key skills. Learners upload their assignments to the VLE and teachers provide feedback but there is insufficient written feedback to help learners improve.

47. The needs and interests of learners are satisfactorily met. A broad range of full-time vocational courses is available at all levels. However, links with employers are underdeveloped and opportunities for learners to set their learning in an industrial context are limited.
48. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Teachers monitor learners' progress effectively but agreed targets are often too imprecise and lack challenge. Additional learning support in lessons is good. It is provided for all learners who require it and they achieve well. In one lesson, learners with a variety of disabilities received an extensive level of support to help them achieve. Learners feel safe in the college and adopt safe practices.

Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course review procedures and use of learners' feedback are well established. Teachers are fully involved in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report accurately identifies many strengths and areas for improvement, but not all of the latter. The quality improvement plan contains actions which are insufficiently detailed to ensure improvement. The department is highly educationally and socially inclusive. Equality and diversity data are analysed well. Since the last inspection there have been improved success rates on full-time courses and the VLE has become embedded successfully and is used extensively. However, little progress has been made to improve learners' punctuality.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good: Grade 2

Context

50. Courses are available in hairdressing and beauty therapy to 191 full-time and 16 part-time learners. There are 110 learners enrolled on work-based learning programmes in hair and beauty and 28 school pupils aged 14 to 16 on level 1 hairdressing. Around two thirds of learners are aged 16 to 18 and almost all are female. Full-time courses are available in beauty therapy at levels 1 to 3 and in hairdressing at levels 1 and 2 with progression to level 3 as part of advanced apprenticeships.

Strengths

- high success rates on many courses
- high standards of practical and commercial skills of learners
- extensive curriculum enrichment activities
- good support, particularly for level 1 learners
- good work-based learning provision
- effective management action to improve provision.

Areas for improvement

- unsatisfactory retention rates in NVQ 3 beauty therapy
- outdated and cramped accommodation.

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are good. The standard of learners' practical, commercial and communication skills is high, which increases their prospects for employment. Beauty learners are professional in their work. Learners use ILT confidently to study and produce assignment work. Success rates are good overall, with almost all courses above national average. They are very high on the certificate in beauty therapy and level 1 courses. Apprenticeships have good and improving success rates. There is low retention on the national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 3 beauty therapy course. Attendance rates have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

52. The quality of provision and of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. The best lessons are briskly paced, plan for a variety of activities to challenge and engage learners and link practical work to theory and commercial practices. Learners participate well in learning. Learning materials, including ILT, are good. However, outdated and cramped accommodation does not reflect commercial standards and impacts adversely on some practical teaching.

53. Assessment is well planned using electronic tracking. Marking of written work promotes improvement. Learners know what they need to do to achieve their qualification. Some are fast-tracked to complete early. A lack of clients in some sessions is offset by additional assessment opportunities in the workplace, during holiday periods and at a day centre for disabled people. Learner reviews set useful targets.
54. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well. There are suitable progression routes and good work-based learning provision in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. An extensive enrichment offer enables learners to participate in external exhibitions, manufacturers' courses, competitions, work experience, sports, awards and visits to museums.
55. Guidance and support are good, particularly at level 1, with effective team teaching with basic skills tutors. Tutors provide good individual guidance and learners progress and feel well supported. Learning support resources are identified and provided when required. Tutorials and reviews support personal development.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are good. Effective actions have improved provision since the previous inspection. Success and attendance rates are higher and under-performing courses are now closed with improved options offered to learners. Communication is systematic, with good teamwork and sharing of resources. Work-based learning is managed and delivered well, meeting employer needs. Key skills are integrated appropriately. Internal verification is satisfactory. Self-assessment is inclusive and broadly accurate excepting over-generous judgements on achievement and teaching. Equality of opportunity is good overall but there is insufficient promotion of the provision to males.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

57. Full- and part-time ESOL programmes from entry level 1 to level 2 cater for 480 learners, of whom 50 are aged 16 to 18 and the remainder adults. Some 300 learners study full time. Part-time literacy and numeracy programmes cater for 80 adult and 16 to 18 year olds. Entry and level 1 vocational courses include literacy and/or numeracy support, while 78 learners receive support, independently of their courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on a significant number of courses
- good development of ESOL learners' speaking and listening skills
- effective literacy, numeracy and additional language support for learners on vocational courses.

Areas for improvement

- teaching and learning not meeting the full ability range of learners
- inappropriate accreditation for ESOL learners
- insufficient quality improvement arrangements.

Achievement and standards

58. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are high on a significant number of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL speaking and listening programmes, but no more than satisfactory on others.
59. Standards are satisfactory. Learners enjoy their studies. Rates of progression to further study are satisfactory. ESOL learners speak confidently. Literacy learners develop new skills including accurate and improved use of dictionaries. Numeracy learners steadily improve their use of mathematical concepts.

Quality of provision

60. Quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is good emphasis on developing ESOL learners' speaking and listening skills. Learners often work collaboratively in groups or pairs, using English to discuss tasks, with enthusiasm and engagement. Additional literacy, numeracy and language support effectively helps learners achieve their vocational learning aims. Support is successfully integrated within vocational programmes at entry and level 1. The range and use of learning resources is satisfactory.
61. Teaching and learning within discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision do not meet the full ability range of learners. Literacy and numeracy sessions rely too heavily on worksheet completion. As identified by self-assessment, targets on individual learning plans are often too general and do not sufficiently reflect

learners' longer-term needs or aspirations. Learners do not routinely receive records on paper of their targets.

62. Programmes satisfactorily meet the needs and interests of learners. Skills for life speaking and listening qualifications are suitable but much of the accreditation for ESOL learners is inappropriate. Too many learners work towards adult numeracy accreditation despite having well developed numeracy skills. Qualifications for learners at levels 1 and 2 do not accredit their writing skills.
63. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Informal pastoral support is good and tutorial support is regular. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The range of additional support is good, and satisfactory for discrete provision. Introductory vocational and employability training for full-time ESOL learners is useful.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication and teamwork are good with regular team meetings. Operational management is satisfactory. Progress to remedy weaknesses identified at the last inspection is mainly satisfactory. The self-assessment process incorporates the views of staff and learners well. However, quality improvement arrangements are not sufficient. Current self-assessment overestimates strengths of the provision and does not adequately identify areas for improvement. Actions, projected outcomes and timescales in accompanying development plans are not specific enough. Professional development to meet mandatory subject specialist requirements and needs is not sufficient. ESOL teachers teach numeracy without having appropriate qualifications or training.

Business and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

65. The college offers a broad range of professional and vocational provision from level 1 to higher levels, with options for legal secretaries, business, accountancy, management and personnel. There are 628 learners enrolled, of whom 274 are full time and 354 part time. Of these, 237 are aged 16 to 18 and 391 are adults.

Strengths

- high success rates on the national diploma in business and the certificate for legal secretaries courses.
- wide range of provision offering good opportunities for progression
- effective management to improve under-performing courses.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates for adult courses at level 3
- unpunctuality and poor attendance of learners
- teaching which offers insufficient challenge for more able learners.

Achievement and standards

66. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. A significant improvement in success rates took place in 2007/08, particularly at level 2, and they are now slightly above national figures for long courses. Success rates are significantly above the national average for the national diploma in business and the certificate for legal secretaries courses. They are improving for adults at level 3, although they are still low.
67. The standard of learners' work, and the development of skills, is satisfactory, and good on some courses. Most learners enjoy their time at college but they are too often unpunctual and attendance is low for many courses. This is acknowledged by staff and recognised as an area for development.

Quality of provision

68. Quality of provision is satisfactory and teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and teachers use their knowledge and experience effectively to improve learning. Teaching methods and learning materials in most cases are suitably varied. Accommodation is at least satisfactory, with some good rooms providing the opportunity to use personal computers. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not use directed questions to involve all learners sufficiently. Some lessons are too slow and more able learners are insufficiently challenged. The use of ILT and the VLE is insufficiently developed. The identification of learners with additional learning needs is generally timely and support is good.

69. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessments are well spaced, varied and relevant. Feedback comments from teachers are mainly detailed and helpful to learners, but occasionally they are too brief and fail to inform the learner how to make future improvements.
70. Meeting the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. As reported in the last inspection, the college has maintained a wide range of provision. Progression to higher level courses and higher education is good. The department is responsive to the needs of employers. Curriculum enrichment activities, to support understanding of employment choices and the business world, vary between subjects from very good practice to insufficient.
71. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Pastoral support is good and tutors pay particular attention to those learners at risk of leaving the course. Target setting to improve learner performance is not always sufficiently detailed. Individual tutorials do not always fully explore learners' progress sufficiently.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are good. Recent actions to improve under-performing courses are effective. Success rates have much improved. The performance of all courses is closely monitored by managers who set realistic and challenging targets for success rates. Communication between staff is good and resources are shared appropriately. Procedures to ensure learners can voice their opinions are well developed and the views of learners are taken seriously. Quality assurance processes are good. The self-assessment report is mainly accurate. Some aspects of weaknesses from the previous inspection have not been fully addressed. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good.

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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	05/06	759	66	69	-3	1684	54	65	-11
	06/07	812	72	74	-2	1472	62	70	-8
	07/08	851	78	N/A		1483	69	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
	06/07	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
	07/08	0	0	N/A		0	0	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	99	66	72	-6	32	75	74	1
	06/07	127	69	75	-6	24	79	75	4
	07/08	96	84	N/A		18	72	N/A	
Other	05/06	660	66	69	-3	1652	54	65	-11
	06/07	685	72	74	-2	1448	62	70	-8
	07/08	755	77	N/A		1465	69	N/A	

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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	05/06	554	57	66	-9	1494	65	66	-1
	06/07	641	63	70	-7	793	63	69	-6
	07/08	613	70	N/A		859	61	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
	06/07	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
	07/08	0	0	N/A		0	0	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	39	59	69	-10	0	0	N/A	N/A
	06/07	42	79	73	6	6	50	71	-21
	07/08	43	67	N/A		6	67	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	114	47	65	-18	177	63	68	-5
	06/07	126	59	68	-9	135	68	69	-1
	07/08	89	64	N/A		266	44	N/A	
Other	05/06	401	59	66	-7	1317	65	65	0
	06/07	473	62	70	-8	652	63	69	-6
	07/08	481	71	N/A		587	68	N/A	

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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	05/06	345	54	71	-17	630	62	64	-2
	06/07	359	66	73	-7	556	65	68	-3
	07/08	436	64	N/A		634	65	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	6	83	87	-4	26	88	72	16
	06/07	9	100	87	13	10	70	76	-6
	07/08	23	100	N/A		22	91	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	45	56	67	-11	19	53	55	-2
	06/07	50	76	69	7	7	71	59	12
	07/08	39	41	N/A		12	33	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	4	100	66	34	8	88	56	32
	06/07	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	N/A	N/A
	07/08	17	59	N/A		5	40	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	9	67	71	-4	148	57	63	-6
	06/07	13	77	74	3	142	66	69	-3
	07/08	21	57	N/A		177	73	N/A	
Other	05/06	281	52	65	-13	429	62	64	-2
	06/07	287	63	70	-7	397	64	69	-5
	07/08	336	65	N/A		418	61	N/A	

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	28	86	53	75	44
		timely	28	61	34	71	27
	06/07	overall	43	84	64	67	58
		timely	43	79	43	65	37
	07/08	overall	23	100		83	
		timely	23	91		83	
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	44	93	58	84	52
		timely	44	84	38	75	34
	06/07	overall	90	87	65	80	61
		timely	90	78	47	74	44
	07/08	Overall	75	71		65	
		timely	75	52		56	

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record (ILR)

Table 5

Success rates on Train to Gain managed by the college 2007 to 2008.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	College NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	10	100
		timely	10	100
	2007/08	overall	152	88
		timely	152	60

* 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