

Lancaster and Morecambe College

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, social care and childcare; construction; information and communication technology (ICT); retail and commercial enterprises (covering hospitality and catering and hair and beauty); and preparation for life and work.

Description of the provider

1. Lancaster and Morecambe College is a further education college with its main site on the border of Lancaster and Morecambe. In addition to Lancaster and Morecambe, it also serves the communities of South Cumbria and North Yorkshire. Students attending the college come from areas of advantage and disadvantage. In 2006/07, there were over 2,000 16-18 year old learners on roll and over 4,500 learners aged 19+. There are more female than male learners in the 19+ age group, but the proportions are roughly equal for learners aged 16 to 18. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is very

small, reflecting the make up of the local population. There are roughly equal proportions of learners on courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. The college offers provision in all sector subject areas and has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in hospitality and catering. The areas with most learners are preparation for life and work, health, care and public services, and retail and commercial enterprises. The college offers apprenticeships, entry to employment, Train to Gain and bespoke industry courses to meet the needs of local employers. It holds the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) contract for Lancashire, which covers six prisons.

2. The local area is highly competitive with six 11-18 schools within three miles of the main college campus, the majority of which also offer vocational qualifications. The rate of participation in Lancaster and Morecambe of students aged over 16 is above the national and Lancashire averages. There is also a local authority (LA) funded adult college in Lancaster.
3. The college's mission is: "providing Lancaster and Morecambe and surrounding communities with an outstanding student experience fulfilling academic, personal and employment goals".

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and childcare	Good: Grade 2
Construction	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Retail and commercial services	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

4. This is a satisfactory and improving college. There has been a clear upward trend in success rates over the last four years. Learners' achievement and standards are now satisfactory overall. In some areas, they are good, such as work-based learning and OLASS provision. However, there are also significant pockets of underperforming courses, particularly at level 2. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A number of improvement strategies have been used in this area and their positive impact can be seen on lesson planning and the use of active learning methods. In some sessions there is too much focus on teaching rather than the progress learners are making.
5. There is good provision to meet the needs and interests of learners. The college responds well to learner, employer and local community needs. The broad vocational curriculum is well matched to the needs of the local area and gives good progression opportunities from introductory to advanced levels. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Students' personal skills are enhanced through the broad range of enrichment activities and additional vocationally relevant courses offered. However, there are some gaps in developing employability skills and in the opportunities for work experience for full-time students. Employer engagement has improved with a significant increase in work-based learning and train to gain provision. The college's provision for 14-16 year-old school pupils has enhanced their choices. The college has developed good partnerships with local community and voluntary groups. Along with their OLASS provision, this enables the college to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable and excluded learners.
6. Care, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. The college has identified key areas for improvement, such as the effective use of individual learning plans (ILPs), and is working hard on developing these. Learners receive good individual support and sound initial advice and guidance. Group tutorials are poorly planned and managed. Support for learners with specific needs is good.
7. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership team have created a positive culture amongst staff and there are some very strong areas, such as financial management, partnership working and the promotion of equality and diversity. Self-assessment generally identifies the main strengths and areas for improvement, although these are not always effectively linked to action plans and the use of targets is not always clear. Actions to improve weak areas have been very effective but strategies for developing satisfactory ones have been less effective.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

8. The college demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Success rates have improved significantly over recent years. Improvements made to the OLASS provision and work-based learning have been particularly impressive. The financial position of the college has been enhanced considerably since the last inspection. Inadequate areas of college performance have been improved extensively and quality assurance arrangements have worked well in these areas. There is a strong shared commitment to improve the college. The self-assessment report identifies almost all of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. Managers have set a clear direction to move forward and recent changes have improved the focus on learning.

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

9. The college has made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Sound leadership and management have enabled the college to significantly improve learners' achievement in the areas identified as weak at that time. There is now very little inadequate teaching in the college. Actions to improve key aspects of work-based learning have been very effective. The curriculum has been extensively reviewed in response to changing local and national priorities and now matches the college's vocational mission and meets the needs and interests of its learners more closely. Governance has improved and the restatement of the college vocational mission has provided it with extra impetus.

Key strengths

- OLASS provision
- work-based learning
- responsive curriculum that meets local area needs
- promotion of equality and diversity
- strategies to improve weaker areas
- financial management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates on some programmes
- focus on learning and learner progress
- poorly planned and managed tutorials
- the effective use of individual learning plans
- rigour and consistency of action plans and target setting.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

Train to Gain

Good: grade 2

10. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. This agrees with the college's own judgement in the self-assessment report. There is a clear overall upward trend, but there are also significant pockets of underachievement. For learners aged 16 to 18 success rates at levels 1 and 3 improved markedly from 2005 to 2007, which brought success rates up from well below the national average to in-line with it. At level 2 the improvement was not so marked and in 2007 the success rate for the college was slightly below the national rate. Success rates have also risen for adult learners over the same period. The increases were most significant at levels 1 and 3, with the college rate rising to 10% above the national rate at level 1 and 5% above at level 3. At level 2 the rate rose to just below the national rate. College data show that the overall success rate has continued to rise in 2008 but the increase is not as great as previously.
11. The improving trend is not consistent across all aspects of provision. There are differences between learner age groups, levels of provision and sector subject areas. In some areas, such as ICT, there is a clear upward trend where improvement strategies have had a major impact. However, there are also courses where achievement is well below expected levels. The college has a number of ways to identify underperforming courses, such as the course review system and a number of strategies to deal with them. These can range from discontinuing provision to restructuring the course offer. Although clear evidence shows these have led to improvement, this is not yet the case in all areas.
12. Key skills success rates have improved from a low base and in 2007 were above the national average. However, there are some inconsistencies for example success rates in communications declined at level 2. Work-based learning success rates for apprentices showed a three-year improving trend from 2005 to 2007 when both overall and timely success rates were well above national rates. Although college data show these rates dropped in 2008, they were still high. Success rates for advanced apprentices showed a declining trend over the same period, but college data show an improvement and in 2008 they are satisfactory. Train to gain success rates rose markedly in 2008 to reach high levels. Progression rates for entry to employment courses are also high. The success rates on the OLASS provision show a clear improvement from 2007 to 2008 when they reached a high level of 81%. Achievement for 14-16 year-old learners is satisfactory. Students receiving additional learning support achieve as well as other learners. Learners from minority ethnic groups achieve similar success rates to those of their peers.

13. The attendance of learners in college is satisfactory and behaviour is good. Most learners enjoy coming to college. They produce work of a satisfactory standard and make the progress expected in their studies. There are many examples of students achieving success in competitions, such as those in sport, hospitality and theatrical make up. There are also good levels of skills development particularly in work-based learning. The college environment supports safe and healthy working.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Work-based learning

Good: Grade 2

14. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This disagrees with the college's view that teaching and learning are good. The college has successfully focused on improving lesson planning and the use of active learning methods. Lessons are purposeful, with clear aims that are explained well to learners. In most lessons, learners are actively engaged in developing their vocational skills and knowledge. Less effective lessons draw on a limited range of activities, fail to engage or maintain the interest of all learners, or offer too little challenge to motivate the more able.
15. Assessment is satisfactory. In the classroom, teachers use question and answer well to check understanding, but in a minority of lessons, quieter learners are not included. More stimulating lessons draw on a wider range of assessment strategies including peer and self-evaluation. Improvements have been made to the range of NVQ assessment methods; for example, the use of digital sound recorders. Feedback on written work is satisfactory. Satisfactory initial assessment procedures identify learners' individual needs at an early stage. Staff use this information well to provide additional support. However, in some curriculum areas it is not used effectively to set individual targets and review progress.
16. Accommodation and resources to support learning are mostly satisfactory. Learners make good use of the well equipped learning resource centre and the wireless-enabled electronic notebooks. Staff are making increasing use of information learning technology (ILT) to improve the learners' experience. Parents and carers find college staff very approachable, and welcome the opportunities to keep in touch with learners' progress through parents' evenings and other informal contact. There is good involvement of employers in reviewing the progress of work-based learners.
17. A wide range of strategies has supported improvements in teaching quality. The established lesson observation system has supported a culture of improvement and encouraged professional dialogue about classroom practice. However, arrangements for validating judgements during the observation of teaching and learning are not sufficiently robust. In some cases this leads to an over emphasis on teaching rather than the progress of learners in lessons, and to some over grading of lessons.

18. Responsiveness to the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local community is good. This agrees with the judgement of the college. The college offers a broad range of vocational qualifications and in most areas; there are progression opportunities from level 1 to level 3. However, the progression to level 3 courses is low in construction and hairdressing. In the college's CoVE area, hospitality and catering, the range of courses, links with employers and enrichment activities are lower than would be expected. The college made the decision to withdraw its academic GCE A level provision in September 2008 following several years of underperformance and low numbers. The college has developed very good links with vulnerable and disadvantaged community groups and works well with them to provide appropriate courses to develop their literacy, numeracy and confidence skills. Engagement of employers has improved significantly in recent years and the college has expanded its work-based learning and Train to Gain provision to meet the needs of the local area.
19. The college has placed considerable efforts in developing successful partnerships with local schools to support curriculum planning. Cross-college curriculum enrichment is well developed and there are a broad and interesting range of theme weeks and fun events, many of which support the personal development of learners. Students feel valued in how the college listens to their views and there is an active student council. Students have a strong influence in the enrichment offer; for example, a college festival during induction provided very good opportunities for learners to meet new people and learn about a wide range of health and safety matters in a fun way. Vocational enrichment opportunities vary across the college. Those offered are greatly valued by learners, participation rates are high and the success rates on additional qualifications improved in 2008. The opportunities for work experience are low in a minority of areas.
20. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. The college had identified most of the key areas for improvement in guidance and support but had graded this aspect of provision as good in the self-assessment report. However, they did not have sufficient evidence to identify the significant variability in the delivery of group tutorials. A range of high quality resources are available for personal tutors to use in their group sessions and all have taken recent staff development. However, inspectors observed that too many group tutorials are poorly planned and managed. Tutors and support staff effectively monitor attendance and punctuality. Individual learning plans have been recently revised and improved but inspectors found inconsistencies in how they are used to measure performance and set interim targets linked to learners' minimum target grades. Learners receive good individual support in lessons, to develop their practical skills and for personal issues. Support and guidance in work-based learning is good.
21. The college has revised entry criteria for all courses and learners generally receive sound initial advice and guidance. An informative supplementary prospectus for parents provides good information about the college. Most individuals' learning needs are accurately diagnosed and quickly met. Support

for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. A broad range of welfare services, including the effective use of appropriate external agencies, is valued by students. Support and guidance for applications to university is very good but is less effective for progression to employment.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

22. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The mission of the college has recently become more focused and the main strategic priority is to provide high quality specialist vocational provision. The principal and senior leadership team have created a positive culture amongst staff whilst carrying out a steady programme of improvement. Effective action has been taken to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Strategies to improve weak areas are good. Strong financial and human resource management ensure efficient use of resources and a dramatic improvement to the college's financial health has taken place. The college provides satisfactory value for money.
23. Overall, success rates have improved at all levels since the previous inspection, although most remain around the national average. In 2007/08, the rate of improvement in most success rates slowed. The college recognises that there are still some significant areas for improvement and in some cases, the rate of improvement has been slow. Around a third of the college income is derived from the OLASS contract. The management of OLASS contracts and partnership working is very strong. The management of work-based learning has also been strengthened and is now good.
24. A number of effective partnerships has been established with a wide range of agencies and employers. Sensible changes that have recently been made to the curriculum offer to ensure a closer match to the vocational mission. This process has been protracted and as a result, some inappropriate and underperforming courses have only recently been discontinued. Arrangements to listen to and act upon the views of staff, learners and key partners are well established, although sometimes the analysis of their views is ineffective.
25. Self-assessment reports generally identify the main areas for improvement and strengths; however, they do not always link with action plans necessary to bring about speedy improvement. Departmental action plans are less effective at improving the quality of satisfactory provision. The lesson observation system is well established; however, college arrangements for validating and challenging judgements are sometimes not sufficiently robust. Staff have good access to management information but there is some inconsistency across curriculum areas in how successfully data are used to bring about improvement. Headline targets have been set for improvement in success rates and at a variety of levels in sector subject areas. There is a lack of clarity amongst some

staff about how these targets fit together and what implications they have when judging the quality of their provision.

26. Governance is generally effective with several good aspects. The breadth of experience and knowledge of governors has recently been improved. Governors receive detailed reports to evaluate the work of the college, although some lack sufficient analysis to allow governors to use them constructively; for example, to judge if targets for achievement and quality of provision are sufficiently ambitious. The college recognises that some of its accommodation is rather dated and is in the early stages of creating a major redevelopment strategy. Current accommodation is well maintained and learning resources provide a broad range of facilities and services for learners. Most staff are well qualified and arrangements for the induction of new staff are thorough. Staff appraisals are appropriate and linked to the staff development programme. Appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively. An appropriate child protection policy and procedures are in place. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.
27. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Procedures are very well established across the college and have led to improvements. The college complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and has a well planned equality scheme. Most teachers take account of equality issues when planning their lessons and most learners have a reasonable knowledge of equality and diversity issues. There are very few examples of racial harassment or bullying. Effective arrangements are in place to support improvements in outcomes for children who are in the care of the local authority and this is reflected in their successful completion of courses. There is a broad match between the race, gender and disability profile of staff, managers and the community and student body. Equality and diversity issues take a high priority in the tutorial programme and this combined with a variety of promotional events are effective at raising the awareness and celebrating the variety of cultures in the community. Courses are actively promoted to particular groups to prevent gender stereotyping.

Sector subject area

Health, social care and childcare

Good: Grade 2

Context

28. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in health and social care and early years from level 1 to level 4. Currently there are 372 learners enrolled, 205 follow full-time courses, 108 are on childcare and 97 on health and social care courses. There are 126 16-18 year old learners. In addition, 41 adult learners follow part-time courses and 126 adult learners follow NVQ courses.

Strengths

- high success and retention rates on most long courses
- much good teaching and learning
- effective assessment and tracking of learners' progress
- effective links with employers
- good teamwork across the curriculum area.

Areas for improvement

- consistently poor results on level 2 childcare courses
- uneven quality of tutorial support
- lack of a strategy to support the attendance of part-time teachers at course team meetings.

Achievement and standards

29. Achievement and standards are good. College data for 2008 show success and retention rates on most long courses rose to well above the national average. However, success rates are low on level 2 childcare courses. On the certificate in childcare and education, they declined to 12% below the national average for the previous year. On the NVQ level 2 in children's care, learning and development, success, retention and pass rates are below national averages. Learners' work is of a high standard with many achieving high grades.

Quality of provision

30. Teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, effective use is made of small group and individual activities to meet the differing learning needs of students. Teachers make appropriate links with the workplace to illustrate good work practice and develop vocational skills. Learners benefit from well prepared and appropriate learning resources. They work hard and make good progress. In a few lessons, ineffective questioning fails to check the progress of all learners. There is good assessment and tracking of learners' progress. Marked work indicates good assignment preparation and clear feedback.

31. The range of courses meets the needs of both school leavers and employers well. Numbers on most courses are high. Most learners who complete, progress

to more advanced courses, to higher education or to employment. There are good links with employers. Effective steps are taken by NVQ co-ordinators to ensure that employers' needs are met and assessment and support are timed to meet the needs of employees. Learners on full-time courses benefit from well organised work placements. In addition, their curriculum is enriched by involvement in voluntary and charity work and by a range of visits and trips.

32. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Good steps are taken to identify learners' additional support needs. NVQ learners who need support receive it in the workplace. Learners on full-time courses at levels 1 and 2 receive in-lesson support and further individual support as needed. However, the quality of tutorial support for full-time learners varies. Insufficient steps are taken to monitor group tutorials in order to improve their quality and impact.

Leadership and management

33. Curriculum leadership and management are good. Good communications keep staff well informed. Teamwork is valued and developed. However, there is no strategy in place to support the attendance of part-time teachers at staff meetings. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. They have good access to training and professional development, including industrial updating. Equality and diversity is promoted well through the curriculum. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but the quality improvement plan lacks rigour. Most annual course reviews include clear actions for improvement.

Construction

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

34. Construction courses run in trowel trades, wood occupations, electrical installation and plumbing. Work-based learning and vocational training for 14-16 year-olds run in many of the crafts. There are approximately 500 learners most of whom are aged 16 to 18 and on full time programmes at level 1. Apprenticeship training at level 2 and 3 is also provided, under subcontract, with Construction Skills and JTL.

Strengths

- very high success rates on entry level construction and level 2 electrical courses
- good tutor and employer support for skills development
- good range of actions to improve programmes.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on two-year full time programmes
- insufficient opportunities for industrial experience
- ineffective use of information and data to inform self-assessment and quality improvement.

Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. There are very high achievement and retention rates across entry level construction and part time electrical installation courses. Success rates on two-year full time courses are poor they are below national rates and have been so for a number of years. Apprenticeship success rates were good but dipped in 2007/08 to a satisfactory level just above national rates. Timely success rates are satisfactory and above national rates. Key skills success rates are high for apprentices but low for full time learners. Success rates for 14-16 year-olds are satisfactory. Skills development and the standards of learners' work are satisfactory.

The quality of provision

36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the more effective sessions learners benefit from enthusiastic well organised teachers, who make learning active and interesting. In the less effective sessions tutors pay insufficient attention to individual learning styles and the instructions they give to students are not always clear. The use of ILT to support learning is developing well across the provision.
37. Programmes satisfactorily meet the needs and interests of learners and employers. Alongside a range of full cost specialist courses and apprenticeship programmes, the college offers a range of full- and part-time programmes from

entry level to level 3. There are insufficient arrangements to provide structured work experience and focused job search training for full time learners.

38. The provision for guidance and support is satisfactory overall. Specialist support for literacy and numeracy is effective in helping learners to progress. Learners receive highly effective support from their tutors and work-based learners are particularly well supported by their employers.
39. Group tutorial sessions are satisfactory. Qualification progression monitoring for all learners is very thorough. Enrichment activities include visits to trade shows and competitions. Assessment and verification arrangements are satisfactory. Course advice and guidance is effective and few learners transfer between programmes.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers provide very effective support for new staff and they have implemented a range of actions to improve programmes. These include a strong emphasis on establishing more effective, active teaching methods, closer scrutiny and more regular monitoring of learner progress and a one-year full-time provision to support improved retention rates.
41. Resources are satisfactory and good attention is given to health and safety. There is ineffective use of information and data to inform self-assessment and support quality improvement. Arrangements for the promotion and development of learners understanding of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. All learners undertake an induction programme that includes equal opportunities awareness training and there is good additional promotion of equality during work-based learner reviews.

Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

Context

42. The college offers full and part-time courses in ICT from entry level to level 3 at its main site and at the Morecambe learning centre. There are 65 learners aged 16 to 18 and 32 adult learners who study full time. Twenty six per cent of these learners are female and 4% are from minority ethnic groups. Over 150 adults attend part-time courses.

Strengths

- good success rates on full time courses
- good teaching
- good support for learners in sessions
- good operational management.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient use of ILPs to plan learning
- insufficient opportunities for work placements.

Achievement and standards

43. Learners' achievement is good and improving. Since the last inspection, overall success rates on full-time courses have improved considerably. The overall success rate in 2007 was 83%, 22% above the national average. The success rate for the first national diploma in 2007 was 12% above national average and college data for 2008 show it has improved further. Retention is good, as is attendance. Learners develop good ICT skills. Progression has improved and is now satisfactory. Learners' work is of a satisfactory standard.

Quality of provision

44. Teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, teaching is well planned, interactive and engaging. Tutors display comprehensive knowledge of their subject. Learners participate well in class discussions and enjoy their learning. Teachers use effective questioning to assess understanding and introduce frequent changes of activity. Learners demonstrate good skills acquisition and acquire confidence in using them. Full-time learners have frequent tutorials.
45. Assessment of learners is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient involvement of learners in recording their progress. ILPs are not always completed thoroughly and there is very little use made of them to plan learning. Learners are often not fully aware of the progress they are making.
46. There is a satisfactory range of programmes. Enrichment opportunities for full-time learners are satisfactory but have a strong emphasis on preparing learners

to progress to higher education. For learners who intend to progress to employment there are insufficient local opportunities for work experience. However, three learners recently went on a successful working visit to the Czech Republic.

47. Care, guidance and support are good. Individual support for learners is good. Tutors work with learners of all ages to raise aspirations. Tutors are very accessible. Learners can seek advice on problems with their own home computers. Learners on full-time courses receive effective additional learning support to enable them to achieve their main learning goals. This additional learning support has been very effective in raising success rates for these learners.

Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are good. The management of this curriculum area has changed since the previous inspection. Managers have successfully improved retention and achievement to significantly above national averages. There has been a strong focus on improving teaching and learning, a teaching coach has been appointed. New staff are well mentored. Good practice in other sections of the faculty has been well integrated into the department. Communication is good with frequent team meetings. Staff morale is high. Teachers benefit from good personal development opportunities. The self-assessment process is inclusive and correctly identified the strengths and areas for improvement. Health and safety and equality of opportunity are satisfactory.
49. Accommodation for teaching is cramped for larger groups. The recently installed computers have tower units, which limit the desk working space for learners.

Retail and commercial enterprises

Good: Grade 2

Context

50. The college offers hairdressing and beauty therapy and hospitality and catering courses from levels 1 to 3. There are 217 full-time learners, 274 part time learners and 70 apprentices on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. In hospitality and catering, there are 55 full-time learners, 93 part-time learners, 8 apprentices and 202 on Train to Gain courses. Sixty three pupils aged 14 to 16 are enrolled on level 1 and the young apprenticeship programme in hairdressing. There is a CoVE in hospitality and catering.

Strengths

- good and improving success rates on many courses
- good teaching and learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in practical lessons in hospitality
- good range of courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy
- good academic and personal support for learners
- good curriculum management in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Areas for improvement

- low retention on a minority of NVQ courses and declining timely achievement of advanced apprenticeships in hairdressing
- lack of challenge for the more able learners
- insufficient opportunity for industrial experience
- insufficiently rigorous quality improvement strategies particularly in hospitality and catering.

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are good and improving. In 2008 college data shows success rates in several areas are high, for example, on NVQ level 2 hairdressing and NVQ level 2 multi-skilled hospitality, apprenticeships and Train to Gain. Success rates for adults are higher than those for 16-18 year-olds. However, there are a small number of courses with low retention rates and the timely framework achievement rate for the advanced apprenticeship in hairdressing has declined. The standard of food preparation skills in hospitality and catering is good. The standard of learners' practical skills is satisfactory in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Quality of provision

52. The quality of the provision is good. Teaching and learning is good in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in practical lessons in hospitality. In the better lessons teachers prepare well, set their learners challenging targets and employ effective strategies to meet learners differing needs. Learners gain confidence, work hard, are motivated, and enjoy their learning. Initial

assessment is carried out and used to inform lesson planning through a detailed class and learner profile. Assessment is well planned.

53. ILT is widely used in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Verbal and written feedback to learners is detailed and constructive and guides learners towards improvement. In practical catering lessons challenging activities are set, learners participate well, enjoy their learning and demonstrate a high skill level. The standard of food preparation is particularly good. However, in some lessons teachers do not set challenging objectives to promote pace and activity for all learners particularly the more able learners. In hospitality and catering, there is insufficient questioning to assess learners understanding.
54. Programmes satisfactorily meet the needs and interests of employers and learners. There is a broad range of courses with clear progression routes in hairdressing and beauty therapy; however, there are limited opportunities for level 2 hairdressing learners to progress to higher levels of study. There is a narrow range of provision in hospitality and catering. Full-time learners are not routinely offered the opportunity for external work placements in the relevant industries to further develop skills and understanding. The realistic work environment provided by the college on its own does not always provide a sufficiently challenging range and variety of experience. In hospitality and catering, the range of high quality partnerships in the industry has declined.
55. Care, guidance and support are good. Learners, including apprentices, value the effective support they are given from vocational and learning support tutors and technical demonstrators. Additional support is well integrated into the curriculum. Learning support provided in practical sessions is good; learners are supported to develop their practical skills and self-confidence. Tutorials in hairdressing and beauty therapy are well planned, but less effective in hospitality and catering. All learners benefit from a pastoral support tutor.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are good overall and good in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Good communication and a pro-active management approach ensure a prompt response to issues of concern. Underperforming courses are action planned for improvement or replaced with a more appropriate offer. There are good links with employers in work-based learning with many qualified assessors who form part of the assessment team. Leadership and management in hospitality and catering are satisfactory.
57. Across the sector subject area there are insufficiently challenging targets set for the improvement of the learner experience. Course reviews lack rigour and do not focus sufficiently on improvements for learners. The curriculum area self-assessment reports were largely accurate although some aspects were overstated. There are significant differences across the two areas and best practice is not routinely shared. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

58. The inspection covered literacy and numeracy courses from pre-entry level to level 2 and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It included key skills application of number and communication and GCSE English and mathematics, as well as the college's Entry to Employment programme. There are 375 adult part-time learners on literacy and numeracy courses. Full-time students accessing literacy or numeracy support are mainly aged 16 to 18. There are 174 students on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; of these 101 are full-time. In 2007/08 there were 119 students on the Entry to Employment programme. Approximately 60% of students are female.

Strengths

- high success rates on literacy and numeracy courses
- successful entry to employment programme with high rates of progression
- good teaching of practical skills
- good range of provision.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient progress of students on some programmes
- underdeveloped individual learning plans
- restricted range of teaching and learning methods
- insufficient rigour in self-assessment.

Achievement and standards

59. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on literacy and numeracy qualifications are high. Key skills success rates in communication and application of number are satisfactory. Students are not making sufficient progress on provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and GCSE English and mathematics. Success rates on the latter were particularly low in 2007/08. The college runs a very successful entry to employment programme and there are high rates of progression for these students into further education or employment. The standard of students' work is satisfactory overall. Oral skills are not sufficiently developed for some students.

Quality of provision

60. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with particular strengths in the teaching of practical skills. The range of teaching and learning methods in a significant minority of lessons is too restricted and teachers do not differentiate sufficiently to meet individual needs. There is increasing use of information and learning technology but it is not

always used effectively to support learning. Assessment of student work is satisfactory. However, targets set in individual learning plans are sometimes too general for effective progress monitoring.

61. The college is responsive to the local community and programmes generally meet their needs well. There are good links with external agencies to promote access and widen participation. The curriculum for entry to employment students is particularly well planned. Some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are repeating programmes at a similar level without clear indication of progress. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Personal support for students is good and there is a very inclusive ethos within the college. Information, advice and guidance, and the tutorial programme, are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

62. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The day-to-day management of the programmes is good. Staffing and resources are satisfactory overall, with good specialist resources. Systems are in place to monitor performance and there are examples of effective quality improvement. However, the self-assessment process is not sufficiently rigorous. It overstates strengths of the provision and does not identify fully the areas for improvement. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory overall, with good examples within some courses.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	04/05	769	56	65	-9	1257	42	62	-20
	05/06	924	66	69	-3	1243	51	65	-14
	06/07	837	73	74	-1	680	80	70	10
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	10	50	68	-18	...	...	...	...
	05/06	13	69	73	-4	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
NVQs	04/05	73	73	68	5	57	67	67	0
	05/06	137	72	72	0	64	64	74	-10
	06/07	92	68	75	-7	51	73	75	-2
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
Other	04/05	686	54	64	-10	1200	41	62	-21
	05/06	774	65	69	-4	1179	50	65	-15
	06/07	745	74	74	0	629	81	70	11
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	

* college data

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	04/05	1019	61	61	0	686	57	60	-3
	05/06	1074	63	66	-3	1686	72	66	6
	06/07	815	66	70	-4	746	67	69	-2
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
GCSEs	04/05	211	59	64	-5	51	55	62	-7
	05/06	226	60	68	-8	51	67	67	0
	06/07	97	62	71	-9	23	83	70	13
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	30	77	67	10	4	25	74	-49
	05/06	53	72	69	3	15	47	68	-21
	06/07	18	67	73	-6	5	40	71	-31
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
NVQs	04/05	132	66	58	8	227	65	61	4
	05/06	196	64	65	-1	417	69	68	1
	06/07	140	71	68	3	317	52	69	-17
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
Other	04/05	646	60	61	-1	404	54	60	-6
	05/06	599	63	66	-3	1203	74	65	9
	06/07	560	66	70	-4	401	77	69	8
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	

* college data

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	04/05	722	56	68	-12	525	60	58	2
	05/06	771	69	71	-2	664	64	64	0
	06/07	591	73	73	0	383	73	68	5
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
A/A2 Levels	04/05	57	70	86	-16	38	71	69	2
	05/06	67	85	87	-2	38	71	72	-1
	06/07	79	90	87	3	28	64	76	-12
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
AS Levels	04/05	187	48	66	-18	41	61	52	9
	05/06	160	66	67	-1	30	63	55	8
	06/07	133	62	69	-7	31	52	59	-7
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
GNVOs and precursors	04/05	25	36	61	-25	51	25	54	-29
	05/06	3	0	66	-66	40	30	57	-27
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
NVQs	04/05	48	56	63	-7	92	70	56	14
	05/06	45	80	71	9	114	68	63	5
	06/07	48	88	74	14	90	82	69	13
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
Other	04/05	405	59	60	-1	303	62	59	3
	05/06	496	67	65	2	442	66	64	2
	06/07	331	72	70	2	234	73	69	4
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	

* college data

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	overall	17	82	48	59
		timely	timely	15	60	31	53
	05/06	overall	overall	18	78	53	50
		timely	timely	26	46	34	27
	06/07	overall	overall	43	58	64	44
		timely	timely	39	26	43	10
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	overall	50	52	51	42
		timely	timely	52	23	29	19
	05/06	overall	overall	87	67	58	61
		timely	timely	97	44	38	40
	06/07	overall	overall	128	81	65	78
		timely	timely	114	69	47	68

* 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 provider/college, 2007 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	396	61
		timely	299	63
	2007/08	overall	504	79
		timely	485	78

* 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 provider/college, 2007 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	13	100
		timely	13	100
	2007/08	overall	37	86
		timely	37	86

* 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

Table 6

Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the provider/college, 2006 to 2008

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate* (%)	Progression rate** (%)
2005/06	75	77	77
2006/07	103	77	77
2007/08	119	79	79

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period.

Note: E2E 'achieved objective' and 'progression' rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college/provider prior to inspection