

Bradford 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; the views of the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); previous inspection reports (www.ofsted.gov.uk); and data on learners and their achievement. 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 early years; science and mathematics; construction planning and the built environment; literacy and numeracy; provision for learners with learning difficulties/or disabilities and business studies.

Description of the provider

1. Bradford College is a large general further education (GFE) college. It has two main sites, two adult education centres and 60 community centres. Courses are provided in all the 15 sector subject areas funded by the LSC except agriculture. In most areas courses are available from entry level to level 4. Higher education (HE) provision is substantial.
2. The college has three Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), applied sciences, beauty and complementary therapies, and a joint CoVE which the college leads in gas technology. There is substantial competition for learners. Nearly all the schools in the area have sixth forms, there are two GFE colleges within easy travelling distance.

3. In 2007/08 the college enrolled 13,196 LSC funded learners, of whom 60% were female. Some 3,657 studied full time, where the gender split was 50/50. Half the learners were white British, 30% of Asian Pakistani origin, compared with 15% in the district's population and 4.5% were black compared with 1.5% in the district. Two thirds of the college's FE population were from postcode areas designated as socially deprived. On some full-time courses this proportion is much higher. Nearly half the FE learners studied at level 1 or below and a fifth at level 3.
4. The Bradford district features prominently in the measures of social and educational deprivation; it is the 32nd most deprived district nationally. Year 11 attainment is low; in 2007 only 36% of pupils gain 5 or more GCSE A* to C grades, including mathematics and English compared with 46.5% nationally.
5. The college's mission is to help learners achieve their potential and make a positive and rewarding contribution to their own communities. The college has set itself five strategic priorities relating to delivery, standards, inclusion, and responsiveness to learners, employer engagement and the learner voice.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and early years	Good: Grade 2
Science and mathematics	Outstanding: Grade 1
Construction, Planning and the built environment	Good: Grade 2
Literacy and numeracy	Good: Grade 2
Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good: Grade 2
Business studies	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

6. The effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. The long course success rate has improved and is above the national average. The success rate at level 1 is a key strength. Learners at all levels make good progress and produce good work.
7. Teaching and learning are good. The college's views on the quality of teaching are accurate. Initial assessment is good and additional learning support effective. Assessment is rigorous and helpful. Learners' progress is closely monitored. In non-accredited provision individual learning plans (ILP's) are insufficiently detailed, hindering an accurate assessment of achievement.
8. The college meets the needs and interests of learners very well. There is a rich range of enrichment activities but take up was low last year. The promotion of the Every Child Matters agenda is outstanding. Success in reaching the vulnerable and hard-to reach is outstanding and a particular strength. Partnership working is strong and employer engagement excellent.
9. Guidance and support are good. Additional learner support is effective. Assistive technologies for sensory support are not always provided quickly enough. The learning environment is safe and harmonious.
10. Leadership and management are good. Strategic leadership is outstanding. Performance management is robust and professional development effective. Quality assurance and improvement are good. Data are accurate and used well. Value for money is outstanding. Staff are well qualified and morale is high. Equality, diversity and the promotion of community cohesion are outstanding. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

11. The college has an outstanding capacity to improve. There is a track record of improvement or maintenance of high standards. The focus on improvement and the elimination of poor performance is strong. Teaching and learning are good. Curriculum management, team working and quality assurance are focused strongly on improvement. Students' achievement data are accurate and used well to inform action. Performance management is robust, and professional development of staff is well focused. Learners' progress is monitored and evaluated well. The strategic leadership of change and improvement are outstanding. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report is broadly accurate.

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

12. The college has made outstanding progress since the last inspection. Success rates have improved. Previously inadequate provision has improved and all curriculum areas inspected this time are at least good. More teaching is now outstanding and less is unsatisfactory. The college's responsiveness to the community and employers is outstanding. Performance management of staff, quality assurance and leadership and management have improved. The leadership of change and improvement is outstanding. The financial position remains strong in spite of major capital investment.

Key strengths

- high success rates at level 1
- good teaching and learning
- outstanding provision in science
- the responsiveness of the provision
- extensive partnership and collaborative working
- outstanding success in widening participation
- strong employer engagement
- good student support
- outstanding promotion of the Every Child Matters agenda
- outstanding promotion of equality and diversity
- outstanding strategic leadership.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success for adults at level 2 and satisfactory level 3 success rates
- the attention given to learning during lesson observation
- uneven provision of assistive technology for those with sensory support needs
- individual learning plans in non-accredited learning which are insufficiently rigorous.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

13. Achievement and standards are good. The college compared success rates for 2008 with the national rates for 2007, leading to a more positive view in the self-assessment report. In the four years to 2008 the overall long course success rate has been above the national average for similar colleges. In this period the rate for learners aged 16 to 18 has improved faster than the national average. The rate for adult learners fluctuates but is consistently above the average.
14. Level 1 success rates are improving and were high in 2008 for both ages and are a significant strength. A high proportion of enrolments are at this level. The success rate at level 2 for learners aged 16 to 18 has improved markedly, moving from well below average in 2007 to be above average in 2008. The level 2 rate for adults fluctuates. In 2007 it was above average. In 2008 the rate was low, due to the low success rates on provision franchised out. This provision is now delivered directly by the college and success rates on it have improved. Level 3 success rates are satisfactory. They improved in 2008 for both age groups.
15. Train to Gain success rates are good and achieved within the planned period. There are no issues concerning the performance of males compared with females or of each minority ethnic group. Learners in receipt of additional support achieve as well or better than their peers. The key skills success rate for application of number and communication at levels 1 and 2 is above the low national average and is satisfactory. Success rates on short courses are high.
16. Learners make good progress, enjoy their lessons and produce work of a good standard. At level 1 and below, on personal and community development learning, and on Train to Gain provision, learners make good gains in confidence and develop employment related skills. Many learners attain outstanding success; for example, one learner in computing achieved a gold medal in the recent UK skills competition.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

17. The quality of provision is good. Responsiveness is outstanding. Teaching and learning are good, a judgement which agrees with that in the self-assessment report. The proportion of lessons judged outstanding has increased since the last inspection and the proportion judged inadequate reduced. A substantial amount is still only satisfactory. Teachers manage learning well. Attendance is broadly satisfactory. It is good on personal and community development learning. Lateness is managed effectively. Resources to support learning are at least satisfactory and excellent in some areas. Information and learning technology is good although not enough use is made of it in a few areas. The college's views on the quality of teaching are accurate. In some college

observations too little attention is given to learning, an issue the college recognises.

18. Arrangements to initially assess learners' attainment in literacy and numeracy and personal needs are good. Additional learning support is offered, where appropriate, at any stage in a learner's programme and is readily accessible. Initial assessment informs individual learning plans appropriately. These plans are used satisfactorily to plan learning and monitor progress. In some areas, for example in some non-accredited provision, insufficiently detailed learning plans prevent an accurate assessment of achievement.
19. Assessment is rigorous and effective. Most learners have a good understanding of how to improve their performance. Work is marked constructively and returned promptly. In a few cases feedback is not helpful enough. Internal verification is robust and helpful. Learners' progress is monitored and evaluated effectively. Assessment and the monitoring of progress are good on Train to Gain provision resulting in good timely achievement of qualifications.
20. The degree to which the college meets the needs and interests of learners is, as the self-assessment report notes, outstanding. The wide range of courses, including Train to Gain and personal and community development learning, is planned well to ensure that it is inclusive and that learners can progress appropriately. High and increasing numbers continue into education or training. Learners leave college very well equipped for employment.
21. A particular strength of the college is its success in reaching out to vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups and providing them with the support and encouragement to engage in learning. The college has successfully provided young people not in education, training or employment with relevant provision. Courses delivered in local communities help many adults re-engage with learning. The college provides successfully for pupils who have been excluded from school. Innovative projects, such as the college's 'World of Wonder' centre and the college's work to address gender inequality help promote science and technology.
22. The college has the confidence of its partners, helping it to develop innovative approaches to regional regeneration and community cohesion. Working relationships with schools are good. Personal and community development learning is delivered in partnership with community organisations. Employer engagement is excellent; employers are very positive about the college's understanding of their business needs and the training provided. The college is particularly good at anticipating and meeting employers' needs. It works well with the local authority to provide training for employers new to the area. Employers are kept well informed of the progress of employees on Train to Gain provision.
23. There is a rich range of enrichment activities. Take up was low last year and the college is taking steps to address this. Communication between the college and learners is strong. Learners feel confident to express their concerns and views. The pastoral curriculum, enrichment activity and lesson planning

promote health, safety, and economic well-being well and encourage learners to make positive contributions; for example to charity. The college's attention to learners' physical, emotional and spiritual well-being is exemplary.

Guidance and support for learners are good. Advice and guidance are largely effective at helping learners move from school to college, placing them on the right course and helping them make progress. In some personal and community development learning a few learners is placed at an inappropriate level. Support for learners applying to higher education or seeking employment is good. Additional learning support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Learners accepting this support do well. The availability of this support, for example, in the provision of assistive technologies to those with sensory support needs is not always timely.

24. The college's promotion of learners' health and well-being is outstanding. The learning environment is safe and harmonious. The security team is exceptional in the way it engages with learners. Learners know they will have college support against inappropriate treatment and report that they feel safe in and around the college. Staff have had safeguarding training and are well aware of procedures. A small central team deals very effectively with safeguarding issues. The college maintains good contact with parents and carers.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: grade 1

25. Leadership and management are good. Several features are outstanding. The strategic leadership of improvements since the last inspection is outstanding. The principal is an inspirational leader who, with the support of governors and senior managers, has changed the college's culture and core values to be more learner focused. The strategic vision is well matched to local and national priorities. The college contributes well to economic regeneration and to the re-engagement of disadvantaged people. It is highly regarded in the region. Collaborative work is good and helps the college widen participation. The college works well with local schools and plays a key role in curriculum development. Success rates for long courses at most levels have improved significantly.
26. Staff are well informed about college matters and consulted appropriately. Team working is good. Decision making is timely and staff have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility and accountability. Arrangements for performance management are robust, linked where appropriate to the quality of teaching and procedures to improve areas of under-performance. Opportunities for professional development are very good and focused well on key priorities. Arrangements to share good practice are well developed.
27. Quality assurance is good. Systems are well established and there is an appropriate focus on key performance indicators and improvement. The quality team plays a pivotal role in supporting and challenging staff to improve.

Learners' views are carefully considered and acted on. Data are accurate and used well to monitor progress and set targets. The lesson observation system has helped improve the quality of teaching. Moderation procedures are rigorous. The volume of outstanding teaching, an area for improvement at the last inspection, has increased. The proportion of inadequate teaching has been reduced.

28. Curriculum management is good and focused on improving quality. The quality of provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. The management of work for employers and of personal and community development learning are good. The changes in adult and community work were well managed. The links between the college's business unit and some curriculum areas are under-developed. The college's self-assessment report is largely accurate. Action plans indicate clearly how provision is to be improved.
29. Governors make an outstanding contribution to college strategy and performance. They possess a good range of expertise and are now more representative of the college and the area than at the last inspection. The standards committee scrutinises college performance robustly. Financial management is good and value for money is outstanding. The college has maintained its financial strength.
30. The development of the college's estate has been well planned and delivered and is ongoing. The new facilities for sports, construction and engineering are excellent and have replaced much of the inferior accommodation noted at the last inspection. The college has ambitious proposals for a new building. Staff are well qualified and morale is high.
31. Equality, diversity and the promotion of community cohesion are, as the self-assessment report notes, outstanding. The college has received regional and national recognition for this work. Equality and diversity feature prominently in all aspects of work. Social and educational inclusion are outstanding. The college is widely respected in the diverse communities it serves. Minority ethnic groups make good progress. College communities are treated fairly and with respect. Staff receive specific training about the needs of the different groups served by the college. The college encourages open debate. It has hosted national seminars on what it means to be British and runs training programmes on citizenship. The college is a very safe and inclusive learning environment. Security arrangements are effective and unobtrusive. Arrangements to safeguard children and vulnerable adults are excellent. The college complies with the requirements of the relevant legislation regarding equality and diversity.

Subject sector areas

Health, social care and early years

Good: Grade 2

Context

32. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in health and social care and early years from entry level to level 3. At the time of the inspection there were nearly 400 learners on these courses, three quarters studying full time. About half were aged 16 to 18. Most part-time learners were adults. Just over half the learners were on early years courses. Childcare courses are provided for school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Strengths

- good or outstanding pass rates on most courses
- much good teaching and learning
- high standard of learners' work
- good communication within and across the programme areas.

Areas for improvement

- the limited management impact to address some persistently low retention at level 3.

Achievement and standards

33. Achievement and standards are good. In 2007/08, pass rates on most courses rose to well above the national average. However, the retention rate has been consistently low on the national diploma in health studies. In 2008 the retention rate was well below the national average. Learners' work is generally of a high standard and many students achieve high grades.

Quality of provision

34. Teaching and learning are good overall. Much of the teaching and learning is good on childcare courses at all levels and in some health and social care courses. Teaching and learning in a few health and social care lessons is inadequate. In most lessons, effective use is made of small group and individual activities to meet differing learning needs. Teachers make appropriate links with the workplace to illustrate good practice and develop vocational skills. Learners benefit from well prepared and appropriate learning resources. They work hard and make good progress. There is little use of ILT in lessons; most classrooms are not yet appropriately equipped. In a significant minority of lessons questioning is ineffective and fails to check the progress of all learners.
35. Assessment is timely, fair and accurate and meets or exceeds awarding body standards. Standards are good or outstanding on childcare courses and

generally good on health and social care courses. On most assignments there is clear and constructive feedback to learners, including helpful annotation.

36. Provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. The range of courses provides good progression routes to employment or higher education. Numbers on most courses are high. Many learners progress from level 3 courses to HE. Full-time learners benefit from well organised work placements.
37. Student support is good. Good steps are taken to identify learners' additional support needs. Learners on full-time courses at entry level receive good in-lesson support and further individual support as needed. Most learners receiving additional learner support complete their courses and achieve the award.

Leadership and management

38. Curriculum leadership and management are good. Good communication at college, programme area and team level keep staff well informed. Teachers are generally well qualified and experienced. They have good access to training and professional development, including industrial updating. Equality and diversity are successfully promoted through the curriculum. Staff contribute appropriately to the self-assessment report through termly course reviews. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. The implementation of action plans to improve retention on level 3 full-time courses have had limited impact.

Science and mathematics

Outstanding: Grade 1

Context

39. At the time of the inspection there were around 1,100 enrolments on science and mathematics programmes. The science provision includes pre-GCSE and GCSE courses, vocational courses in applied science and pharmacy services, Access programmes, and GCE A and AS courses. About 100 learners were on work-based NVOs in pharmacy and optical retailing. Provision in mathematics includes GCSEs, an Access programme, and GCE A and AS subjects. Most learners were part time, however many also studied on other college courses. About half the learners studied at level 2 and just under half at level 3. Around one third of the learners were aged 16 to 18. Most students are enrolled on science provision.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- much good or outstanding teaching in science
- the excellent response to employers
- highly effective academic support
- very good initial advice and guidance
- outstanding leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- some uninspiring teaching in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

40. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates are high; for example, on NVO2 pharmacy the success rate was high in both 2007 and 2008. In GCE AS applied science the rate was double the national average in 2008 and in GCSE mathematics the higher grade success rate is high. There are low pass rates on a few courses, for example, in GCE A level physics. Learners on GCE A level chemistry, AS physics and AS mathematics make very good progress. Progression to HE is high in science.

Quality of provision

41. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Much of the teaching in science is good or outstanding. Innovative approaches encourage the active involvement of learners. The teachers are highly enthusiastic and learners are constantly challenged to develop skills and understanding. The use of questioning is particularly effective. There is a good variety of activities. Paper-based resources are of a high quality and ILT is used well to enthuse and motivate learners. In mathematics too much teaching, though satisfactory, is uninspiring and insufficiently varied.

42. The provision is very well matched to the needs of learners. The range of courses is wide. Learners receive a good range of vocational enrichment. Responsiveness to employers is excellent. Enrolments on the work-based pharmacy services programmes are increasing and an NVO 2 in optical retailing has been developed to address a need identified by the Association of Optometrists.
43. Students receive outstanding support. Careful initial assessments ensure that learners are placed on the most appropriate courses. On-going assessment is rigorous and identifies quickly learners who may not succeed when suitable support arrangements are put in place. Academic support is highly effective; it is targeted well to best suit learners' individual needs and is carefully planned and monitored. Learners commented positively on the supportive environment where there was always someone on hand to help.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are outstanding. Communication and team working are good. The self-assessment process is rigorous and largely accurate. Actions have led to continued improvements in success rates. A comprehensive programme of professional development in science has led to an increase in the proportion of lessons graded good or better. There has, though, been little success in improving the proportion of good or better teaching in mathematics. The ILT resources to support mathematics teaching are limited. There is a well maintained and equipped teaching environment in science which, through extensive wall display provides an excellent subject identity. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Good: Grade 2

Context

45. The college offers courses from levels 1 to 4 in most vocational trades and BTEC national and higher national courses. About 350 learners are aged 16 to 18 and 270 are adults. Approximately 60% of learners study full time, most of whom are aged 16 to 18. Off-the-job training is provided for over 250 apprentices. Courses are provided for school pupils aged 14 to 16. About 6% of all learners are female and nearly 24% are from minority ethnic groups. The college is a leader in plumbing and has a gas innovation CoVE.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- the good quality of learners' work
- good teaching in practical lessons
- the wide range of provision
- the effective strategies for improvement.

Areas for improvement

- weak lesson planning
- insufficient technician support in workshops.

Achievement and standards

46. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on most long courses improved significantly in 2007/08 and are now high. Pass rates also improved considerably and are now very high. On the national certificate and diploma courses success rates are in line with the national average. Retention rates for most courses are high.

47. The quality of learners' work is good. Learners on BTEC courses produce well structured reports and make good use of ILT. Learners' portfolios in the craft areas include a good range of appropriate evidence. These learners develop good vocational skills in college workshops and produce work to an acceptable industrial standard. Progression to higher level courses and employment is good.

Quality of provision

48. The quality of provision is good. Teaching in practical lessons is good. In these lessons, learners carry out realistic tasks that mirror work on-site. Teachers give more able learners extension tasks. They regularly check learners' progress and provide detailed and helpful feedback. Health and safety practice is strongly emphasised. In theory lessons, most lesson plans are not subject-specific and some are only partially completed. A few lessons are poorly structured and fail

to engage the learners sufficiently. Teaching of key skills is not always delivered in a vocational context. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and in line with the awarding bodies' requirements. Internal verification is satisfactory.

49. The range of provision is wide, is well matched to learners' needs and covers the main construction craft areas as well as technician and construction management courses. Learners take part in skills competitions that help develop vocational and other employment related skills. The college responds well to the needs of employers; for example, by providing short updating courses.
50. Support and guidance are good. Entry guidance is effective. Teachers provide good individual support during lessons. Health awareness is promoted through induction programmes and group tutorials. One-to-one tutorials are adequate although the learning targets set are not always measurable.

Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management are good. Actions taken to improve the provision have been effective. The quality of teaching has improved. Success rates have risen significantly. Communication is good. Annual course reports are sufficiently evaluative. The curriculum self-assessment report is largely accurate but does not analyse trends in success rates. Some workshops are small for the groups of learners using them. There are too few technicians to service workshop teaching properly. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Literacy and numeracy

Good: Grade 2

Context

52. The college offers part-time courses from entry level to level 2 in literacy and numeracy. It also provides teaching in the key skills of application of number and communication. Programmes are offered at the main sites, in community and employer locations. There are 1,460 learners on discrete literacy and numeracy courses on the main college sites and 250 in community venues. Currently 270 learners are receiving additional learning support and nearly 3,000 learners are enrolled on key skills provision.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- good development of learners' confidence and communication skills
- good teaching and learning
- the wide range of venues and flexible learning opportunities
- good pastoral and curriculum support
- strong curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- low but improving attendance in literacy and numeracy
- inconsistency in the use and availability of ILT
- initial assessment in English and communication.

Achievement and standards

53. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on most courses; for example, in 2007/08, the success rates on many numeracy courses were outstanding and on level 1 key skills courses well above average. Success rates on level 2 key skills provision and in GCSE English were satisfactory. Attendance in literacy and numeracy has improved but remains below the college average. Learners develop their confidence and communication skills well. The standard of learners' work is good.

Quality of provision

54. Teaching and learning are good. Most teaching is well planned and engaging. In better lessons, teachers use ILT effectively to develop learners' skills. Staff are well qualified. Learners participate well in class discussions and enjoy their learning. In a few lessons, the planning to ensure teaching meets the needs of all learners is insufficient, the pace is slow and learners are not effectively engaged. The use of ILT is inconsistent.
55. Assessment processes are satisfactory. Initial and diagnostic assessment are used well to develop individual learning plans. Targets are clear and specific. The self-assessment report identifies accurately that initial assessment in

English and communication requires improvement with some learners placed on inappropriate courses.

56. Termly progress reviews identify learners' progress and their areas for development satisfactorily.
57. The provision meets the needs of learners, employers and the community well. The many venues and flexible learning opportunities help increase participation. Innovative projects and partnerships have helped to increase work with employers and other organisations such as the West Yorkshire probation service.
58. Pastoral and curriculum support for learners are good. They include, for example, additional teaching time where appropriate. Learner support in lessons is well planned. Staff provide good personal support; for example, for learners who are homeless.

Leadership and management

59. Curriculum leadership and management are good. Professional development is good. Weekly team meetings promote the sharing of good practice and provide highly effective communication. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The range of external links is wide and productive. The curriculum area team is involved in National Curriculum developments. Quality improvement plans are clear about what is to be improved. Managers use data effectively and make satisfactory use of learner feedback. The self-assessment process involves all staff and is broadly accurate.

Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Good: Grade 2

Context

60. The curriculum includes pre-entry level and level 1 courses for learners with a range of learning disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties for learners aged 14 to 16, 16 to 18 and for adults. There are five full-time courses and some part-time courses. Of the 190 learners, 142 are on full-time courses. The provision is spread over three college sites and a range of community venues.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- much good teaching and learning
- strong learning support
- good curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

- inconsistent use of technology to aid learning
- underdeveloped use of assistive technology.

Achievement and standards

61. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on many courses are well above national average. Outcomes on some internally accredited courses are low. Learners are set challenging targets that lead to work of a high quality particularly on vocational courses. Attendance is good. Learners undertake productive work placements and develop their skills effectively. Learners enjoy their work.

Quality of provision

62. The quality of teaching is good. In the best sessions teachers use questioning effectively and create a warm and vibrant atmosphere that motivates and absorbs learners. There is an ethos of focused enjoyment and productive work. Individual needs are taken into account and learners are challenged appropriately. Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Some internal lesson observations pay too little attention to learning. There is an over emphasis on paper-based resources. The use of ILT to promote and assist learning is inconsistent. The lack of computers and interactive whiteboards in most teaching spaces discourages developments.

63. Early assessments are thorough and the outcomes inform individual learning and support plans appropriately. These plans are of satisfactory quality. Excellent measures are taken to aid the transition of learners from school.

Progress review is satisfactory. Work is thoroughly assessed and marked and clear and helpful feedback given to learners.

64. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. There is a clear focus on learning outcomes that have a positive impact on the life of the learner. The range of programmes and the enrichment activities is good. There are good opportunities for progression that are well planned and give learners focus for the future. Insufficient opportunities are available for learners to access the wider college enrichment programme. Good links have been established with supported employment agencies and local companies. These have helped, for example, to expand the work placement provision.
65. Support for learning is good. Learning support workers are highly skilled; a focus on the holistic needs of learners enables them to develop subject specific skills, independence and wider personal skills.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are good. Self-assessment is broadly accurate although some areas for improvement have not been identified. There is a good focus on sharing good practice, communication and quality improvement. Managers use data effectively. The curriculum management team have a clear vision, are supportive and innovative. Professional development opportunities are good. Social inclusion, equality and diversity are actively promoted and add to the richness of the curriculum. The use of technology to mitigate disability is underdeveloped. A specific post has been filled to develop this support but there has been little impact on learners so far.

Business studies

Good: Grade 2

Context

67. The college provides full-time vocational business courses from levels 1 to 3 for about 240 learners, most of whom are aged 16 to 18. Almost 330 learners study on part-time accounting courses. Most of these are aged 19 and over. Over 1,000 adult learners follow short trade union courses.

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses
- good teaching and learning
- good support for learners
- wide range of courses and clear progression routes
- successful strategy for improving learners' performance.

Areas for improvement

- low retention on a minority of courses
- monitoring the extent to which trade union learners' wider needs are met.

Achievement and standards

68. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates have improved on most courses and are above the national average. Achievement on trade union courses is outstanding. On a few courses retention is low. The standard of learners' work in lessons is high. On trades union courses learners are able to discuss complex issues in a confident and collaborative way. Learners following business courses work co-operatively; listening carefully in order to understand and respect others' points of view.

Quality of provision

69. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching often results in good understanding and real enjoyment. Teachers make highly effective use of ILT to present material in different ways and give clear explanations and demonstrations. They vary the methods they use, keep learners engaged and check that the planned learning is taking place. In a highly competitive business game, teams had good fun improving the profitability of their business while developing their knowledge and understanding. In a minority of lessons learners make slow progress.
70. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. The range of courses is wide and provides clear progression routes from level 1 to professional level and HE. Great care is taken to place learners on the right courses. Learners have good access to vocational and other specialist staff. A high proportion of learners progress from level 2 to level 3 and a very high proportion move from level 3 to HE, many staying at the college. In trade union

studies the extent to which learners' need for wider skills development are met, such as the use of e-mail which could enhance their future work, is not monitored.

71. Student support is good. A comprehensive tutorial programme and regular individual tutorials ensure that learners receive good guidance on how to improve. Learners know that any requests for extra help will be met. In lessons where some learners have disabilities, support staff work alongside vocational teachers to allow those learners to participate fully.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are good. Improvement strategies have been highly effective at improving success rates in business and accounting courses. Managers observe lessons and set teachers clear targets to improve their teaching. Teachers benefit from good professional development. In some cases best practice; for example, the good teaching on higher level accounting courses, is not shared sufficiently. Course planning pays good attention to equality of opportunity. The self-assessment process is comprehensive and the report broadly accurate. Equality and diversity are promoted well.

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, GFE colleges with a high widening participation factor.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	05/06	1994	67	68	-1	6817	70	67	3
	06/07	1732	78	73	5	5568	76	71	5
	07/08*	2074	84	N/A		3620	81	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	**				**			
	06/07	**				**			
	07/08*	**		N/A		**		N/A	
NVQs	05/06	81	73	70	3	**			
	06/07	82	82	73	9	**			
	07/08*	81	83	N/A		**		N/A	
Other	05/06	1886	67	67	0	6805	70	67	3
	06/07	1650	78	73	5	5558	76	70	6
	07/08*	1981	84	N/A		3620	81	N/A	

* college data

** numbers too small to warrant inclusion

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, GFE colleges with a high widening participation factor.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	05/06	1569	61	65	-4	2713	65	66	-1
	06/07	1436	66	69	-3	2154	73	70	3
	07/08*	1506	75	N/A		2149	66	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	443	58	69	-11	382	54	67	-13
	06/07	326	69	71	-2	304	84	70	14
	07/08*	225	75	N/A		167	84	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	70	67	67	0	**			
	06/07	38	63	70	-7	**			
	07/08*	69	74	N/A		**		N/A	
NVQs	05/06	423	59	64	-5	662	62	69	-7
	06/07	379	61	66	-5	490	63	71	-8
	07/08*	413	64	N/A		859	47	N/A	
Other	05/06	633	63	63	0	1656	68	65	3
	06/07	693	68	69	-1	1349	75	70	5
	07/08*	801	80	N/A		1111	79	N/A	

* college data

** numbers too small to warrant inclusion

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, GFE colleges with a high widening participation factor.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	05/06	2036	64	68	-4	1736	62	62	0
	06/07	1923	66	70	-4	1674	67	67	0
	07/08*	1937	72	N/A		1462	72	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	436	74	86	-12	230	70	74	-4
	06/07	341	76	84	-8	221	78	77	1
	07/08*	315	83	N/A		136	77	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	817	61	64	-3	326	59	57	2
	06/07	857	63	64	-1	189	63	59	4
	07/08*	801	68	N/A		232	66	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	76	74	67	7	**			
	06/07	35	46	***		**			
	07/08*	39	49	N/A		**		N/A	
NVQs	05/06	71	61	66	-5	240	57	65	-8
	06/07	62	74	75	-1	275	67	71	-4
	07/08*	111	96	N/A		322	77	N/A	
Other	05/06	636	61	62	-1	907	64	62	2
	06/07	628	64	68	-4	978	65	66	-1
	07/08*	671	68	N/A		763	71	N/A	

* college data

** numbers too small to warrant inclusion

*** too few starts nationally to warrant calculation

Table 4a

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider/college, 2007 to 2009.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider NVQ rate (%) **
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	32	94
		timely	32	94
	2007/08	overall	535	77
		timely	521	76

* 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