South Nottingham College

Inspection report

Provider reference   130783

Published date   December 2008

Contents

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; information and communication technology; hairdressing and beauty therapy; sport, leisure and recreation; visual arts and media; and literacy and numeracy.

Description of the provider

1. South Nottingham College is a medium sized general further education (GFE) college. It has two main centres in Clifton and Rushcliffe, in the south of Nottingham. Additionally it has learning centres in Clifton, Bingham, Cotgrave and the City Centre. The college mission is summarised by: 'success through learning'.

2. Around half of all learners come from Nottinghamshire and around 40% come from Nottingham City postcode areas. Many of them are from the less affluent areas of the City. At age 16, the performance of Nottingham schools at GCSE placed them at 142nd and Nottinghamshire schools at 96th from 150 authorities. Nottingham has three GFE colleges, including South Nottingham College.

3. In 2007/08 the college had 8,066 learners. Of the 1,577 full-time learners 1,193 were aged 16 to 18; of the 6,489 part-time learners, 6,126 were adult. There are more female than male learners, especially amongst adults where 60% are female. Around 76% of learners are of white heritage. The proportion of learners on levels 1, 2 and 3 courses is roughly equal. In 2007/08 the college had 32 work-based learners, 111 learners aged 14 to 16 and 684 learners on Train to Gain programmes.

4. Programmes are offered in most sector subject areas but the numbers enrolled in some, such as construction, land-based and humanities are very small. The sector subject areas with the largest enrolments are: preparation for life and work; health, public services and care; information and communication technology (ICT); retail and commercial enterprise; leisure, travel and tourism; and arts, media and publishing.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2

Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2

Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2

Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2

Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity	*Good: contributory grade 2*

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and childcare	Good: Grade 2

Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade 2

Sport, leisure and recreation	Good: Grade 2

Visual arts and media	Good: Grade 2

Literacy and numeracy	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision   Good: Grade 2

5.   Effectiveness of provision is good with outstanding aspects. Achievement and standards are good with outstanding features. Success rates have increased significantly since the last inspection and are now above the national average for all learners, and are outstanding for adult learners on level 1 long courses and learners aged 16 to 18 on level 2 long courses. Learners on Train to Gain programmes have high success rates and work-based learners have satisfactory success rates. Success rates for learners aged 14 to 16 are satisfactory. Key skill success rates are above the low national average. The standard of learners' work is high. Evaluation of learners' progress compared with their prior attainment is limited and indicates learners achieve as expected.

6.   Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the last inspection. Staff training and development are extensive, well managed and include the sharing of best practice. Some lessons do not ensure all learners, particularly the most able, are suitably challenged or engaged. Systems to monitor and analyse information from lessons have improved considerably but the college is generous in its view of the proportion of good, and particularly outstanding lessons.

7.   Responsiveness to the needs and interests of learners, employers, and the local community is outstanding as is the college's approach to educational and social inclusion. A rich and varied range of courses enable learners to progress, including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners make an outstanding contribution to both the local and wider community through exceptional initiatives such as 'Balls to Poverty' - a charity providing footballs and coaching in South Africa.

8.   Learners receive very good initial advice and guidance. A wide range of welfare services is accessible to learners and is well managed. Support for learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very strong. The tutorial programme which is delivered by the college's team of guidance support tutors embraces diversity and the Every Child Matters themes well. The college does not always appropriately measure the impact of its support services to assess their effectiveness.

9.   Leadership and management are satisfactory. Despite many very strong features of leadership and management, the college's response to meeting child protection requirements is behind schedule. The principal provides clear strategic direction. Standards are high and rising and challenging targets are set. Quality assurance is good. Monitoring of course performance is rigorous. Quality assurance of Train to Gain partnerships is insufficiently thorough. Equality of opportunity is good. The management of finances and resources is very good. The appraisal process has been improved but is not well established and timely.

Capacity to improve   Good: Grade 2

10. The college has good capacity to improve. Its record of bringing about improvement and meeting challenging targets is good. Success rates have improved since the last inspection from a low base to be consistently high. Good standards of care and support and an inclusive recruitment policy have been maintained through a period of considerable growth in learner numbers. Strategic planning is thorough and effective. Quality assurance is good with particularly effective monitoring of performance. The procedure for assuring the quality of teaching and learning is not fully effective. Self-assessment is detailed and comprehensive. The grades awarded, however, are generous. Some strengths are over-stated and not all the areas for improvement identified through inspection are recognised.

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

11. The effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement is good. Success rates have improved and retention rates for adult learners on long courses are above average in 2007/08. There has been considerable growth in recruitment. The proportion of teaching that is good or better has increased and teachers use a wider variety of strategies to make lessons interesting. The use of information learning technology (ILT) varies, but is sufficient, with an increasing number of examples of good practice. The previous shortcomings in staffing levels have been resolved. Appraisal remains an area for improvement. The management of work-based learning has improved and is satisfactory. Whilst the college has done much to improve the quality of the learning environment, some accommodation is inadequate.

Key strengths

- high and improving success rates
- good teaching and learning
- outstanding approach to educational and social inclusion
- wide range of provision with good progression opportunities
- extensive employer engagement
- excellent links with community organisations and schools
- innovative projects to engage learners enabling them to make a positive contribution to the community
- very strong support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- very effective initial advice and guidance
- very clear strategic direction
- very good financial and resource management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- its administrative arrangements for child protection
- the incomplete implementation of the appraisal scheme
- the insufficient use of prior attainment data in lesson planning and progress monitoring to ensure all learners achieve their full potential
- the underdeveloped monitoring of quality assurance arrangements of partners
- the insufficient rigour of the lesson observation process.

Main findings

Achievement and standards   Good: Grade 2

12.   Achievement and standards are good with outstanding features. The college
      self-assessed them to be outstanding. Success rates for learners of all ages and
      at all levels have improved significantly since the last inspection in all sector
      subject areas, and are high. The success rates of adult learners on level 1 long
      programmes and learners aged 16 to 18 on level 2 long programmes are
      outstanding. A very high proportion of learners complete their studies.
      Achievement rates are high for learners aged 16 to 18 and satisfactory for
      adults. Success rates on GCSE A and AS levels are below the national average.
      Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve high success rates
      and develop good personal and social skills. The success rate of learners from
      minority ethnic backgrounds is better than the national average. The college
      does not monitor progress in relation to prior attainment systematically. Limited
      evidence of learners' progress indicates learners achieve as expected. Success
      rates for learners aged 14 to 16 are satisfactory; too many are withdrawn early
      from their studies by their school. Progression rates within the college are good.

13.   Key skill success rates are improving slowly and are above the low national
      average. They are good at level 2, but some learners at this level are not
      sufficiently challenged. The success rate is high on the Train to Gain
      programme and satisfactory on work-based learning programmes. The
      progression of learners on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes is in line
      with the low national rates.

14.   The standard of learners' work is high. Learners develop good workplace skills.
      The college prepares them well for their future economic well-being. Several
      achieve medals and awards in national competitions and the college celebrates
      this success. Learners enjoy their work. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision   Good: Grade 2

15.   The quality of provision is good. The college self-assessed it to be outstanding.
      Teaching and learning are good. Since the last inspection, the college has
      prioritised raising the quality of teaching and learning and has significantly
      resourced staff training and development. Several initiatives, such as the
      college's e-learning, key skills and teaching and learning champions, encourage
      the sharing of best teaching practice. Most lessons are well planned and taught
      by knowledgeable, enthusiastic teachers. Learners enjoy lessons and have
      positive working relationships with their teachers and peers. The best lessons
      are planned exceptionally well to cater for the range of learners' abilities and
      ensure active participation. Most use questioning techniques appropriately to
      check learners' breadth and depth of understanding. Where lessons are less
      effective, they are often too teacher-dominated. Planned learning activities do
      not ensure all learners, particularly the most able, are challenged or engaged
      suitably.

16.   Many lessons promote themes of equality and diversity well, particularly in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and health and social care. ICT is used effectively by learners to support their independent study. The creative use of ILT in lessons, although developing well, is less widespread. Assessment practice is good. Learners' work is marked promptly and in most cases written feedback clearly identifies improvement points. The majority of learners are aware of their target grades and their progress is tracked carefully by tutors. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory.

17.   The college has improved systems to monitor and analyse information from lesson observations considerably. A significant proportion of full-time and part-time staff are observed and outcomes are moderated. Despite these systems, however, observations are not sufficiently robust. The quality of judgements, written records and verbal feedback is too variable, and does not always give teachers a sharp and accurate picture of strengths and areas for development. The college's self-assessment report was generous in its view of the proportion of good, and particularly the proportion of outstanding lessons.

18.   Initial assessment is good and identifies learners requiring additional literacy and/or numeracy support effectively. Teachers use initial assessment information inconsistently in lesson planning.

19.   Inspectors agree with the college that curriculum provision is outstanding and meets the needs of learners, employers and the community exceptionally well. A rich and varied range of courses is offered and a developing variety of enrichment activities significantly enhances the learners' experience. The college is very responsive to the needs of employers and works successfully with an impressive number and range of organisations. Comprehensive labour market information is used extremely well to target priority areas. Partnership working, including collaboration on a joint post-16 offer, is outstanding. Learners make an outstanding contribution to both the local and wider community through some exceptional initiatives.

20.   The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Courses are offered from pre-entry to advanced level, including E2E provision and a very extensive range of foundation level courses. The college is very successful in increasing participation by learners traditionally under-represented in education or training. This includes learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who participate fully in the life of the college. Extensive and innovative initiatives successfully raise aspirations and promote community cohesion.

21.   Guidance and support for learners are good. A wide range of welfare services, including counselling, childcare, financial support and careers guidance is easily accessible and well managed by a dedicated support team. Learners feel safe in college. They are encouraged to be healthy. Initial advice and guidance are impartial and very effective. Thorough admission procedures ensure learners are placed on the most appropriate courses and a high proportion of learners in the college complete their courses, with very few transferring to other programmes.

22.   Support for learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very strong. Individual support needs are handled sensitively and are highly personalised to ensure any barriers to learning are removed. Learners of all ages value highly the support they receive. Most learners in receipt of additional learning support successfully complete their programme of study. The college does not always appropriately measure the impact of support services to assess their effectiveness; for example, the monitoring of learners in receipt of literacy and numeracy across the college is inconsistent: it is unclear exactly how many learners decide not to take up support and how well these learners achieve.

23.   The tutorial programme which is delivered by the college's team of guidance support tutors embraces diversity and the Every Child Matters themes well. The systems for monitoring learners' attendance are well established, although they have not impacted significantly on overall attendance rates.

Leadership and management   Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity   *Good: grade 2*

24.   Leadership and management are satisfactory, in contrast to the college's judgement of outstanding. Leadership and management have many strong features, but the college's response to meeting child protection requirements is behind schedule. The principal, well supported by knowledgeable governors and capable senior managers, provides clear strategic direction. A culture of putting learners first, alongside providing a high level of care, is well embedded. Managers' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood. A high level of accountability exists at all levels. Since the last inspection, strong leadership and highly effective actions have resulted in a faster upwards trend in achievement than that nationally. Success rates are high. The curriculum has been developed effectively and responsively. It aligns well with local and regional needs and provides clear progression routes at all levels. Collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders is productive.

25.   Quality assurance is good. Monitoring of course performance is rigorous. Targets are challenging and used effectively to improve performance. The procedure for observing lessons is comprehensive but grades awarded are often generous. Quality assurance of Train to Gain partnerships is insufficiently thorough. Self-assessment is detailed and uses a wide range of data to support judgements. Some strengths are over stated and not all areas for improvement are identified. Sufficient account is not always taken of improvement trends in the national averages used for comparison. Evaluation of learners' progress, compared to their prior attainment, is limited. Curriculum management is good and management of work-based learning and Train to Gain provision is satisfactory.

26.   Equality of opportunity is good. Leaders and managers show firm commitment to promoting equality. A greater proportion of learners within the college's population are from minority ethnic groups, compared with the population in

the college's catchment area. The closeness of match between the minority ethnic profile of staff and that of the learners' population is improving. Learners from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities mix well and a harmonious atmosphere exists. Promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum is good and is enriched by extra-curricular projects, including several that are innovative and exciting. Achievement by different groups of learners is analysed carefully at whole college level but analysis is underdeveloped at course level. Legislative requirements for equality, race and disability discrimination are met. Action plans are effective in improving achievement, but some actions are too general and there remains some variation between success rates for different groups.

27.   Governors are well informed and supportive. They provide a high level of challenge to senior managers. They meet monthly and keep a close check on the college's performance using a full range of performance indicators. They have remained firmly focused on their role despite their involvement in complex and time-consuming merger discussions. Learners' views are sought and used productively. The influence of learners on the work of the college, for example, through representation on committees, is underdeveloped.

28.   Staff are well qualified and highly committed to the college. The management of finances and resources is very good. The college's financial position has improved considerably and is now secure. Value for money is good. Money is used carefully to improve accommodation and resources. The quality of accommodation varies. Most is fit for purpose and several specialist areas are very good. Some inadequate accommodation, however, remains. A wide range of high quality professional development opportunities exists and is well used. The appraisal process has been improved but is not well established and timely.

Sector subject areas

Health and social care, and childcare   Good: Grade 2

Context

29. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in early years and care at levels 1 to 4. Of the 221 full-time learners, 202 are aged 16 to 18. There are 896 part-time adult learners. Many are on the Train to Gain programme. A further 59 part-time learners are aged 14 to 16. Of all learners 6.5% are male and 20% are from minority ethnic groups.

Strengths

- outstanding success rates on some early years and care courses
- good teaching and learning
- very effective provision to meet the needs and interests of learners
- strong support focused in improving achievement.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on some care courses
- inappropriate match of learners to key skill levels
- inadequate accommodation for many lessons.

Achievement and standards

30. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on levels 1 and 2 early years courses are outstanding and have improved significantly over the last three years. Success rates in health and social care at level 2 are outstanding. Learners from minority ethnic groups achieve well, particularly in community based provision.

31. There are some low success rates in health studies. At level 1 they have declined over the last three years. Those for part-time learners on the level 2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in care are consistently low. Success rates on the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma are low and declining.

32. The standard of learners' work in lessons is good. Learners gain confidence and present their work well. Learners' communication skills are well developed. Standards in written work are satisfactory and sometimes good.

33. Learners are inappropriately matched to key skill levels and are insufficiently challenged.

Quality of provision

34. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers relate theory to practice skilfully and use a wide variety of activities and tasks. Lessons have good pace. Learners make good progress and communicate effectively. Equality and diversity are embedded into the content of lessons and underpin all courses. Teachers are supportive. However, the management of disruptive behaviour in some lessons is poor. Attendance in observed lessons was low. Assessment is good. NVQ assessment is well planned and meets awarding body requirements.

35. Programmes and activities to meet the needs and interests of learners are good. Enrichment activities are good. Learners develop research, planning and evaluation skills through practical tasks. Learners gain additional qualifications. Links with employers are very effective. There are clear progression routes.

36. Guidance and support for learners are good. There is close monitoring of progress, effective target setting and clear identification of learners at risk of disengagement. Group tutorials are well planned and learners develop wider personal and social skills. Additional learning and health needs are identified and lessons planned to meet need.

Leadership and management

37. Leadership and management are satisfactory. College-based early years and care provision are well managed. Staff are supported well. Communication is good and good practice is shared effectively. Equality and diversity are promoted well and learners understand their rights and responsibilities. Internal verification and moderation arrangements are satisfactory. Course reviews are comprehensive, informed by learners' views and feed into the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report does not integrate the whole of the provision in this area. Most areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed.

38. Accommodation for many lessons is inadequate; as was the case at the previous inspection. Some classrooms are too small with poor temperature control. Resources and materials are satisfactory, but industry-standard equipment is insufficient.

Information and communication technology   Good: Grade 2

Context

39. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in information and
     communication technology (ICT) from introductory level to level 3.
     Qualifications include BTEC introductory, first and national diplomas and
     Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT). Part-time learners
     access ICT courses at various outreach centres, including Nottingham City
     Centre and Clifton. There are 100 full-time and 307 part-time learners; female
     learners slightly outnumber males. Of 407 learners, 92 are aged 16 to 18 and
     215 are over 19.

Strengths

   • high success rates and high grades on full-time courses
   • good teaching and learning
   • well designed courses that meet local and individual needs
   • good support for full-time learners
   • good management of full-time provision.

Areas for improvement

   • low success rates on part-time level 1 courses
   • underdeveloped target setting for part-time learners.

Achievement and standards

40. Success rates on full-time courses are consistently high. Achievement of high
     grades on all full-time programmes is outstanding. The quality of learners' work
     is good with examples of very good and outstanding work. Progress made by
     full-time learners, compared to their prior attainment, is good. Success rates on
     part-time level 1 programmes are low.

Quality of provision

41. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan
     lessons well and include a wide variety of activities. Learners enjoy lessons and
     make good progress. In some lessons, interactive whiteboards are used
     creatively to capture learners' ideas and stimulate discussion. ILT equipment,
     however, is not available in some classrooms. The involvement of guest
     speakers from industry to support learning is insufficient. In the learning
     centres, the effective use of self-paced learning materials and tutor support
     enable learners to make satisfactory progress.

42. The quality of target setting for full-time learners is very good. Learners set
     their own specific targets at the beginning of sessions and tutors monitor
     individual progress effectively. However, targets in individual learning plans
     (ILPs) at outreach centres are less well developed. Long-term targets are not
     specific and there are no short-term session targets.

43.   Programmes and activities to meet the needs and interests of learners are good. Additional units enrich the curriculum of full-time learners; examples include, robot technology on the national diploma and computer gaming on the first diploma. Learners' progression from level 1 to higher education and employment is good. The introductory robotics course has opened an additional progression path for learners to a local university. Community outreach centres enable hard-to-reach learners to access relevant qualifications and gain valuable ICT skills.

44.   Learners receive good support. They benefit from well designed assignments, including projects of personal interest and, in some cases, of practical use to the college and to industry. All learners have a good appreciation of how to achieve the highest grades. Pastoral support is good and learners speak positively about the approachability of staff and of enrichment opportunities.

Leadership and management

45.   Management of the full-time curriculum is good. A new management structure has helped in the re-organisation and running of the school. Learners' representatives are involved in course reviews and arranging funded enrichment activities. The learners' voice has a high profile. Managers are proactive in finding ways to engage learners. Quality systems are good. Accommodation is satisfactory. Monitoring of attendance, punctuality and work is good. The self-assessment report is evaluative and many of the judgements are accurate. The promotion of equal opportunities is good and is reinforced at induction and at frequent tutorial sessions.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy   Good: Grade 2

Context

46.   The college offers a range of NVQ full-time and part-time programmes in
      hairdressing and beauty therapy from levels 1 to 3, barbering at level 2, and
      reflexology, body massage, Indian head massage and nail technology. Of 201
      full-time learners, 132 are aged 16 to 18. Of 212 part-time learners, 150 are
      adults. There are 27 apprentices in hairdressing. Approximately 60 learners
      aged 14 to 16 are enrolled on the City and Guilds diploma in hairdressing.

Strengths

   *   high success rates on hairdressing level 2 and beauty therapy courses
   *   outstanding development of skills in beauty therapy
   *   good learning support aiding learner progress
   *   wide range of enrichment activities
   *   good curriculum management.

Areas for improvement

   *   low success rates on the majority of short courses
   *   inadequate accommodation in some areas.

Achievement and standards

47.   Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on hairdressing
      level 2 and beauty therapy courses and have been significantly above the
      national average for the last three years. Success rates on the Indian head
      massage course have declined to be below the national average. Hot stone
      therapy success rates are significantly below the national average.

48.   Completion rates for apprenticeship framework within the expected time are
      high. Success rates are satisfactory on programmes for learners aged 14 to 16.

49.   The development of learners' skills in beauty therapy is outstanding. Learners
      practise facials, manicure, waxing and eye treatments to a high standard early
      in the course. Hairdressing colouring and cutting employment skills are high.
      Learners benefit from highly qualified, experienced and enthusiastic staff.
      Learners' written work is of a high standard and is sometimes outstanding. Most
      learners show high levels of professional image and attitude. Attendance is
      high.

Quality of provision

50.   The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are
      well planned. In the best lessons, teachers use effective strategies to engage
      and inspire learners. Individual learners' needs are accounted for well, but
      poorly recorded. Learners enjoy lessons and take pride in their work. Teachers
      provide constructive feedback, which helps learners improve. The monitoring of

learners' progress is robust. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. The assessment of work-based learning is effective.

51. The range of programmes and activities is satisfactory and meets the needs and interests of learners. The range of enrichment opportunities is wide. Activities include visits to New York and national exhibitions, additional courses such as ear piercing, hot stone therapy and colouring, and work placement and entry into national competitions. Resources are satisfactory, but the salons at the Bingham site are cramped and some hairdressing salons at West Bridgeford do not reflect the real work environment.

52. Learning support is good and aids learners' progress. Learners receive appropriate initial assessment and those needing additional support receive it. Learners are well supported by their teachers and value the guidance provided during frequent tutorials.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. Quality improvement systems are well established. Action planning during appraisals and observations are used effectively to improve teaching and learning. Tutors are enthusiastic and feel well supported and valued. They contribute to curriculum development effectively. Good attention is given to the learners' voice to improve the curriculum. Health and safety practices are weak; the monitoring of electrical equipment testing is insufficiently robust. Management of equality and diversity is good. The self-assessment report is wide-ranging and identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement correctly.

Sport, leisure and recreation   Good: Grade 2

Context

54.   The college offers full-time and part-time provision in sport from levels 1 to 4, including first and national qualifications and NVQs, and sports therapy programmes at levels 2 and 3. A young apprenticeship programme is available and a vocational sport programme is delivered in schools. A foundation degree was introduced in 2008. There are 8 work-based learners. Of 359 learners, 31 are aged 14 to 16 years, 302 aged 16 to 18 and 28 are adults.

Strengths

-   high success rates
-   good standard of practical coaching
-   excellent community and industry partnerships
-   imaginative and innovative opportunities for learners to enhance their employability skills
-   highly effective strategies to develop provision.

Areas for improvement

-   low pass rates on work-related programmes
-   narrow range of teaching and learning strategies in theory lessons
-   lack of challenge for more able learners.

Achievement and standards

55.   Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on most courses are high. The national diploma success rate has improved significantly over the past three years and is now high. The level 2 diploma success rate has been consistently high. Other long courses are improving steadily with success rates above the national average. Success rates on full-time NVQ programmes are low. Apprenticeship framework achievement is very low.

56.   The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Standards of learners' practical skill are high in football and satisfactory in hockey. Many learners attending the college's athlete performance programmes achieve national success.

Quality of provision

57.   The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In practical sessions, coaching is good. Well planned sessions are delivered in good quality facilities by highly qualified staff. Theory lessons are less effective. The range of teaching and learning strategies used is narrow and learners remain passive for too long. More able learners are not sufficiently challenged in their theoretical studies. Independent learning is not encouraged sufficiently. Opportunities for integrating theory and practice are missed. Checks on understanding and quality of work are limited. Accommodation is often cramped and very few rooms have ILT facilities. Some assignments assessed at

distinction level contain uncorrected basic errors in spelling and grammar. The quality of tutors' feedback is variable and not always sufficiently specific. Learners are aware of their target grades.

58.   The range of provision is outstanding, and it meets the needs of learners and local employers very well. A wide range of industry-specific additional qualifications is offered. Staff maintain extensive industry networks creating innovative opportunities for learners to develop their employability skills, including planning and organising events. Progression into related employment is good. The community and industry partnerships with professional sports organisations and community groups are excellent. The sports academies provide access to specialist, high quality coaching in a range of sports. Vocational links with local schools are valued and successful.

59.   Personal support for learners is good and clearly focused on achievement. Individual progress reviews are effective in setting targets and monitoring progress. Learners with particular support needs are not always catered for in theory lessons.

Leadership and management

60.   Leadership and management are good. The curriculum area has adopted highly effective strategies to develop provision. Managers are proactive and dynamic. A new structure has provided clear identification of roles, responsibilities and accountability. Staff appraisals are now more objective and focus on achievement of targets. Communication is good and there is a strong team ethos. Management of equality and diversity is good. The self-assessment report identifies most strengths and areas for improvement accurately, but understates the significance of some weaker areas.

Visual arts and media   Good: Grade 2

Context

61.   The college offers a wide range of full-time courses from levels 1 to 3 in art and design, media and music technology, including specialist courses in textile design, 3-D design, graphic design, media computer games development, media production and interactive media and photography. It also offers General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS and A-level film studies and the foundation diploma studies in art and design. A range of part-time courses in art, design, media and music is offered at the college and in community venues. Over half of the 1,900 learners are on level 3 courses. Just under half of the learners are aged 16 to 18.

Strengths

- very high success rates on the introductory diploma art and design and the national diploma in media studies
- high and improving success rates for adults on long programmes
- high standard of learners' work
- good teaching and learning
- good learners' support
- highly effective leadership and management
- excellent specialist resources and accommodation.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates and value added on GCE AS and A2 film studies
- low and declining success rates on foundation diploma studies in art and design
- insufficient checking of learners' understanding
- insufficient analysis of progress to ensure learners achieve their potential.

Achievement and standards

62.   Achievement and standards are good. The success rates for adult learners on long programmes are high and improving. The national diploma in media and the introductory diploma in art and design have very high success rates. Success rates on the GCE AS and A-level courses are low with learners achieving well below expectations. Over the last three years, the success rate on the foundation diploma in art and design has declined to below national average. Standards of work and progress are good. Some outstanding creative work is produced by textile, art and design and media learners. Learners regularly win prestigious awards and competitions.

Quality of provision

63.   The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers encourage and motivate their learners through well organised and lively lessons. In the best lessons, teachers meet the needs of all learners effectively

by using an appropriate range of strategies and approaches. Some teachers do not use questioning techniques effectively to test understanding and deepen knowledge. Assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress in lessons are good. Clear, constructive, detailed feedback helps learners improve. Learners thoroughly enjoy developing individual responses in different media and processes.

64.   The range of programmes and activities is good and meets the needs and interests of learners. The extensive curriculum is particularly responsive to market needs and learners' interests. The range of part-time specialist provision in creative studies is wide. New courses have been developed in music technology, digital media, and games development in response to demand. Productive partnerships attract hard to reach learners into education.

65.   Learners' support and guidance are good. Learners value the helpful support they receive from their teachers and tutors. Course tutors and the specialist support team communicate well to ensure that the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met effectively.

Leadership and management

66.   Leadership and management are good. Managers set clear strategic direction and communicate well with the highly motivated team. Managers have implemented highly effective improvement actions. Resources and accommodation are excellent, including a wide range of industry-standard equipment and specialist workshops. Equality and diversity are celebrated and effectively promoted through interesting and challenging assignments. Managers do not analyse learners' progress sufficiently to ensure learners achieve their full potential. Staff development to support improvements in teaching and learning is insufficient. The self-assessment report does not focus on areas for improvement sufficiently and some strengths are overstated.

Literacy and numeracy   Good: Grade 2

Context

67. The college provides support for language, literacy and numeracy as well as key skills in application of number, communication and ICT. Qualifications are offered from entry level to level 2. Approximately 800 learners are on courses in literacy and 374 in numeracy; 411 learners take courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Learners study on campus and in several outreach venues including places of work.

Strengths

- high level 1 success rates by adults
- good teaching and learning
- significant provision meeting the needs of communities and employers
- outstanding support for learners with additional learning needs
- very good promotion of equality and diversity in ESOL lessons.

Areas for improvement

- low success rate on the entry level certificate in adult literacy
- insufficient challenge for some learners in key skills lessons
- incomplete analysis of data to aid improvement.

Achievement and standards

68. Achievement and standards are good. Courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL have high success rates, but the success rates for adult literacy at entry level are very low. The standard of learners' work is good, with a very high standard within the intermediate ESOL programme. Progression is carefully planned. Learners and staff have high expectations. Learners develop their confidence and self-esteem. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

69. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. A thorough learner profile produced following initial assessment is used well to inform lesson planning, including support needs. The teamwork between teachers and support assistants is very effective. Good questioning techniques and strong encouragement and feedback enable good learners' progress. In some key skills lessons, learners work at too low a level and are insufficiently challenged.

70. The range of programmes and activities is good and meets the needs and interests of learners and employers. The provision for adult learners in basic skills and in ESOL is strong and effective, and many initiatives encourage non-traditional learners into study.

71.   Cultural differences are celebrated and there is a strong ethos of learners from different ethnic backgrounds working together on tasks. Imaginative use of resources and observation of events successfully promote wider knowledge of different cultures.

72.   Support and guidance for learners with additional learning needs are outstanding. Staff are well qualified and have appropriate expertise, for example, British Sign Language qualifications for key skills staff. The support from learning support assistants is very good. Initial assessment is effective in identifying support requirements and lesson plans incorporate support needs where appropriate. The application of differentiation is included within lesson plans for all learners and is carried out effectively and appropriately.

Leadership and management

73.   Leadership and management are good. The recent appointment of a curriculum manager has raised the profile of key skills within the college. Key skill champions are starting to disseminate good practice and to improve the consistency of teaching. Feedback from observations is used effectively to identify staff training needs and opportunities for professional development are good. The self-assessment report is detailed and identifies many strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors, but some strengths are overstated. Data analysis is not sufficiently detailed to target improvement actions at individual course level. The promotion of equality and diversity is good, especially in ESOL classes.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 1	05/06	545	79	69	10	1437	81	65	16
	06/07	579	82	74	8	1039	77	70	7
	07/08*	623	81	**	**	1187	81	**	**
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	12	58	73	-15	…	…	…	…
	06/07	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
	07/08*	14	86	**	**	…	…	…	…
NVQs	05/06	25	92	72	20	12	83	74	9
	06/07	38	89	75	14	10	80	75	5
	07/08*	26	85	**	**	4	50	**	**
Other	05/06	508	79	69	10	1425	81	65	16
	06/07	541	81	74	7	1029	77	70	7
	07/08*	583	80	**	**	1183	81	**	**

*   College data
**   The 2007/08 national rates were not released at the time of this inspection

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 2	05/06	692	73	66	7	1032	70	66	4
	06/07	820	80	70	10	1302	75	69	6
	07/08*	648	81	**	**	1101	76	**	**
GCSEs	05/06	221	69	68	1	185	65	67	-2
	06/07	265	71	71	0	177	64	70	-6
	07/08*	160	74	**	**	187	76	**	**
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	12	92	69	23	2	50	68	-18
	06/07	18	83	73	10	1	0	71	-71
	07/08*	19	89	**	**	12	75	**	**
NVQs	05/06	56	88	65	23	144	56	68	-12
	06/07	69	80	68	12	191	63	69	-6
	07/08*	74	80	**	**	186	77	**	**
Other	05/06	403	72	66	6	701	74	65	9
	06/07	468	84	70	14	933	80	69	11
	07/08*	395	84	**	**	716	76	**	**

*   college data
**   The 2007/08 national rates were not released at the time of this inspection

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 3	05/06	683	62	71	-9	781	55	64	-9
	06/07	596	73	73	0	748	68	68	0
	07/08*	533	80	**	**	729	75	**	**
A/A2 Levels	05/06	36	86	87	-1	26	85	72	13
	06/07	56	71	87	-16	36	72	76	-4
	07/08*	41	73	**	**	34	68	**	**
AS Levels	05/06	185	44	67	-23	87	54	55	-1
	06/07	113	55	69	-14	73	56	59	-3
	07/08*	22	68	**	**	51	78	**	**
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	50	70	66	4	7	71	57	14
	06/07	5	40	59	-19	…	…	…	…
	07/08*	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
NVQs	05/06	24	75	71	4	194	60	63	-3
	06/07	32	81	74	7	233	75	69	6
	07/08*	37	81	**	**	235	74	**	**
Other	05/06	388	67	65	2	467	52	64	-12
	06/07	390	78	70	8	406	66	69	-3
	07/08*	433	82	**	**	409	76	**	**

*   college data
**   The 2007/08 national rates were not released at the time of this inspection

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	College NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	College framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	22	27	54	14	44
		timely	22	27	34	14	27
	06/07#	overall	7	71	58	43	53
		timely	7	71	38	43	33
	07/08#	overall	2	50	64	0	57
		timely	3	33	***	0	***
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	99	30	50	14	38
		timely	98	29	29	13	22
	06/07#	overall	38	68	54	66	44
		timely	38	68	34	63	27
	07/08#	Overall	28	71	65	64	61
		timely	31	65	46	58	42

* 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)
*** Data not available
# College data

Table 5a

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the college, 2007 to 2008.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2007/08	overall	461	80%
		timely	461	80%

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned
** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college/provider prior to inspection

Table 5b

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain skills for life programmes managed by the college, 2007 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider skills for life rate**
Train to Gain (skills for life)	2007/08	overall	77	82%
		timely	77	82%

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

*   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 college, 2006 to 2008

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate* (%)	Progression rate** (%)
2005/06	42	74	81
2006/07	35	60	65
2007/08	38	71	53

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the three months or greater of the LSC contract year

*   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

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