

Yeovil College

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: science and mathematics; engineering and manufacturing technology; art, media and publishing; literacy and numeracy and preparation for work; and business, administration and law.

Description of the provider

1. Yeovil College is situated in the medium-sized market town of Yeovil in Somerset. It was established as a tertiary college in 1974 and now occupies one six-hectare campus on the edge of town. The college serves south Somerset and north and west Dorset.
2. The college serves a population of up to 200,000 people. The region is characterised by high employment but an average weekly income below the national average. There is a higher proportion of residents aged over 60 compared to the national average and very low numbers of residents from a

minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of minority ethnic learners attending the college is higher than the composition of the area served by the college.

3. Yeovil College offers courses in all 15 of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) areas of learning. The college has a sixth form centre for learners aged 16 to 19 seeking progression to university or employment and provision for young people aged 14 to 16 in partnership with schools. In 2007/08 there were 1,617 full-time equivalent (FTE) learners aged 16 to 18 and 670 FTE learners aged over 19. In addition, the college worked with 600 young people aged 14 to 16. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in advanced engineering and is a partner with Bridgwater College and Somerset College of Arts and Technology in a CoVE in hospitality and tourism. Yeovil College offers apprenticeships in arts, media, business, administration, construction, engineering and manufacturing. The college also offers Train to Gain programmes.
4. The college mission is: 'to inspire and lead our community through excellence in providing learning and pathways for progression'.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

Science and mathematics	Good: Grade 2
Engineering and manufacturing technology	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
Business, administration and law	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The effectiveness of provision is satisfactory. Learners' achievement and standards of work are satisfactory overall. The success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are satisfactory at levels 1 and 2 and above the national average at level 3. Learners on A/AS level courses perform above the national average for general further education (GFE) and tertiary colleges. Achievement rates at levels 1 and 2 are satisfactory but retention rates are low. Success rates for adult learners are high on level 1 courses and satisfactory at levels 2 and 3. Success rates in key skills qualifications are improving at all levels but overall remain too low. Success rates on work-based learning programmes are satisfactory overall. Success rates for learners aged 14 to 16 are good. Learners enjoy their work and attendance on their main programmes is high.
6. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching of practical aspects of vocational courses is good. In the best lessons, teachers use practical activities and tasks that link well to the world of work. In the weaker lessons not all learners are actively engaged in lessons and more able learners are not stretched or challenged sufficiently. Assessment is broadly accurate but there is too little assessment in the workplace for apprentices.
7. The college's response to meeting the needs and interest of learners and to educational and social inclusion is good. The college has highly effective and productive partnerships with a wide range of employers, schools and local support agencies. It offers substantial full- and part-time provision in a large number of vocational and academic areas from foundation level to higher education, including a significant number of work-based apprenticeships, Train to Gain and courses for learners aged 14 to 16. The range of voluntary enrichment activities is satisfactory.
8. Guidance and support are good. Initial assessment of learners' needs has improved since the last inspection but the results are not always effectively linked to teaching and learning in the classroom. Most learners receive good additional support, especially those with mental health difficulties and multiple and profound disabilities. The tutorial system is satisfactory but tutorial practice and contact time does vary across the college.
9. Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The principal is well supported by senior managers and governors and has a clear vision and strategic direction for the college. Targets are planned well but are not always sufficiently challenging to meet the college's ambitions for its learners. Action planning is not precise enough to enable rigorous monitoring of progress towards the achievement of the required outcomes. Quality improvement processes have improved since the last inspection and are comprehensive but not consistently effective. Self-assessment is reasonably accurate in recognising the broad strengths and issues in the college. Management data is reliable and

managers' use of data to raise learners' success rates has improved, but this work is not yet fully embedded at curriculum level. Financial management is satisfactory as is the promotion of equality and diversity.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. The college demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve. Learners' outcomes have improved and are satisfactory overall. The college has made satisfactory progress in addressing areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Self-assessment is well established and reasonably accurate. However, in a number of areas the reports were insufficiently evaluative and inspectors identified areas for improvement that had not been captured in self-assessment. Quality improvement processes have improved since the last inspection but they are not consistently effective in raising the quality of provision. Lesson observation is not sufficiently sharp in providing clear feedback for teachers on areas for improvement and in planning their development. Arrangements for sharing good practice across the college are under developed. The college's development plans provide a clear agenda but action planning is insufficiently precise to ensure rigorous monitoring of progress. Governors' monitoring of performance is satisfactory. Financial management is satisfactory.

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

11. The college has made satisfactory progress in addressing weaknesses identified at the last inspection. There have been recent, significant improvements in success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 at level 1 and for adults at levels 2 and 3 that have brought these into line with the national average for similar colleges. Four of the five curriculum areas that were judged satisfactory at the last inspection have remained satisfactory according to the college's self-assessment. Although quality improvement and self-assessment practices have been improved since the last inspection, there remain issues around their consistent implementation across the range of the college's work, so that they are not yet fully effective. Inspectors identified a number of areas for improvement that were not identified in self-assessment and found curriculum reports to be insufficiently evaluative.

Key strengths

- work-related skills development of learners
- the good achievement for learners aged 14 to 16
- highly effective links with employers
- the very good access to learning for hard to reach learners
- good academic and pastoral support for learners.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- retention rates at levels 1 and 2 for learners aged 16 to 18
- the proportion of good or better teaching
- the implementation of arrangements for reviewing and evaluating the quality of provision
- the promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum
- the effectiveness of actions to promote improvement.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: grade 2

12. Learners' achievement, and the standard of their work, are satisfactory overall. This does not match the college's own self-assessment. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 on long courses have improved year on year and have consistently been just above the national average. Success rates for adult learners have fluctuated but have risen to just above the national average in 2007/08. There are no significant differences in performance between different groups of learners.
13. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses are improving and have been consistently above the national average. Learners on advanced level courses perform above the national average for GFE and tertiary colleges and there is good achievement of high grades. The progression rates between AS and A2 are low. The college is aware of the issue and has put in place a strategy for improving the progression rates. There is insufficient value-added data to provide meaningful analysis of learner progress. The majority of learners at level 3 are enrolled on vocational courses. Success rates on these courses are satisfactory overall but declined in 2007/08. Success rates for national diploma courses have been low for the last two years. Success rates at levels 1 and 2 for learners aged 16 to 18 are satisfactory but retention rates are low.
14. Success rates for adult learners at level 1 are high and have been significantly above national average for the three years 2005 to 2008. The success rates for adult learners at level 2 have improved each year and are now satisfactory. There has been a significant increase in the success rates for adults at level 3 to a satisfactory level.
15. Success rates on work-based learning programmes are satisfactory overall and in business administration and childcare they are good. Success rates in key skills qualifications are improving at all levels but overall remain too low. There are some good success rates in application of number and information and communication technology (ICT) key skills. Success rates on short courses are satisfactory for all ages. Success rates for learners aged 14 to 16 are good and there is good progression on to full-time courses in the college.
16. As recognised by the college, learners enjoy their work and attendance on their main programmes is good. The standard of their work is satisfactory overall and they make satisfactory progress. Learners make a positive contribution to the local community.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. The quality of provision is satisfactory, although the college's self-assessment report judges it to be good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors broadly agree with college's judgements about the key features of teaching and learning but do not agree that there is a high proportion of teaching and learning that is good or better. Some college observers astutely and accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement and place appropriate emphasis on judging learning. However, grades awarded do not always match these judgements and lead to an over-generous view of teaching and learning.
18. Teaching of practical aspects of vocational courses is good. In the best lessons teachers use practical activities and tasks that link well to the world of work. Some teachers are adept at using integrated learning technologies to enliven lessons but not all teachers are confident in using these technologies and others do not use them appropriately. In the weaker lessons not all learners are actively engaged in lessons and more able learners are not stretched or challenged sufficiently. In a few lessons teachers fail to focus enough on learning outcomes and do not check learners' understanding sufficiently. Resources vary across the college and some unsuitable accommodation is impeding learning in a few curriculum areas.
19. As recognised in the self-assessment report, assessment is broadly satisfactory. Teachers provide useful written and verbal feedback to learners to help them to improve their work. There is too little assessment in the workplace for apprentices. A few curriculum areas have integrated the teaching and development of key skills well within learners' main programmes, but strategies to improve key skills provision vary too much across the college.
20. The college's response to meeting the needs and interest of learners and to educational and social inclusion is good. The college provides a good range of courses for learners from age 14 upwards and has been successful in developing coherent progression routes in most curriculum areas. The college works collaboratively with local schools in the successful development of flexible programmes. The college is highly responsive to the needs of local employers and has a large apprenticeship programme. The range of voluntary enrichment activities is satisfactory. In some areas, such as sport and recreation, it is good. Information, guidance and support for progression to higher education and employment are good. Learners make many useful contributions to the college and the local community. The Students' Union is successful in conveying learner views and acquiring facilities for learners.
21. Guidance and support are good. Arrangements to identify additional learning needs are effective. Since the last inspection initial assessment has improved and is now used more effectively to diagnose learners' specific needs. However, the results from initial assessment are not always effectively linked to teaching and learning in the classroom. Most learners receive good additional support, especially those with mental health difficulties and multiple and profound disabilities. Over 90% of all learners who are offered additional learning support accept it and their success rates are close to college rates.

The tutorial system is satisfactory but tutorial practice and contact time does vary across the college. Individual tutorials are held regularly to review learner progress and discuss pastoral issues. Good use is made of external speakers in group tutorials. Speakers cover topics such as healthy living, safety, finance and sexual behaviour. Welfare services are well used and easily accessed.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: grade 3

22. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, well supported by senior managers and governors, has a clear vision and strategic direction for the college that is recognised and valued by staff. The strategic plan is based around the desire for the college to become outstanding in all respects and develop its key aims clearly with a strong focus on improvement. Staff have a good understanding of the college's priorities and targets and of their role in improving outcomes for learners. Targets are well-planned but are not always sufficiently challenging to meet the college's ambitions for its learners. Action planning is not precise enough to enable rigorous monitoring of progress towards the achievement of the required outcomes. Progress has been made in some areas, but other areas for improvement from the last inspection have still not been fully addressed.
23. Learners' outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. The financial position of the college has improved. College leaders are confident that their plans to continue with the redevelopment of the college estate in order to provide a learning environment of a consistently high standard will come to fruition.
24. Quality improvement processes have improved since the last inspection and are comprehensive. They are, though, inconsistently effective in raising the quality of provision. Lesson observation provides much useful information about teaching and learning. However, observers are not yet sufficiently skilled in translating this into sharp and focused feedback and action planning for teachers and frequently grade lessons over-generously. Nevertheless, support for teachers is starting to lead to improvements and teachers value the comprehensive range of staff development opportunities. Self-assessment is well established and reasonably accurate in recognising the broad strengths and issues in the college. However, inspectors judged that in a number of areas reports were insufficiently evaluative and they identified areas for improvement that had not been captured in self-assessment. There is little coverage of the college's large work-based learning provision in the self-assessment report, reflecting insufficient management focus on this part of the college's work.
25. Management data are reliable and managers' use of data to raise learners' success rates has improved, but the work is not yet fully embedded at curriculum level. Across the college the analysis and evaluation of learners'

progression through the levels of the curriculum and their progress from their starting points on entry in graded qualifications is insufficiently developed.

26. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. Teaching staff are well qualified, and the college has responded well to recent national initiatives designed to improve the qualifications and professional development of its staff.
27. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory but with good examples across the range of curriculum areas. However, it is poor in work-based learning where equality and diversity are given only cursory attention following learners' induction. Analysis of equalities data to explore areas of potential under performance is becoming more sophisticated. The college analyses differences in the performance of different groups and has been effective in addressing a disparity in success between male and female learners. The college complies fully with the requirements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2002. Training has taken place for almost all staff, governors and volunteers with a planned programme for those still to attend. Learners of all backgrounds feel safe in the college and there is good attention to health and safety in teaching and learning.
28. Governors' monitoring of performance is satisfactory. They have a good range of skills, know the college well, and support and challenge senior leaders constructively. The college works well with employers and other partners. Financial management is satisfactory and the college has made steady progress in recovering from a fragile financial position. In the context of satisfactory outcomes for learners and prudent financial management, the college offers satisfactory value for money.

Sector subject area

Science and mathematics

Good: Grade 2

Context

29. The college offers AS and A-level courses in chemistry, physics, biology and mathematics; GCSE courses in mathematics, human biology and science; and a national diploma in science. There are 308 full-time and 10 part-time learners aged 16 to 18 studying courses in the area, and 15 full-time and 37 part-time learners aged over 18. Around a third of learners take GCSE courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses at A and AS level
- very good achievement of high grades on most courses at A and AS level
- highly effective teaching and learning activities in many lessons
- very effective academic and pastoral support
- good leadership in improving performance
- well designed accommodation for science practical courses.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates in GCSE mathematics and national diploma in applied science
- low success rates in key skills
- insufficient challenge in too many lessons
- lack of vocational provision at level 2.

Achievement and standards

30. Achievement and standards are good. Success, retention and achievement rates for most A and AS level General Certificate of Education (GCE) courses continue to improve and are well above the national average. Achievement of high grades in A-level biology and physics, and AS-level biology courses, are particularly high. However, success rates for the national diploma course, GCSE mathematics and key skills remain well below the national average. Standards are good and many learners demonstrate good understanding. For example, in a further mathematics lesson, learners were raising the level of the discussion to above that required by the course. Overall attendance continues to improve and is now good.

Quality of provision

31. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons comprise a variety of activities which promote learners' understanding and interest. In many lessons learners make good progress; questioning is well focused with learners participating effectively in discussion. In a few lessons, the pace is slow, learners are not challenged, and learners' understanding is not assessed sufficiently well. Not all

individual learning needs are met, and there is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity. Attention to learners' health and safety is good.

32. The range of courses is satisfactory overall. Whilst the national diploma in applied science, which is being replaced by the national diploma in forensic science, provides an alternative to the GCE programme, there is no vocational provision at level 2. There is a broad programme of subject-based enrichment activities for learners on physics courses which are well attended. However, enrichment provision is limited in the other subjects.
33. Support and guidance for learners are good. Initial advice and guidance are good, as is the guidance for learners when they leave the college. Learners generally follow courses appropriate to their needs and abilities, although advice for applicants for mathematics at level 2 is not always appropriate. Learners' progress is reviewed regularly with effective actions for improvement. Additional learning support needs are identified early and effective support is provided.

Leadership and management

34. Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership has led to improved performance and success rates continue to rise above the national average. Judgements arising from lesson observations are broadly accurate, although the college's overall judgement of the quality of teaching and learning is inflated. A formal process for sharing good practice is not yet in place. Course review is robust in most areas. However, the overall self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative. Accommodation for science courses is very good, for example, allowing effective theory, practical and analysis activities to be planned. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Engineering and manufacturing technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

35. The college offers courses in mechanical, manufacture, electrical and aerospace engineering from level 1 to 3. At the time of inspection, there were 247 enrolments. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18. There are 117 work-based learners most of whom are advanced apprentices. In addition, there are 54 learners aged 14 to 16 on an introductory course in engineering crafts and a young apprenticeship programme.

Strengths

- high success rates on level 3 certificate in engineering
- good teaching and learning in practical lessons
- good resources
- good progression rates through a wide range of provision.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient focus on the needs of individual learners in theory lessons
- inadequate assessment in the workplace
- insufficient use of naturally occurring evidence towards key skill achievement
- insufficient focus on quality improvement.

Achievement and standards

36. Learners' achievement, and the standard of their work, are satisfactory. Success rates at all levels have risen for the last three years and are now in line with the national average. Success rates for the last three years on the level 3 certificate in engineering have been significantly above the national rate. Pass rates on many programmes in 2007/08, including those for learners aged 14 to 16, are high. Overall work-based learning framework success rates are high for advanced apprentices. However, timely completion rates on advanced and apprenticeship programmes have been low, although the timely rate on the advanced programme improved to around the national average in 2007/08. Key skill success rates are declining. Learners produce work to a satisfactory standard and develop appropriate practical skills. Learners' attendance at lessons is high.

Quality of provision

37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are good in practical lessons where effective planning enables learners to work on individual tasks whilst progressively developing their skills. In one lesson, learners made individual components which form part of a scale model of a helicopter fuselage. Learners then used this assembly to develop their fault finding skills. In theory lessons there is insufficient focus on the needs of individual learners with too much emphasis on whole group teaching. There is little checking of individual understanding and a lack of activities to extend the

more able learners. The use of naturally occurring evidence from coursework and the workplace does not contribute to key skill achievement. There are insufficient opportunities for assessment in the workplace and the assessments that do take place are not internally verified.

38. The range of provision is good. Many learners progress from level 1 with local schools through the college provision and onto higher education. Links with local employers are effective in ensuring the curriculum is relevant and up to date.
39. Initial advice and guidance, and support for learners are satisfactory, as is initial assessment.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and resources are deployed effectively. There has been an insufficient focus on improvement activities. Course reviews are brief; they lack focus, action points and targets. Significant staffing shortages have impeded some improvement activities. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but not evaluative. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Accommodation is good; courses are delivered in new, well-equipped, purpose built workshops.

Arts, media and publishing

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

41. The college offers a range of full-time courses in visual arts, media and performing arts at intermediate and advanced levels. There are 54 learners at level 2 and 353 learners at level 3. There is also a small number of learners on work-based learning programmes. Most learners are aged 16 to 18.

Key strengths

- high success rates on media courses
- high standard of practical work
- very good industry links which inform creative project work.

Areas for improvement

- low retention rates on many visual arts and performing arts courses
- poor planning for individual needs of learners
- insufficiently effective critical review of provision.

Achievement and standards

42. Learners' achievement is satisfactory. Success rates in media are high and have risen considerably over the three years. However, retention rates on many visual arts and performing arts courses are low, in particular the national diploma in art and design, national awards and the part-time adult foundation diploma in art and design. Success rates in AS level art and design and national diploma in graphics are high. Standards of practical work are high. Drama students show well-developed characterisation within roles and dance students demonstrate excellent technical standards. Media learners produce well-crafted videos and art and design students use a range of techniques effectively in their creative projects. However, there is insufficient primary source drawing in some sketchbooks. Attendance at lessons is good.

Quality of provision

43. Teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers motivate and challenge learners. In dance, teachers inspired learners through seamless demonstrations and emphasis on professional standards. In weaker lessons there is poor planning to meet individual needs of learners, insufficient variety of lesson activities and too few strategies for checking of learning. Learners recognise the progress they are making and show the beginnings of good evaluative skills. They are enthusiastic and enjoy their courses. The virtual learning environment is used well to support learning.
44. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Learners receive marked work promptly and most written feedback has useful points for improvement.

45. The range of courses is good. Enrichment is good and includes study trips abroad and visits to museums, exhibitions and performances. Links with industry are very good and have a positive impact on the curriculum through commissions and 'live briefs'. These include promotional and corporate DVDs and student-devised choreography for a professional dance company.
46. Learner support is satisfactory. Learners value the support they receive from their tutors. However, targets set in tutorials are frequently too vague to be of use. Initial advice and guidance is satisfactory overall although there is no formal audition process in performing arts.

Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory as is equality of opportunity. Staff feel well supported. Continuing professional development for staff, including industrial updating, is good. There is insufficiently effective critical review of the provision. The self-assessment report is insufficiently analytical and there are few formal mechanisms for sharing of good practice. A new process has been implemented but it is too early to judge its impact. There is new, well-resourced accommodation for art and design and media but accommodation and resources for music performance are inadequate. Rooms are small, poorly appointed and there is no sound proofing.

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

48. The college offers provision for Skills for Life for approximately 200 adult learners in college and community venues. Entry to Employment (E2E) learners and preparation for work learners aged 16 to 18 access a curriculum to support low achievers with social and emotional needs. Adult learners with mental health needs access the Skills for Life curriculum alongside activities encouraging social inclusion. There are 267 learners taking key skills qualifications in communication and application of number at levels 1 and 2.

Key strengths

- good achievement of individual learning goals
- successful teaching strategies to engage hard to reach learners
- wide range of courses in college and in the community
- good support for vulnerable learners
- effective management and development of provision.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates for application of number level 2 and communication level 1 and 2
- insufficient resources to support community provision for Skills for Life.

Achievement and standards

49. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates in adult literacy at levels 1 and 2 have been consistently above the national average. Application of number at level 1 is above the national average and improved significantly in 2007/08. Communication at levels 1 and 2 and application of number at level 2 have low but improving success rates. Learners make good progress towards individual learning goals. Confidence and skill increases and younger learners significantly increase their ability to participate in training. The standard of work is good, although in some classes there is insufficient recording of progress against personal targets.

Quality of provision

50. Teaching and learning are good. In most group sessions, activities are linked to the interests of learners and focus on practical activities. For example, a numeracy lesson involved measuring ingredients for making a smoothie. However, in too many lessons insufficient attention is paid to learners' individual needs. Teachers do not always contextualise personal goals during lessons, limiting learners' ability to measure their own progress. Teachers make good use of realia and information and learning technology to present relevant material. Good use is made of internet resources, although in community provision lack of access to the World Wide Web and storage space leads to the

overuse of published worksheets. Initial assessment is thorough and used effectively to inform lesson planning and review.

51. The good range of courses meets the needs of learners well. Courses cater for those able to access college to improve their literacy and numeracy while E2E and work preparation courses attract those who need a transition period to identify their aspirations and upgrade their skills. Community classes offer provision in familiar settings to those with poor basic skills or mental health problems who would not otherwise attend college. Well received provision is also offered within the Probation Service for offenders and there is successful work in employers' premises.
52. Support and guidance for learners are good. Tutors sensitively address and manage the individual needs of those with emotional, social and educational issues. Tutorials deal well with the health and social needs of learners aged 16 to 18 and good links are made with Connexions for preparation for work provision.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. There is clear strategic direction from managers who understand the developmental needs of the provision. Measures to improve key skills delivery and accommodation in the community have been put in place. The promotion of equality and diversity are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but is too descriptive. There is an accurate focus on achievement and resources but the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficiently critically evaluated.

Business, administration and law

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

54. There are 579 learners. Half of these are under 19 and are mostly on full-time advanced courses studying GCE subjects in accounting, business and law. There are 70 learners on Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses in business studying at levels 1, 2 and 3. Just under half of adult learners are on national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses and the remainder are on higher education courses leading to degrees and professional qualifications at level 4 and above. There are 40 learners on apprenticeship programmes in accounting and administration.

Strengths

- high success rates on AS level business and law
- high success rates on apprenticeships in 2007/08
- good use of information and learning technology to help learners to improve their work
- responsive provision to meet learner needs.

Areas for improvement

- low retention rates on A2 law and business courses
- poor checking of learning in lessons
- insufficient monitoring of key aspects of provision.

Achievement and standards

55. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are consistently high on AS-level courses in law and business and mainly high on NVQ accounting programmes. The success rate on AS law is well above national average with high added value scores. Learners on A2 and BTEC national programmes in business perform poorly. Retention and success rates in A2 business have declined, as recognised in the college self-assessment report. Work-based apprenticeships have good and improving success rates. The standard of learners' written work is generally satisfactory. The practical work produced on the BTEC introductory course is very good. Written work on GCE courses is imaginative and based securely in its vocational context. The best BTEC assignment work is characterised by good independent research and excellent presentation. There are high levels of student satisfaction with their courses. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Quality of provision

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons effective planning ensures that all learners can participate in a range of enjoyable learning activities. AS law students greatly enjoyed categorising commercial food products with respect to VAT law. In weaker lessons there is too little attention

paid to the needs of individual learners and the teachers do too much of the work. Teachers fail to check learning effectively. There is too little challenge for learners in most lessons. Good computer facilities are available in classrooms but are often not used effectively. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are good. Learners' work is marked accurately and thoroughly. Feedback to learners using computers is very good. Learners enjoy the instant feedback on their work.

57. The good range of courses meets the needs of learners well. The college offers courses with clear progression pathways. Courses are offered on Saturdays, through evening workshops and on employers' premises to give learners an opportunity to study at a time convenient to them.
58. Guidance and support are satisfactory overall and good for part-time learners. Tutorials are of variable quality and are not monitored sufficiently to ensure that good practice is shared. Learners feel safe in the college.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory at course level. The self-assessment report is insufficiently supported by evidence and has overstated a number of strengths. The college lesson observation scheme overstates the quality of teaching and learning. The quality improvement plan is comprehensive but it is too early to assess its impact. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	05/06	587	64	69	-5	1404	73	65	8
	06/07	348	70	74	-4	700	78	70	8
	07/08*	359	80	n/a		561	83	n/a	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	-	-	-		-	-	-	
	06/07	-	-	-		-	-	-	
	07/08*	-	-	-		-	-	-	
NVQs	05/06	62	69	72	-3	25	52	74	-22
	06/07	27	67	75	-8	4	100	75	25
	07/08*	25	76	n/a		3	67	n/a	
Other	05/06	525	63	69	-6	1379	74	65	9
	06/07	321	70	74	-4	696	78	70	8
	07/08*	344	76	n/a		558	76	n/a	

* college data

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	05/06	829	64	66	-2	1068	70	66	4
	06/07	777	76	70	6	611	71	69	2
	07/08*	762	75	n/a		504	76	n/a	
GCSEs	05/06	259	76	68	8	70	69	67	2
	06/07	269	75	71	4	57	74	70	4
	07/08*	220	73	n/a		42	74	n/a	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	-	-	-		-	-	-	
	06/07	41	90	73	17	1	0	71	-71
	07/08*	14	79	n/a		1	100	n/a	
NVQs	05/06	131	47	65	-18	156	62	68	-6
	06/07	136	79	68	11	191	64	69	-5
	07/08*	153	77	n/a		117	73	n/a	
Other	05/06	439	62	66	-4	842	72	65	7
	06/07	331	73	70	3	362	74	69	5
	07/08*	375	73	n/a		344	72	n/a	

* college data

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	05/06	2018	77	71	6	568	58	64	-6
	06/07	1953	78	73	5	631	61	68	-7
	07/08*	1876	81	n/a		522	75	n/a	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	512	90	87	3	38	76	72	4
	06/07	537	91	87	4	31	68	76	-8
	07/08*	472	93	n/a		30	90	n/a	
AS Levels	05/06	1078	73	67	6	71	52	55	-3
	06/07	984	75	69	6	83	53	59	-6
	07/08*	881	80	n/a		50	56	n/a	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	16	56	66	-10	1	0	57	-57
	06/07	-	-	-		-	-	-	
	07/08*	-	-			-	-		
NVQs	05/06	43	74	71	3	147	62	63	-1
	06/07	23	74	74	0	154	57	69	-12
	07/08*	19	100	n/a		95	78	n/a	
Other	05/06	369	72	65	7	311	56	64	-8
	06/07	409	72	70	2	363	63	69	-6
	07/08*	504	69	n/a		347	74	n/a	

* college data

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	136	78	52	73	43
		timely	128	30	34	26	28
	06/07	overall	101	76	63	62	56
		timely	83	46	41	39	35
	07/08	overall	92	79	69	74	63
		timely	83	59	47	53	42
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	131	60	57	51	51
		timely	116	29	38	25	34
	06/07	overall	147	60	64	50	60
		timely	147	28	45	25	42
	07/08	Overall	185	66	67	50	64
		timely	172	49	51	35	47

* 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)