

Leeds Metropolitan University

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, social and childcare; hospitality and catering; arts, media and publishing; literacy and numeracy; and business administration and professional.

Description of the provider

1. Leeds Metropolitan University has a history of vocational and professional education that dates back as far as 1824. In 1998, in pursuing the aim to become a major provider of post-16 to post-graduate education, the University merged with Harrogate College. Most further education (FE) provision is based at Hornbeam Park in Harrogate, some 17 miles from the central Leeds campus. Most students are drawn from in and around Harrogate, although increasing numbers of students travel from the north of Leeds. Harrogate is a relatively prosperous area. Locally the proportion of young people who remain in education after the age of 16 is high. Unemployment is low. Less than 2% of the population are from minority ethnic groups. Within the vicinity there are nine local authority and four independent schools, each with sixth forms. As a consequence, competition for students aged 16 to 18 is very strong. The college offers a wide range of full- and part-time courses, mainly in vocational areas, including specialist vocational and professional provision; courses are available in most areas of learning.
2. In autumn 2003, the Vice Chancellor of Leeds Metropolitan University described a vision of the University as a regional University, with worldwide horizons, using all our talents to the full. Since that time Harrogate College has undergone significant change. The college was successfully awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status in early years and play work in July 2006. In September 2006, the college opened its new 'Enterprise Harrogate' centre which has focused the college's portfolio in enterprise and employer engagement. The college has, over a number of years, worked in partnerships with local secondary schools through a vocational 14 to 16 programme. In the 2006/07 academic year there was a total of 4,773 enrolments at the college and this equated to 1,554 FTEs. The college also runs a significant higher education (HE) provision, which provides progression from FE level 3 into HE.
3. The decision to review the future of Harrogate College emerged in 2006 in consequence of a number of developments in the area. In January 2007 the board of governors determined there should be a review of how best to ensure appropriate and cost-effective learning opportunities for current and future learners and businesses in the Harrogate area. In March they agreed to seek a partner from the Regional University Network Colleges, in July Hull College was chosen as a preferred partner and transfer is scheduled to take place on 1 August 2008.

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

Health, social and childcare	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Hospitality and catering	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Good: Grade 2
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and professional	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. Overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Learners' achievement and standards are satisfactory. There are no clear trends in achievement over the last three years but overall success rates are broadly average in relation to comparable national rates. Success rates at level 2 and for adults at level 3 are below average. Strategies are in place to improve underperforming courses and are having some positive impact but it is too early to see their full effect. There is good skills development, particularly in work-based learning, and many examples of students producing high standards of work, such as in art and design.
5. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Improving the quality of teaching and learning has been a high priority for the college and its impact can be seen in the improving proportion of good and better grades for lesson observations. The support for learners is a particularly strong point. There is satisfactory provision to meet the needs and interests of learners. Employer engagement is satisfactory and improving. Provision for 14 to 16 year olds is good, with a range of courses available which students achieve well on. Care, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Pastoral support for learners is good. The rigour of progress and attendance monitoring is an area for improvement as is the integration and management of work-based learning and key skills.
6. Social and educational inclusion are satisfactory overall. Social inclusion is good as the college works well with a range of agencies to ensure its provision is accessible to a wide range of learners, including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners from disadvantaged or disaffected groups. However, educational inclusion is only satisfactory as there is insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of learners in some lessons. The college does not monitor sufficiently the progress made by different groups of learners.
7. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Provision has been realigned, management structures are clear and communications are good. Curriculum management is satisfactory overall, is good in some areas and is improving. Strategies to improve success rates are well developed at course level but are less so at college level and have not yet had a significant impact. Management information systems are improving but are not yet fully developed.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. The college demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, although there is some overstating of strengths and insufficient attention given to success rates, and quality assurance processes are satisfactory. The provision of management information is improving. There are well developed and effective arrangements for ensuring the quality of teaching and learning. Strong attention is paid to underperforming courses but there is a limited overall strategic approach to

areas such as attendance, retention and achievement strategies. There is improving curriculum management and comprehensive quality assurance arrangements.

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

9. The college has made satisfactory progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. There have been improvements in achievement in work-based learning and in the proportion of good and better teaching. Staff cover arrangements have been improved as has the quality of some accommodation and sports facilities. There have been improvements in most curriculum areas inspected and no areas have been graded unsatisfactory. Although the provision of data has improved there are still weaknesses in the use of data. Overall success rates have remained static, when comparable national averages have been increasing.

Key strengths

- good skills development and standards of students' work
- good provision for students aged 14 to 16
- good teaching and learning
- good support for learners
- effective communications.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- success rates, particularly at level 2 and for adults at level 3
- rigour of attendance and student progress monitoring
- integration and management of work-based learning and key skills across the college
- provision of management information
- strategies and their implementation at college level to address low success rates.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: Grade 2

10. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The college judged this area as good. Although they identified areas for improvement, insufficient weight was placed on them and some strengths were overstated. Whilst there are some areas of good achievement there are very few areas with clear upward trends.
11. For learners aged 16 to 18 there are differing patterns in success rates at different levels. At level 1 there is no clear trend in success rates over the last three years and rates achieved in 2007 were broadly average. At level 2 success rates have remained static over the last three years and in 2007 were well below average. At level 3 there has been a significant upward trend over the last three years with success rates rising by more than 20%, from well below average to around the national rates. Patterns in success rates for learners aged 19+ are variable. At level 1, where there are most learners, the success rate has remained static over the last three years, but is still above comparable national rates. At level 2 there is no clear trend and the success rate is well below national rates. Success rates are also well below national rates at level 3, and there is a declining trend.
12. In some curriculum areas learners achieve good results but there are also areas of underperformance. Self-assessment has identified all areas for improvement, stressing the poor success at level 2 for all ages and the poor performance by 19+ students at level 3. There are numerous strategies in place to address underperformance at course level and these are beginning to show positive impact, however it is too early to see their full effect. There have been issues with recording and collection of data, which have now been resolved and data are more reliable. The college is at a very early stage of using data to monitor the performance of different groups of learners and is not yet using data analysis to its full advantage.
13. Key skills success rates are low. Work-based learning success rates, for both apprentices and advanced apprentices, show a three year improving trend. However, they have risen from a low base to around national rates and so are now satisfactory. Achievement for the small number of Train to Gain learners is satisfactory. Achievement for 14 to 16 year old learners is good. There are over 350 students aged 14 to 16 studying in a number of different curriculum areas and there are high success rates on many accredited programmes. Students enjoy their life at college and there are many examples of students producing high standards of work, such as in art and design. Skills development in work-based learning is good. Attendance is satisfactory overall, although there are some pockets of poorer attendance and monitoring is more effective in some areas than others.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: Grade 2

14. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that the quality of teaching and learning is good. The college has a clear focus on continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning that is reflected well in the standard of students' work. The lesson observations process is good. Observations are regular and teachers receive useful and detailed feedback on their performance. The outcomes of the observation process and internal audits are used well to prepare individual teacher development plans and inform curriculum area and cross-college teaching and learning development programmes. However, there is insufficient cross-college analysis of the grades awarded to lessons to identify trends across all aspects of the college; for example, the differences in grades awarded to the teaching and learning for 16 to 18 years olds compared with adult students.
15. There was close agreement between internal observers and inspectors in observations carried out during the inspection. Inspectors identified the need to improve the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning, improve the individualisation of learning through better differentiation and to make extension activities for the more able student more consistently available across all areas of learning. The college recognised these areas for improvement in its self-assessment report.
16. Teachers have very good levels of subject expertise. Students benefit from well planned lessons and a good range of activities to make learning enjoyable and to ensure they are involved actively in lessons. The college is increasingly using information and learning technology (ILT) to support teaching and learning. Students are motivated and generally keen to learn. Regular assessment includes good feedback on how students can improve their work. Assessment in the workplace is particularly strong, with clear and thorough feedback on performance and assessment decisions. Literacy, numeracy and language support needs are systematically assessed at the outset of learning for full-time students and the outcomes are used well to inform individual learning plans. The support for learning provided by tutors and specialist support staff helps students in receipt of additional learning support succeed at a similar rate to their peers.
17. The teaching of key skills has been integrated into lessons across some subject areas. However, it is not fully integrated in all areas and this hinders progress. Some aspects of work-based learning also need better integration, such as the overall tracking and monitoring of framework components. Employers, parents and carers are well informed about students' progress and about the work of the college.
18. Programmes and activities satisfactorily meet the needs of learners. The college continually reviews its curriculum. It offers a satisfactory range of courses, with good progression opportunities in most areas. Partnership working to provide a

well developed curriculum for young people aged 14 to 16 is good. Over 350 students from 17 schools benefit from vocational courses and taster sessions delivered at college, and school-based provision run jointly with the college. There is a satisfactory range of enrichment activities for learners and there are adequate opportunities through the tutorial and enrichment programme for students to develop their understanding of health and safety. Many activities support learners in making a positive contribution to the local community.

19. Employer engagement is satisfactory and improving. Work with employers is better developed in some curriculum areas than others. The range of work-based programmes is satisfactory. There is a small Train to Gain programme and plans are in place to broaden this provision in retail, customer service and care. The college delivers a satisfactory level of Skills for Life provision, including targeted work with community groups and clients of the probation service. Staff development is taking place for vocational tutors to expand the college's portfolio of Skills for Life provision, particularly in its work with employers.
20. Care, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Initial advice and guidance are satisfactory and induction for new students is good. There are attendance issues on some courses and the college is strengthening its systems to identify and support students at risk of dropping out of college. Pastoral support for students is good. Students are positive about the support they receive from tutors and the central college services, which include welfare and counselling support. Specialist support for students with physical disabilities or specific learning difficulties is generally good but there is insufficient monitoring of the impact of student support across the college. Progress monitoring is satisfactory. Students have regular meetings with their tutors but the targets set, against which their progress is monitored, are not always sufficiently rigorous or timely. Careers education and guidance are satisfactory. The college recognises this is an area for further improvement and is auditing its current provision with a view to strengthening it in some areas.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: Grade 2

21. Leadership and management are satisfactory. College leaders have responded appropriately to the changing national education and training priorities and the competitive nature of 16 to 18 provision in Harrogate, by re-aligning the provision, concentrating on vocational and work-based learning courses and reorganising management structures. The college is currently involved in a transfer of ownership from the University to a large FE college. The decision to transfer is based on a number of factors, such as the increasing challenge of running a small FE college cost-effectively within HE, and the exclusion of HEIs from some further education support services. Good communication has kept staff well informed of the transfer arrangements, and the previous restructuring, they are confident about the future and their morale is good.

22. The University's vision and character are reflected appropriately in the college's strategy, development planning and professional development. College management structures are clear and arrangements to monitor performance are well developed. Management and curriculum groups meet regularly, cover appropriate business and monitor the implementation of development and improvement plans. The quality of curriculum provision and its management are satisfactory, in some areas they are good, and overall they are improving. The leadership and management of provision for 14 to 16 year olds are good. Communications within the college are good in most areas. Between some cross-college functions, such as work-based learning and curriculum departments, they are underdeveloped but improving. The college provides satisfactory value for money.
23. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory overall but underdeveloped in work-based learning. They are comprehensive, well documented and clear to staff, who implement them satisfactorily. The observation of teaching is rigorous and the outcomes largely accurate. The analysis of the outcomes in order to steer strategic improvement planning is underdeveloped. Curriculum self-assessment reports are largely accurate although strengths are sometimes overstated. The college self-assessment report is also largely accurate, although the decline in the overall success rate against the national average has been given insufficient weight in reaching judgements about achievement and standards, and leadership and management. Insufficient attention is given in the self-assessment report to the overall quality of work-based learning.
24. Quality assurance and self-assessment lead to appropriate quality improvement planning. Strong attention is given to courses which are underperforming and early evidence indicates improvement is taking place at course level this year. Not enough attention has been devoted to developing and implementing overall strategies to improve; for example, attendance, retention and achievement. Quality improvement arrangements have not yet had sufficient impact on overall college success rates. Management information systems are currently underdeveloped, but are improving. The lack of readily provided information on, for example, students' retention and attendance against targets, has limited the college's ability to monitor progress and hindered its ability to monitor the overall impact of its improvement strategies.
25. Accommodation and equipment are broadly satisfactory. Some equipment is outdated. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Arrangements to induct and appraise staff are well developed. The professional development programme is focused closely on college priorities and on supporting quality improvement. An evaluation of the impact the programme has on quality improvement is not undertaken. Arrangements to promote health and safety are well developed. Relevant professional development is undertaken. Risk assessments are carried out appropriately. The child protection policy and procedures meet legislative requirements. An extensive programme of child protection training has taken place.
26. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. There is a single equality policy and associated schemes and action plans for race, gender and

ethnicity. Arrangements to promote equality of opportunity are satisfactory overall but underdeveloped in some aspects of work-based learning.

Arrangements meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2002. The college has strong links with local schools and provides well managed provision for students in Key Stage 4. Curriculum links with employers are satisfactory but improving. The enterprise unit has developed good communications with employers.

27. Governance is satisfactory. Governors, the Vice-Chancellor's office and the University's academic board are involved appropriately in setting the strategic direction for the college. They receive an appropriate range of reports, including the self-assessment report and quality improvement plan which enable them to monitor the performance of the college satisfactorily. However, they have not identified clearly enough the need to address the college's deteriorating overall success rates and ensured that improvement plans were implemented sufficiently energetically to address this decline.

Sector subject areas

Health, social and childcare

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

28. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses at levels 1 to 3 in health, social and childcare. Ninety five learners, including 84 aged 16 to 18, are following full-time courses, comprising the CACHE awards in childcare and education at levels 2 and 3, the OCR national certificates in health and social care at levels 1 and 2 and the Edexcel diploma in health and social care at level 3. There are 127 learners on part-time courses, including the NVQs in health, social care and early years.

Strengths

- good or outstanding success rates on full-time courses at levels 1 and 2 and on most part-time courses
- high quality teaching and learning resources and accommodation
- well planned lessons that include good links to the vocational area
- effective engagement with external partners
- good communications and teamwork.

Areas for improvement

- low and declining achievement rates on level 3 full-time courses
- inconsistent quality of teaching and learning
- low attendance
- lack of a strategy for setting performance targets at course level.

Achievement and standards

29. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are good on courses at levels 1 and 2 in both health and social care and early years. They have been consistently above the national average on the OCR national certificate at level 1 and the CACHE certificate in childcare. The success rates for the part-time level 3 diplomas in pre-school practice and home-based care are good and well above the national average in 2007. Pass rates on the full-time level 3 diplomas in health and social care declined to well below the national average in 2007. There is low attendance in some lessons, especially on level 3 courses.

Quality of provision

30. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Learners benefit from high quality teaching and learning resources and accommodation. All courses have a base room equipped with appropriate facilities and learning resources. Most teaching rooms have ILT equipment and all have well presented displays of students' work. A well designed outdoor area includes flexible teaching and learning spaces. While most lessons are well planned, there are few effective methods used to check learners' understanding and progress. Most teachers

use non-directed questions so that the same few students answer while others make no contribution. In many lessons, insufficient attention is paid to meeting learners' different needs.

31. The range of programmes meets the needs and interests of the learners satisfactorily. Productive links with local schools have led to an increase in the number of 14 to 16 learners. The college is leading the local early years diploma developments. Good links with placement providers are effectively managed by the work placement coordinator. Strategies aimed at ensuring that courses meet employers' needs are beginning to have an impact. In addition, the area is developing apprenticeship programmes that will start in September 2008.
32. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Though students feel that they are well supported overall, they would like group tutorials to be more focused on skills development and aspects to improve their achievement.

Leadership and management

33. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory. The managers and many teachers are newly appointed. Good communications across the area and team building activities are leading to the establishment of cohesive course teams. Staff feel well informed and well supported. Equality of opportunity is an integral part of the curriculum in all courses and it is actively promoted in lessons. The area lacks a systematic approach for setting performance targets at course level. As yet, there are no underpinning strategies to ensure that targets are set at an optimum level and are likely to be met.

Hospitality and catering

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

34. Programmes provided by the college are from NVQ levels 1 to 3 which can be accessed by full-time, part-time or work-based learning through apprenticeships or Train to Gain. The provision includes professional cookery, food and drink service, multi-skills, housekeeping and hospitality supervision. School link programmes are provided at NVQ level 1. At the time of the inspection, there were 22 learners aged 16 to 18 and one adult learner on full-time programmes. All 37 part-time learners were adults.

Strengths

- good monitoring of learner progress
- good inclusion of 14 to 16 learners
- good management of learners' experience.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates at level 2
- insufficient range of equipment for food preparation
- insufficient use of data.

Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success and pass rates have been inconsistent for most programmes particularly at level 2, where they are low. At level 1 hospitality, success rates have improved during the past three years to national average and retention has been consistently good for the previous two years. Standards of practical work and the skills are satisfactory, with level 1 learners illustrating good progress. Learners' social skills are developed well in class and through a range of vocational activities. Work contained in students' portfolios is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students are able to develop appropriate skills in food preparation, cooking and customer service in a realistic vocational setting. This is supported by other external activities learners are involved in, such as function work for local organisations. The range of commodities and materials available to learners are satisfactory. The range of equipment within food preparation areas is insufficient and not reflective of current industry standards. Learners are involved well in their lessons and most are able to work with little supervision and show good understanding of their work. Learners are enthusiastic about their studies and the skills being developed.
37. Lessons are planned appropriately with outcomes clearly defined and make good reference to aspects of Every Child Matters. There is limited reference to

differentiation on some plans and some schemes of work lack detail as to programme content.

38. The range of programmes satisfactorily meets the needs of learners, although the additional qualifications that can be achieved are restricted. Enrichment activities are satisfactory, often supporting local community groups. Formal links with industry are underdeveloped and do not inform the planning of programmes sufficiently. Informal links are well established and guest speakers attend college to improve the learners' understanding of industry and further develop relevant skills. There are very good links with local schools for 14 to 16 year olds.
39. There is good pre-entry guidance and induction into the college. Learning support needs are uniformly diagnosed and appropriate support provided. A good level of support is provided through the tutorial system and there is effective monitoring of learners' progress.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Changes to the staffing structure in the area are not yet fully established. Communication between managers and teachers is now good and the standards of teaching and learning are improving. Lesson observations are more effective. Staff appraisal establishes targets to be achieved which are monitored well. Equality of opportunity is reinforced through staff development activities. The management information system is underdeveloped and does not provide staff with sufficiently detailed reports. The self-assessment process is now inclusive of all staff. The report was comprehensive with clear actions to improve. The inspection findings agreed with the areas for improvement but judged most strengths to be overstated.

Arts, media and publishing

Good: Grade 2

Context

41. Full-time provision includes BTEC national diploma courses in media, visual arts, fashion and performing arts, as well as first diplomas. There are progression routes from level 1 through to art foundation diploma, national diploma, foundation degree and degree courses. In 2006/07, there were 694 learners; 60% of learners are aged 19 and over.

Strengths

- good pass rates in national diploma performing arts, fine art and graphic design
- high standard of work
- good teaching and learning
- very good support for learners
- good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient outstanding teaching.

Achievement and standards

42. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on national diploma performing arts, fine art and graphic design courses. National diploma achievement at all levels includes a majority of merits and distinctions. Retention has improved and is now good in national diploma design craft, and in the diploma in foundation studies. The standard of students' work is high. They produce creative and experimental work which is displayed professionally with a range of public exhibitions and performances. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

43. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors have extensive specialist knowledge and are often skilled practitioners. They bring their vocational experience directly into the class, where students benefit from their knowledge of current methods and extensive levels of expertise. Tutors are enthusiastic and committed, and spend extra time with students to ensure they make good progress. Sessions are generally well planned with assignments which encourage an experimental approach to the final outcome. Well organised schemes of work sequentially build on skills and there is detailed tracking of students' progress. However, there is insufficient outstanding teaching and some tutors do not have high enough expectations of their students. A minority of sessions are too teacher focused with insufficient checking of learning and not enough challenge for students.
44. The range of provision is good. Numerous enrichment activities are available. Students take part in educational trips which extend their studies, and there are

fashion shows, media displays and regular performances by performing arts students in a variety of public settings. There is good collaborative provision with local schools. Progression is available from national diploma courses to higher national diploma (HND) and foundation degrees. Most students progress to HE.

45. Care, guidance and support for learners are very good. Tutors have good relationships with their students, are sensitive to their needs and offer a lot of personal support. The tutorial system gives effective support and the aspirations of students are raised. Additional learning support is readily available, and dyslexic students receive support from specialist tutors. Five specialist learning officers provide technical help and support for students. Induction for some students includes a stay at a castle in Northumbria to build teamwork as well as producing art work which is used as a basis for projects.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are good. Management is responsive and supportive, driving forward progress. Good communication includes frequent meetings and morale is high. Robust actions for quality improvement have included a major revamp of the curriculum. Good practice is shared with subject learning coaches and ILT champions delivering specialist workshops to improve the skills of staff. There is good teamwork and peer mentoring for new staff and those taking their PGCE. Grades for observation of teaching and learning have shown an improvement. Resources in specialist areas are good. Online training for equality and diversity is provided as well as CPD workshops for staff. The self-assessment report was generally accurate, although some strengths were overestimated.

Literacy and numeracy

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

47. The programme area includes all literacy and numeracy courses from entry level to level 2. There are 84 adults enrolled on Skills for Life courses; 112 adults and 26 students aged 16 to 18 on entry/foundation courses for people with learning difficulties. Across the college 890 16 to 18 year olds and 78 adults follow key skills programmes; 16 to 18 year old students are generally full-time, adult students largely part-time.

Strengths

- good development of social and work skills in independent living skills classes
- students' good speaking and listening skills
- skilled support staff who know students well and promote their learning.

Areas for improvement

- students' poor attendance and punctuality in Skills for Life and key skills classes
- target setting that does not identify clear personal goals
- insufficient use of data to assess performance.

Achievement and standards

48. Students' progress and standards of work are satisfactory. They work well in teams and are articulate and confident communicators. Students with learning difficulties develop good workplace skills that they use to manufacture and sell products. Students in entry/foundation courses and Skills for Life achieve their qualifications. Key skills achievement is low. Attendance and punctuality in key skills and Skills for Life classes are low.

Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons teachers plan activities and strategies that meet individual needs. In less successful lessons there are too few opportunities for students to work through problems for themselves. Teachers plan with care, setting and monitoring targets towards qualifications that help students make progress. Skilled support workers help students to learn, increase their confidence and self-esteem. Students enjoy their learning.
50. Initial assessment and guidance are thorough. Students on vocational courses where key skills learning is integrated into their vocational subject make good progress; for example, in a sports lesson a large group of students were developing their numerical skills through a range of fitness coaching activities. In classes where key skills are not embedded, learning is less successful and students' needs are not well met.

51. Assessment and monitoring are satisfactory. However, the lack of sufficient personal targets that help student improve their lives means that their progress is not planned, monitored or assessed sufficiently. Students do not routinely share or participate in monitoring their own learning and so are unclear about what they should do to improve. Attention to health and safety is good. The range of provision is satisfactory. Pastoral care and guidance are good. Students are supported by skilled and well qualified staff, including very good support workers.

Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers in this recently reorganised area and have identified what they need to do to drive up standards. Although it is too early to assess the impact of action plans there is a programme to assess the quality of teaching in place and plans to improve performance and to build on good practice. Individual learning plans are being piloted to improve target setting and monitor progress. Managers do not yet have an effective strategy to improve punctuality and attendance and there is insufficient use of management information to help plan improvement.

Business, administration and professional

Good: Grade 2

Context

53. The college offers one full-time and a range of part-time courses in business, accounting and management. Part-time courses, predominantly NVQs, are available in accounting and management at levels 1 to 4. NVQs in business administration and in customer service are offered at levels 2 and 3. Full-time BTEC national qualifications are offered at levels 2 and 3, although in the current year, only the national diploma is running. There are 37 full-time learners and 92 part-time learners.

Strengths

- high success rates on business and level 3 accounting courses
- good teaching and learning
- high quality pastoral support
- good management to promote quality improvement.

Areas for improvement

- low attendance on national diploma in business
- insufficiently developed use of ILT in accountancy and book keeping lessons
- limited range of full-time provision for learners aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

54. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are consistently high for learners aged 16 to 18 on the first and national diploma in business. Learners on the first diploma in business make good progress. Success rates for adults on the level 3 NVQ in accountancy are above the national average. Retention is high on most courses although it has fallen significantly on the national diploma in business for the current cohort of students. Learners' work is of a high standard, especially on the full-time business courses. Overall attendance is satisfactory, but it is low on the national diploma in business. Most students enjoy their studies and participate well when given the opportunity to do so.

Quality of provision

55. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning outcomes identified. Many teachers use a good range of activities designed to meet students' needs and help them to make good progress. In the better lessons learners are actively engaged in their learning and respond well to questioning. Although there is some effective use of ILT, its wider use in accountancy lessons is underdeveloped. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, teachers tend to spend too much time talking and there is too little challenge for more able learners. Most marking is thorough, but not all teachers provide comprehensive advice on how students can improve their work.

56. Teachers monitor students' progress regularly and identify areas for improvement. Regular one-to-one tutorials help most learners stay on track by identifying underachievement early on. However, actions for improvement are often too vague to be helpful to individual students.
57. There is a satisfactory range of predominantly part-time courses for adults. Full-time provision for learners aged 16 to 18 is limited, although there are secure plans in place to remedy this. Support for students is good. Pastoral support is very strong. Well established induction procedures help learners to settle in to college life. A comprehensive tutorial programme promotes learners' personal well-being effectively. Targeted support for adult English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners makes a valuable contribution in helping them to succeed.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are good and leading to quality improvements. Managers work extremely well together to ensure a coordinated and thoroughly organised approach across all programmes. Communication is good. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed; teaching is closely monitored and retention and pass rates have improved in most areas. Self-assessment is thorough, inclusive and largely accurate, although a few strengths are overstated. Data are used well to analyse performance and set targets. Action plans for improvement are monitored thoroughly. Accommodation is adequate overall, although some classrooms are too small. Staff appraisal is well established and thorough. 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, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	04/05	446	74	65	9	2,131	72	62	10
	05/06	253	60	69	-9	1,375	73	65	8
	06/07	495	72	N/A		1,464	73	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	14	79	68	11	0			
	05/06	22	73	72	1	0			
	06/07	10	90	N/A		3	100	N/A	
NVQs	04/05	52	69	68	1	3	33	67	-34
	05/06	36	72	73	-1	3	67	74	-7
	06/07	34	76	N/A		4	100	N/A	
Other	04/05	380	75	64	11	2,128	72	62	10
	05/06	195	57	69	-12	1,372	73	65	8
	06/07	451	71	N/A		1,457	72	N/A	

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	04/05	574	63	61	2	938	57	60	-3
	05/06	297	63	66	-3	434	61	66	-5
	06/07	358	63	N/A		692	57	N/A	
GCSEs	04/05	168	63	64	-1	128	70	62	8
	05/06	131	52	68	-16	58	60	67	-7
	06/07	32	63	N/A		46	67	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	30	77	67	10	5	60	75	-15
	05/06	10	80	69	11				
	06/07	12	75	N/A		1		N/A	
NVQs	04/05	92	47	57	-10	403	45	60	-15
	05/06	52	67	65	2	111	54	67	-13
	06/07	85	58	N/A		88	44	N/A	
Other	04/05	284	66	60	6	702	57	60	-3
	05/06	104	73	66	7	265	65	65	0
	06/07	229	64	N/A		557	58	N/A	

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04/05	572	48	68	-20	939	62	58	4
	05/06	320	58	71	-13	493	60	63	-3
	06/07	320	72	N/A		613	58	N/A	
A/A2 levels	04/05	40	75	86	-11	67	85	69	16
	05/06	25	68	87	-19	26	69	72	-3
	06/07	0	0	N/A		0		N/A	
AS Levels	04/05	147	48	73	-25	115	62	52	10
	05/06	0	0			0			
	06/07	0	0	N/A		0		N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	66	18	61	-43	10	40	54	-14
	05/06	0				20	45	57	-12
	06/07	0		N/A		0		N/A	
NVQs	04/05	32	50	63	-13	119	38	56	-18
	05/06	29	59	71	-12	87	56	63	-7
	06/07	19	68	N/A		65	35	N/A	
Other	04/05	287	52	60	-8	628	64	59	5
	05/06	266	57	65	-8	360	62	64	-2
	06/07	301	72	N/A		548	61	N/A	

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	51	69%	48%	57%	34%
		timely	45	60%	31%	49%	22%
	05/06	overall	54	63%	53%	61%	44%
		timely	59	51%	34%	49%	27%
	06/07	overall	38	63%	64%	61%	58%
		timely	36	50%	43%	50%	37%
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	74	45%	51%	39%	39%
		timely	62	26%	29%	23%	22%
	05/06	overall	66	53%	58%	48%	52%
		timely	68	26%	38%	25%	34%
	06/07	overall	70	66%	65%	61%	61%
		timely	62	48%	47%	44%	44%

Note 'At the time of the inspection - LSC data for 2006/07 had yet to be fully validated'

- * 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'

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