

# BSix (Brooke House Sixth Form College)

Inspection report

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Provider reference 133608  
Published date May 2009

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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](http://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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on students 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; hairdressing and beauty therapy; art, design and media; social sciences; and literacy and numeracy.

## Description of the provider

1. BSix (Brooke House Sixth Form College) is a small sixth form college in the London Borough of Hackney. It opened in 2002 in response to the recommendations of the 1999 Area Wide Inspection of Hackney and Islington for more 16 to 18 provision. The founding principal resigned in January 2006 following a satisfactory inspection. Under an interim principal, options for the college's future were reviewed during 2006 following the opening of Hackney's city academies. The LSC supported the governing body in its decision to maintain the status of a sixth form college and the new principal was appointed in October 2006.
2. Around 1,100 students enrol each year, mostly aged 16 to 18. Over 200 are adult students who have progressed internally from level 1 or level 2 courses and around 50 are 14 to 16 year olds attending full-time courses. The college is non-selective with the lowest GCSE points on entry to be found in the sixth form college sector. Its curriculum is adapted to its intake, offering both academic and vocational courses from entry level to level 3 in 10 sector subject areas. Local competition from nearby further education (FE) colleges and sixth form centres is intense.
3. The London Borough of Hackney is the fifth most deprived borough in the country and one of the most ethnically diverse. A third of Hackney residents of working age do not have a level 2 qualification and nearly a quarter have no qualifications at all. There is a history of low educational attainment amongst Hackney's schools. Recent improvements have narrowed the gap but the proportion of Hackney's 16 year-olds achieving 5 A\* to C including English and mathematics in 2007/08 is still 5% below the national average. Nearly two thirds of Hackney's young people leave the borough for their post-16 education.
4. The student cohort is ethnically diverse. The two biggest groups are young people of African heritage (33%) and African-Caribbean heritage (17%). The gender balance is 60% female and 40% male. The majority come from families with no history of higher education. Around 60% of the students are in receipt of education maintenance payments and 97% of students engender disadvantage uplift in funding, the second highest in the sixth form college sector.
5. Its mission is set out in its three mottos: 'aspire, study, achieve'; 'high standards for all'; 'BSix: a university for teachers'.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

### Sector subject areas

Science	Good: Grade 2
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	Good: Grade 2
Art, design and media	Good: Grade 2
Social sciences	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Leadership and management are good as is the capacity to improve and equality of opportunity. Achievement and standards are satisfactory as is the quality of provision, with satisfactory teaching and learning, and good support and arrangements to meet students' needs. Provision in science, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and art, media and design is good. Provision in social sciences and literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

7. The college has good capacity to improve its provision. The strategic direction of the college is clear, well understood and supported by staff. Success rates have improved over the last three years and remain below national averages. The quality of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Quality assurance procedures are good. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. The college has an accurate view of the standard of teaching and learning. Managers have taken firm action to lead to these improvements over the last two years. Governors provide strong strategic leadership and are fully committed to further improvements. The college has strong partnerships locally on which to build. Financial management is satisfactory and the college is planning with the LSC for its financial recovery.

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

8. The college has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Success rates have improved but remain below the national averages. Punctuality at lessons has improved but attendance remains an aspect that requires further improvement. While teaching overall remains satisfactory, the quality of teaching on vocational courses has improved and is now good. There are improved approaches to ensuring consistency in cross-college procedures in teaching, learning and assessment. Achievement on vocational courses at levels 1 and 2 has improved. Retention across the college remains an issue but it has improved in-year and at level 1. Success rates in GCSE examinations have improved and are good in English. Key skills courses were a key weakness in the previous report. The college has replaced these with more appropriate adult literacy and numeracy programmes. Computer access, also previously a weakness, is now satisfactory. Staff and students generally use information technology (IT) well in lessons and have access to the developing Virtual Learning Network from home.

## Key strengths

- effective strategies to improve success rates
- good relationships which promote learning
- exceptionally good progress on Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) National and General Certificate of Education (GCE) A level courses
- good provision in science; art, design and media; and hairdressing and beauty therapy
- highly responsive arrangements to consult students
- strong leadership, management and governance
- productive partnership working with the local community
- strong educational and social inclusion.

## Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- retention and attendance
- recruitment
- progress on AS level courses
- the proportion of good and better teaching
- exposure to the world of work.

## Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

*Contributory grades:*

*Students aged 14 to 16*

*Good: grade 2*

9. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Students make excellent progress from an exceptionally low base. Although many success rates are below average, they are rising steadily. At level 3, high pass rates in two thirds of sector subject areas include a high proportion of high grades. Progression to higher education and training is good. Three quarters of level 3 students go to university. Value added measures place the college in the top 5% of schools and colleges. Average points per A level entry rank ninth amongst London colleges. However, pass rates on some AS courses remain low.
10. Pass rates are high in nearly all courses at level 2. Achievement at level 1 is satisfactory. Students aged 14 to 16 achieve well and most progress into the college.
11. The college routinely analyses differences between student groups. Effective strategies addressing barriers to learning for disadvantaged young people are improving achievement faster than the national average. A strong focus on 'readiness to learn' develops positive attitudes. Flexible workshops and individual tuition improve literacy and numeracy skills. Aspirational work with universities develops confidence and study skills. Students develop good practical skills and enjoy learning. Students studying practical subjects have a good awareness of health and safety. Standards of students' work, both practical and written, are generally good.
12. At the previous inspection, all students studied key skills with very poor success rates and these are no longer offered. Students are achieving much better in the replacement adult basic skills courses but low success rates in adult numeracy and GCSE mathematics depress the college's overall success rates at all levels by 6%. Retention is rising, particularly on two-year programmes, though they are still too low on many courses. Enhanced monitoring and support have had some impact on attendance but absences remain high, especially at level 1. The college recognises that these are key areas for improvement.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Teaching on vocational courses is good. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and are well qualified. Most lessons are well planned, interesting and lively. Students respond well to questions and make good progress. A welcoming learning environment includes ready access to appropriate learning resources. Accommodation is well designed and flexible to encourage group work.

Teachers and students use information and learning technology (ILT) well but sometimes miss opportunities to use it to the full to enhance learning. Teachers provide extra academic support and comment cards ensure that all learners can articulate the areas they find difficult. However, some lessons present insufficient challenge to meet all needs. More able students lose interest, particularly where ability levels vary widely. Written feedback is generally satisfactory. Joint lesson observations during the inspection showed close agreement between inspectors' assessments and those of college observers. Managers use the outcomes of lesson observations to inform staff development and appraisal. A good range of development and mentoring, including a productive partnership with the Institute of Education, helps staff to improve teaching skills.

14. Thorough, well established internal verification ensures effective assessment. Progress monitoring through individual learning plans is satisfactory and improving. Students find quarterly reviews particularly useful, though some targets are insufficiently detailed or specific.
15. The college responds well to students' needs and interests. Educational and social inclusion are good. A highly responsive curriculum is tailored to local need including an exceptionally wide range of programmes for a sixth form college. Half of the students study vocational or academic programmes at level 3. A broad range of subjects from entry to level 2 meets the needs of the remaining students. The mandatory college policy for all students to study English and mathematics is well supported and is developing well, although it is not fully integrated in some subject areas. Students benefit from clearly defined routes to progress well between courses. A small in-fill cohort of students aged 14 to 16 from 10 schools is well supported and successful, although within a narrow range of courses. It is too early to judge the success of 14-19 diplomas in society and health, creative and media studies, or the innovative 'BSix Baccalaureate' framework.
16. The college has a wide range of productive partnerships in the local community. A close partnership with the Learning Trust supports increasingly effective schools liaison. Successful promotional events for school leavers have doubled applications for 2009. Joint work on 14-19 diplomas and successful alternative provision for 14 to 16 year-olds has further strengthened links with local schools and FE colleges. Performing arts students benefit significantly from the partnership with the Hackney Empire and visual arts students regularly work on projects with community groups. Many local organisations use BSix's facilities at weekends and in the evenings. A well designed website offers a clear picture of college opportunities.
17. Arrangements to consult students are highly innovative and responsive. 'Principal's Question Time' is popular and lively. Well trained and articulate student learning advocates contribute to quality assurance, leading student surveys, 'mystery shopper' and formal learning observations, and present their self-assessment report to managers. Students are well represented as governors and participate in staff recruitment. Stimulating and well attended enrichment activities include sport, visiting speakers and clubs. Frequent

cultural and creative events create a vibrant atmosphere. The college proudly recognises and celebrates the many achievements of its past and present students through a range of presentations and awards.

18. Employer links remain under-developed. Initiatives to raise students' industrial awareness include city internships and childcare placements. However, students have insufficient opportunities to extend their experience of industry. Incomplete analysis of leavers' destinations means there is no clear picture of the needs of students progressing to employment.
19. Guidance and support are good. Services are coherent and provide appropriate arrangements for all applicants. Staff work very flexibly to meet students' needs. They provide responsive support and an extensive range of welfare services. The welcoming student services centre is well used. Relationships with support staff are good. Services are planned effectively through regular review of their impact and usage.
20. Pastoral support is a very effective part of a well conceived tutorial system. Tutors encourage and motivate students using good resources. Students progressing slowly or at risk of leaving early are carefully identified and closely monitored. Students with disabilities or emotional and social needs receive good intensive support. Systematic diagnostic and referral systems ensure prompt additional learning support. Parents and carers receive detailed progress reports and are encouraged to actively support students to succeed.
21. Support for university applicants is very good. A high proportion of students secure places at a wide range of universities. Strategies to raise awareness of study combinations and course requirements are timely and effective.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

*Contributory grade:*

*Equality of opportunity*

*Good: grade 2*

22. Leadership and management are good. The college has worked in a rapidly changing local educational environment since it opened in 2002 with a mission to raise standards for post-16 students in Hackney. Despite fluctuations in achievement over the last few years, it has generally been successful in meeting this mission. Its range of provision is broad and inclusive, including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and substantial vocational work. Students' examination grades are much higher than predicted on entry. Progress at GCE AS level is satisfactory. Progression to higher education is generally good. Since the last inspection, substantial organisational changes include a new principal and senior managers. Staff turnover has reduced and stability has improved. Staff are committed to the clear direction set by senior managers and governors. The greatest barrier to success is the college's weak financial position. It missed recruitment targets last year significantly, causing a major threat to its budget. However, current recruitment numbers are well above those at the same time last year.

23. Success rates have fluctuated since 2006 and remain low but a sustained and relentless approach is beginning to have an impact. Students on most courses make very good progress. Teaching and learning have improved but remain satisfactory and an area for further improvement. The college works hard and successfully to ensure effective local partnership working and makes a good contribution to community cohesion.
24. The college is well supported and strategically directed by a strong governing body. Governors bring a wide range of experience to their role and are committed to supporting the college to become an excellent local educational resource to their community. Governors are well informed and well supported in their work by the clerk. Their committees closely scrutinise both the educational and financial performance of the college. They are very clear on what needs to improve and are fully involved in the development of strategies to address the issues.
25. Quality assurance is good. The system is comprehensive and supported by a detailed manual. Its implementation, including target-setting and course reviews, is not consistently good across departments. Students' views are effectively gathered and used to inform changes. The self-assessment report is generally accurate. Standards of teaching and learning are closely monitored. The college has a realistic view of the quality of teaching and learning and recognises it as an area requiring further improvement. Extensive staff development, including external courses, peer development and work with the Institute of Education, is showing good impact. Curriculum managers receive effective support and advice from external consultants. In general, curriculum management is good. Although self-assessment reports vary in quality, planning to promote improvements is very effective.
26. The college is inclusive and provides good support for students. Its wide curriculum and good support arrangements ensure that it can welcome students from the wide local range of ethnic backgrounds. It routinely monitors the performance of different ethnic groups. Teachers develop students' understanding of equality and diversity well and constantly reinforce their importance. Inspectors agree with students and their parents that the college is a safe place. The college meets its obligations under race relations, child protection, gender and disability legislation. Arrangements to safeguard children and vulnerable adults are rigorous.
27. Accommodation is well maintained and provides a safe and pleasant working environment. The learning resources centre (LRC) and communal areas such as the refectory are spacious and attractive. The LRC provides a very good range of on-line and print resources to support students and is a real strength of the college. Sports and fitness facilities are good. Classrooms, performance spaces, studios, workshops and laboratories are well suited for purpose and well equipped. Many classrooms have interactive whiteboards and students easily access high quality computers. Specialist resources are good.

28. Financial management is satisfactory. The college and LSC are working to address the difficult financial position. There is no deficit in 2007/08. Finances are effectively deployed to support the curriculum. Managers understand their budgets and receive regular reports on their budgetary position. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

## Sector subject areas

Science

Good: Grade 2

Context

29. The college offers GCE AS and A level courses in chemistry, physics, and biology; first and national diplomas in science; and GCSE courses in the three sciences. There are 151 full-time students, mainly on level 3 courses and aged 16 to 18.

Strengths

- excellent progress made by most students
- high achievement on vocational courses
- good teaching and learning
- very effective academic and pastoral support
- good curriculum leadership in improving performance
- outstanding equality of opportunity enabling students to achieve their potential.

Areas for improvement

- low attendance in a few lessons
- insufficient use of questioning to challenge students and check understanding
- insufficient opportunities for enrichment and work experience.

Achievement and standards

30. Achievement is good and standards are satisfactory. Many students enter the college with low attainment and make excellent progress. Pass rates for vocational courses are high, with the national diploma at 100% for the past two years. Pass rates on all courses improved in 2007/08 and are around average for GCE courses. Retention for many courses declined in 2007/08, leading to success rates that have remained satisfactory, or declined to lower than average, such as on A2 programmes. However, the college is fully aware of the reasons for the decline and current rates are high. Achievement of high grades is around the national average and high for the national diploma and AS level physics. Attendance in a few lessons is low though satisfactory overall.

Quality of provision

31. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned to support students' individual abilities and different learning styles. A variety of stimulating and well managed activities promote students' interest and enjoyment. Students work well together and support each other effectively in group work. Regular questioning ensures that learners make good progress, although it does not always check understanding or challenge students to think for themselves.

Homework and assessments are set regularly but some marking and feedback are insufficiently detailed. Attention to health and safety is good.

32. The range of courses is satisfactory. Three subjects are offered at GCSE, A and AS levels, and vocational diplomas at levels 1 and 2. There are too few subject-based enrichment activities for GCE students but more for vocational students. Timetabling prevents some students from attending extra-curricular activities provided by the college.
33. Support and guidance are very effective. Initial advice and guidance are good, as is the guidance for students progressing to employment or education. However, destination data for leavers, and for students who withdraw early, are not systematically collected or analysed. Students' targets are challenging but realistic and progress is reviewed regularly. However, the rigour of actions for improvement varies across the department. 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 achievement continues to rise. Lesson observation judgements are largely accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development but the overall judgement of the quality of teaching and learning is sometimes over-generous. Good practice is insufficiently shared. Course review is robust in most areas and self-assessment is generally accurate. The promotion of equality of opportunity is excellent. Students with very poor prior attainment are encouraged and supported to aspire to high standards. Many achieve places at good universities. Science accommodation is well designed and allows effective theory and practical work. However, poor ventilation of fume cupboards limits their use.

## Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good: Grade 2

### Context

35. The college offers a range of full-time courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy from entry to level 2. There are 74 full-time learners. Of these 58 are aged 16 to 18 and 12 are aged 19 or over. Five learners aged 14 to 16 study a re-engagement programme at college as an alternative to a traditional school education. There are five full-time teaching staff and two technicians.

### Strengths

- good success rates on all courses
- good standard of learners practical skills
- good teaching and learning in most lessons
- comprehensive effective support for learners
- rigorous management systems to improve success rates.

### Areas for improvement

- poor attendance rates on all courses
- lack of challenge in some lessons
- insufficient opportunity for industrial experience
- insufficiently detailed course reviews.

### Achievement and standards

36. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on all courses. On NVQ courses they average over 80%, which is very high and 88% successfully completed NVQ level 3 in beauty therapy in 2007/08.
37. The standard of students' work is good. Students' practical skills are good. Students make particularly good progress from low starting points. Portfolios are good and effectively organised. Well written case studies show good IT skills. Standards of health, safety and hygiene practice are high.
38. Attendance is poor but improving. Overall attendance for 2007/08 was 73%, and for some groups of learners it was extremely low. However, enhanced monitoring procedures are showing positive effects. In-year attendance has risen.

### Quality of provision

39. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well prepared. Detailed schemes of work and lesson plans incorporate the results of initial assessment. Teachers effectively employ a good range of learning strategies. Students gain confidence, work hard, are motivated and enjoy learning. Students and staff use IT confidently to enhance learning with stimulating software packages, videos and presentations. Students have good access to the college network

from home. However, in some lessons, questioning ineffectively checks knowledge and understanding.

40. Assessment is well planned, closely tracked and monitored during weekly student reviews. Feedback is constructive and promotes improvement. Internal moderation of assignments and assessments is rigorous. Effective half-termly progress checks review and update individual learning plans.
41. The curriculum meets the needs of learners and the local community. A good range of courses promotes progression from entry level to level 2 in hairdressing and level 3 in beauty therapy. However, there are insufficient progression opportunities for learners to progress from level 2 to level 3.
42. Students benefit from well attended enrichment such as manufacturer training which gives valuable insights into careers and commercial practice. Students' practical experience at college is satisfactory. However, opportunities for external work experience are limited. Some students organise their own placements but most do not experience real commercial conditions.
43. Students receive comprehensive support and financial assistance to purchase essential equipment. Initial advice and guidance are good. Tutors support students effectively in both practical and theory lessons. Weekly tutorials rigorously monitor learners' progress against appropriate targets on individual learning plans. Additional learning support is well planned to relate to the subject using highly relevant activities which students enjoy.

#### Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are good. Good communication generates a prompt response to concerns. Effective and rigorous systems and procedures track and monitor the progress of at risk learners and underperforming courses. Purposeful weekly meetings monitor performance and share good practice. Staff are well qualified and highly motivated.
45. Course reviews are insufficiently detailed and lack focus upon improvement. The self-assessment report is largely accurate but staff are insufficiently involved in the process.
46. Equality and diversity are well promoted through the curriculum. Students appreciate the celebration of their individual cultures and those of tutors from diverse backgrounds.

## Art, design and media

Good: Grade 2

## Context

47. A good range of courses includes an introductory diploma in art and media, first and national diplomas in art and design and a higher diploma in creative arts and media. The college also offers GCSE film studies and AS and A2 levels in art and design, media studies, film studies and communication. The majority of full-time students are 16 to 18 years old.

## Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- excellent success rates for AS media, A-level art and design, and communication
- extensive external links and subject enrichment
- excellent progress on most courses.

## Areas for improvement

- retention on introductory and national diploma in art and design
- students' evaluative and reflective writing skills.

## Achievement and standards

48. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Overall, students make excellent progress and many achieve high grades. The majority complete their courses and success rates are high on AS media, A-level art and design, and communications. First diploma in art and design success rates are consistently above national average. Success rates in 2007/08 were 100% on GCE AS level media studies, AS and A2 communication and A2 art and design. However, too many students on introductory diploma and two-year diploma courses fail to complete.
49. Students use a range of materials inventively and drawing skills are developed well. Ideas are creatively expressed through a range of techniques and processes including print and textiles. Students' work in media studies and communication shows good understanding of complex categories of audience and production procedures. They use tools and equipment safely and with confidence. However, students are held back by underdeveloped analytical skills in their reflective annotations on their work and in references in sketchbooks.

## Quality of provision

50. Teaching is good. The best lessons are well planned and engage all students. Students progress quickly in a lively and stimulating environment. Teachers use effective strategies to address low prior attainment. Students benefit greatly from current expertise of the many tutors who are active practitioners. Behaviour is good and most students contribute willingly. Regular exhibitions in

the attractive BSix gallery give students valuable opportunities to display their work.

51. Assignments are interesting and carefully planned. Assignment briefs contain comprehensive instructions and expectations. Most include helpful contextual guidance. Assessment practice is good. Feedback is constructive and clearly shows progress. Grading is accurate and clearly referenced to criteria.
52. The provision satisfactorily meets learners' needs and interests. The college has extensive and productive external links and enrichment activities. Higher diploma students enjoyed creating a promotional DVD with Hackney museum.
53. Students are well supported. Individual learning styles and support needs are identified early. A comprehensive tutorial programme monitors academic progress and gives good pastoral support. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their progress through self-evaluation and action planning. Students feel secure and confident and enjoy their time at college. Good advice and counselling services are available and working relationships are good.

#### Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are good. Communication and decision making is clear and informed by accurate information. Teachers are confident to take responsibility for their courses and can make decisions which improve student experience. Teachers understand targets for recruitment and success and monitor them efficiently.
55. Studios are well lit and provide a good creative working environment. Digital resources for creative work are good and classrooms for theory lessons are adequately equipped. However, printmaking and 3D facilities are inappropriately located and under-utilised.
56. Management is becoming more self-critical although course reviews show insufficient analysis of performance and insufficiently specific actions. Equality of opportunity is good. Students enter the college with very low prior attainment and many achieve their qualifications and progress into further education and training.

## Social Sciences

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

57. The college offers GCE AS and A level courses in psychology, sociology, economics and government and politics. Of 143 students aged 16 to 19, 52 study psychology, 54 sociology, 22 economics and 14 government and politics.

### Strengths

- good teaching on most courses
- good retention in 2008/09
- good individual support for students
- productive strategies which are improving the quality of provision.

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates
- insufficiently detailed target-setting in some student reviews
- students' needs not fully met in a few lessons.

### Achievement and standards

58. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.
59. Standards of work are satisfactory. Students make good progress. Most demonstrate satisfactory or good knowledge and understanding in discussion. However, some written work is weak. The department has recognised this and is improving students' skills through well targeted workshops and support sessions. Progression to higher education is good. Attendance is much higher than the college average.
60. Achievement is unsatisfactory on many courses. However, although success rates are below national averages they have improved significantly. Pass rates in A2 psychology and A2 government and politics were 100% in 2007/08. Most students achieve broadly in line with expectation based on their prior attainment at GCSE. Students in A-level government and politics achieve higher grades than predicted. Retention is good. However, the proportion of students achieving higher grades is low.

### Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory or better. In many lessons, teaching is lively and stimulating. Varied activities fully engage students in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. They use question and answer effectively to check and extend learning. Students gain good analytical and evaluative skills. However, in a few lessons, planning is insufficient to meet the needs of all students. Activities do not sufficiently develop students' understanding to enable them to complete tasks or answer

questions. Some in-class assessment does not sufficiently focus on individual progress.

62. Assessment is satisfactory. Marking is generally accurate, although there is some variation in the quality of feedback to students to promote improvement. Initial assessment satisfactorily identifies students who need specific additional support.
63. The curriculum satisfactorily meets students' needs and interests. A broad range of subjects are available at A2 and AS level. Enrichment activities appropriately broaden and enhance learning.
64. Individual support is good. Many learners have not previously had the opportunity to develop essay writing and analytical skills. Well attended workshops have been tailored to their needs and are having a measurable impact on progress this year. Effective one-to-one mentoring is also available. The tutorial programme covers a good range of relevant topics and contributes well to students' personal and social development. However, targets in individual learning plans and subject reviews are not sufficiently specific and do not identify skills to be improved. Actions to achieve targets are vague.

#### Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Successful strategies have raised success rates which are low but improving. Actions to improve teaching and learning are having positive impact in the classroom. Although some judgements are over-generous, lesson observations provide clear evidence that teaching is effective and enabling students to make good progress towards their learning goals. Self-assessment accurately identifies key priorities and areas for development. Most weaknesses from the previous inspection have been addressed but pass rates are still low on some AS courses. Analysis and evaluation in course reviews are inconsistent. Communication is good. Staff work well as a team. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

## Literacy and numeracy

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

66. The college offers literacy and numeracy to all students on level 1 and level 2 courses to complement their main learning programme. Students are all aged 16 to 19. Around 350 study literacy and over 400 study numeracy. Most are at level 1.

### Strengths

- good and improving success rates on the majority of courses
- good development of skills
- effective teaching to engage students in literacy
- good and responsive extra-curricular enrichment and support.

### Areas for improvement

- poor attendance
- insufficiently challenging teaching and learning in numeracy
- underdeveloped assessment practice
- underdeveloped cross-college literacy and numeracy provision.

### Achievement and standards

67. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are good and have improved on most courses. Many are now at or above national averages. Pass rates in adult literacy are very high, particularly at level 1. Entry and level 2 numeracy success rates remain below national average. Retention is low on level 2 literacy.

68. Students develop a good range of skills. Literacy students develop effective communication skills and engage well in discussion and debate. Numeracy students develop good data handling skills.

69. Attendance is poor. Rigorous monitoring procedures are in place but have yet to impact positively on overall attendance.

### Quality of provision

70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In successful sessions teachers motivate students and make learning relevant. Relationships are good and a mutually respectful learning environment is created. In most literacy sessions effective teaching successfully engages learners. Lessons are well prepared with a good range of stimulating activities and materials.

71. Insufficiently challenging teaching in numeracy fails to inspire more able students. The pace of learning is often too slow and teachers sometimes depend on the more able students leading and supporting others.
72. Assessment practice is underdeveloped and students' progress is insufficiently monitored. The use and quality of individual learning plans varies considerably and targets are not sufficiently specific or measurable. Teaching and learning are insufficiently informed by initial assessment outcomes. Reviews of learning are not always timely. Staff and students are vague about different forms of assessment.
73. The range of provision is satisfactory. However, arrangements do not fully meet the wide range of students' needs. There are good plans to improve the organisation and content to contextualise and embed literacy and numeracy in main courses.
74. Advice and guidance are satisfactory. A good range of responsive extra-curricular enrichment captures students' interest. Students welcome the breakfast club and drop-in workshops. They also value the extra voluntary support staff offer to address their specific needs.

#### Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have recently improved. Communication is good and team work is productive. Staff benefit from a range of professional development opportunities, regular and thorough appraisal and classroom observations.
76. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Students and tutors respect differences and handle cultural sensitivities effectively.
77. Quality monitoring has improved. Performance data are used more effectively. The impact of the many recently introduced quality initiatives has yet to be realised.
78. Cross-college literacy and numeracy provision is underdeveloped. Although implementation of the comprehensive new college English and mathematics policy has started, it is too early to see its full impact. Arrangements to link with vocational staff are not yet fully developed.
79. The self-assessment report is generally accurate but does not identify some key strengths and areas for improvement. Tutors are vague about the course review and self-assessment process. Some weaknesses identified at the last inspection remain and attendance, which was an identified strength, has declined.

## Students' achievement

Table 1

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	05/06	913	54	68	-14	54	39	51	-12
	06/07	1225	56	69	-13	91	49	55	-6
	07/08*	694	66	N/A		67	51	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors**	05/06	40	25	70	-45	2	100	n/a	
	06/07	31	61	70	-9	3	33	n/a	
	07/08*	0		N/A		0		N/A	
NVQs**	05/06	52	63	70	-7	1	100	71	29
	06/07	53	62	72	-10	1	100	77	23
	07/08*	32	81	N/A		2	100	N/A	
Other	05/06	872	53	68	-15	51	35	51	-16
	06/07	1140	56	69	-13	87	49	55	-6
	07/08*	632	65	N/A		65	49	N/A	

\* college data

\*\* national rates for GFE WP colleges

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	05/06	636	68	81	-13	62	58	65	-7
	06/07	674	66	83	-17	72	64	68	-4
	07/08*	482	72	N/A		94	85	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	278	75	83	-8	39	62		
	06/07	231	73	85	-12	34	76		
	07/08*	203	77	N/A		42	83	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	19	47	82	-35				
	06/07	11	82						
	07/08*	19	63	N/A				N/A	
NVQs**	05/06	27	74	64	10	2	100	68	32
	06/07	45	51	66	-15	4	75	70	5
	07/08*	31	77	N/A		3	100	N/A	
Other	05/06	312	63	74	-11	21	48		
	06/07	391	64	77	-13	34	50		
	07/08*	229	68	N/A		44	84	N/A	

\* college data

\*\* national average from GFE WP College

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	05/06	1154	61	78	-17	127	73	73	0
	06/07	1080	65	80	-15	117	60	72	-12
	07/08*	1028	66	N/A		124	66	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	243	85	91	-6	58	90		
	06/07	238	78	92	-14	56	64		
	07/08*	232	85	N/A		55	84	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	590	53	72	-19	38	66		
	06/07	526	62	75	-13	26	73		
	07/08*	417	61	N/A		31	55	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	41	49	73	-24	6	33		
	06/07	1	0						
	07/08*	14	36	N/A				N/A	
NVQs	05/06								
	06/07								
	07/08*	6	100	N/A		2	50	N/A	
Other	05/06	280	58	71	-13	25	56		
	06/07	315	61	72	-11	35	43		
	07/08*	359	60	N/A		36	61	N/A	

\* college data