

Totton 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.

Description of the provider

1. Totton College, established in 1969, is a medium sized sixth form college located in the small town of Totton, on the outskirts of the New Forest and the Waterside area of Southampton. Totton is well served by motorway links and is the largest urban area in the New Forest. In addition to its main site, the college has many community sites in the local area. The local recreation centre and a rugby club are based on the main site and the college manages the nearby Hanger Farm Performing Arts Centre. The college attracts students from other parts of Southampton, Romsey and, increasingly, the Salisbury area, in addition to those from its immediate hinterland. The economic and social profile of these areas and the social composition of the student population are very

mixed. The local Redbridge ward has severe deprivation and the Totton ward is included in the register of the most deprived in England.

2. The local environment is highly competitive in the recruitment of young people to further their education. In the immediate area there is a large general further education college, a tertiary college and three other sixth form colleges. There are also several former grant maintained schools in south west Hampshire, some of which became 11-18 schools as recently as 1997.
3. The college provides first chance post-16 education to full-time students and second chance post-19 education, on both a full-time and part-time basis. In 2007/08, the college had 1,183 students aged 16 to 18, mostly attending full-time, and 3,006 students aged 19 and over, mostly attending part-time. Sixty five per cent of students aged 16 to 18 study courses at level 3, 20% at level 2 and 15% at level 1. The college has around 100 students aged 16 to 18 who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
4. Since the last inspection, the college has developed a stronger emphasis on employment and skills. It has a contract for 30 apprenticeships in 2008/09, there were 60 Entry to Employment starts in 2007/08, with 100 contracted for 2008/09 and there are 200 Train to Gain starts contracted for 2008/09. The college has one Higher National Certificate course, two foundation degree programmes, with the University of Southampton, and a foundation art programme. The college is a partner in two Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs).
5. The college's mission is 'to provide progressive and challenging education and training that is responsive to the needs of individuals, the community and employers. The college is to be characterised by the excellence of our achievement and the public value added'.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

6. The overall effectiveness of provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. Since the last inspection, the college has gradually improved overall success rates whilst significantly broadening and extending its curriculum. High pass rates have been maintained, retention improved and the proportion of students making good progress significantly improved. Pass rates are high on many courses. Retention is often at, or above, the national average for similar colleges. Students' success in key skills tests is good. Standards of students' work are largely good.
7. Teaching, learning and assessment are good and have improved since the last inspection. Lessons are very well planned and executed. Learning activities are engaging and interesting. Students work purposefully and make good progress. Extension strategies to stretch the most able are effective. Assessment is good. Students and teachers have good access to high quality resources, including computers. Teachers increasingly use information learning technology (ILT) to improve learning, but the college's virtual learning environment is underdeveloped.
8. The college's response to educational and social inclusion and to meeting the needs and interests of students is outstanding. The broad and inclusive curriculum meets the needs of different students well. The college is increasingly successful in increasing the participation of harder to attract students. Responsiveness to employers is good, with a strong emphasis on employment and skills.
9. The guidance and support of students are outstanding, with a strongly inclusive culture. Initial advice and guidance are excellent and induction is good. Tutorial provision is very good and contributes strongly to the rigorous monitoring of students' progress. A student database is used very effectively. Attendance monitoring is rigorous. Students' additional learning support is of a high quality. Careers advice and guidance are outstanding.
10. Leadership and management are good. The college's strategic direction is clearly articulated and supported. The gradual transition to a broader curriculum is managed well. Partnerships are highly effective. The management information system is excellent. Quality assurance, including self-assessment, is good and leads to improvements. Governance is effective. Equality of opportunity is good, with an inclusive curriculum, placing a high priority on welcoming and supporting students with differing abilities and aspirations. The college is compliant with equality and diversity legislation and appropriate procedures are in place for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

11. The college's capacity to improve is good. Quality assurance and the thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment process are good. The strategic direction of the college is clearly understood by staff and governors. Since the last inspection, the college has maintained, and in many cases, improved, its performance. During the same period, it has gradually, and successfully, shifted the organisational culture and the curriculum to respond more overtly to the needs of employers and the local community. The college acknowledges the challenges ahead, to expand employer-based provision, whilst maintaining a high quality sixth form curriculum and managing a major new building programme.

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

12. The college has made good progress since the last inspection. Strengths have been maintained and areas for development have been successfully addressed. For example, teaching and learning have improved. Retention has improved and a substantially higher proportion of students on level 3 programmes now make good or better progress, when taking into account their prior attainment.

Key strengths

- outstanding educational and social inclusion
- outstanding support and guidance for students
- outstanding provision to meet the needs and interests of students
- highly effective partnerships
- the use and accessibility of management information to underpin quality assurance.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- the further improvement of success rates for all groups of learners
- the further development of the virtual learning environment to enhance learning
- adjusting the membership of the governing body to reflect better the community.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

13. Achievement and standards are good. Since the last inspection, the college has gradually improved overall success rates whilst significantly broadening and extending its curriculum. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that high pass rates have been maintained, retention improved and the proportion of students making good progress significantly improved. There are no significant differences in the performance of students by gender, ethnicity and disability.
14. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 are significantly above national averages for similar colleges for level 1, long courses, and just above for level 3. Overall success rates for the general certificate of education (GCE) A level are high, improving to 95% in 2007/08. The GCE AS level success rate stayed much the same, at 77%. Success rates at level 2 have been well below national averages, largely due to lower success rates for the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and for the small number of level 2 vocational courses. In 2007/08 the success rate for both improved significantly.
15. Success rates for adults are well above national averages on level 1, long courses, and have improved to the national average for level 2. For level 3, they are improved over three years, but are still below the national average. Achievement and standards are good for the recently introduced Entry to Employment programme, with good progress and success rates.
16. Pass rates are high on many courses. For GCE AS and A level courses in 2007/08 they were 90% and 98% respectively. High grade passes improved to 34.5%. This is lower than the national average, partly because of the significantly lower students' prior attainment at GCSE level than at most sixth form colleges. Pass rates are often high on applied A level courses. The overall pass rate for the level 2 vocational courses improved significantly, to 96%.
17. Retention has improved since the last inspection and is often at, or above, the national averages for similar colleges. The previously low retention at level 2, for students aged 16 to 18, improved to around the national average in 2007/08.
18. Students' progress relative to their prior attainment at GCE A level is considerably improved since the last inspection and since 2006/07. ALPS value added data for 2007/08 show GCE AS students to make 'excellent' progress and A-level students 'outstanding' progress, from a starting point of below average GCSE point scores at enrolment. Both of these indicators were 'good' in 2006/07.

19. Students' success in key skills tests, largely relating to information technology (IT), are now good, at 75% and 85% for students aged 16 to 18 and 19 and over respectively.
20. Standards of students' work are largely good. Students develop their study and practical skills well in lessons and gain in confidence.
21. Progression of students to higher education and employment is good. Students' internal progression is substantial. Students' attendance is satisfactory, at 83% in 2007/08.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

22. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are very well planned, with clear outcomes, and incorporate a good balance of theory and practical activities. Teachers make good use of individual student targets to plan lessons and to ensure students achieve their maximum potential. Learning activities are engaging and interesting. Students work purposefully and make good progress. Extension strategies to stretch the most able are effective, especially for those on Entry to Employment and Train to Gain courses. Students contribute well and enthusiastically in lessons.
23. Assessment is good. Completed student work contains helpful comments, enabling students to improve their learning. Formative feedback in lessons is also good.
24. The college has continued to improve the quality of teaching and learning through a rigorous and thorough lesson observation system. Teachers are observed at least twice yearly. Over the last three years, the profile of grades indicates the elimination of inadequate teaching and an increased proportion of good and outstanding lessons. Observations culminate in evaluative and helpful feedback and a development plan to maintain strengths or eradicate weaknesses. An annual report identifies key curriculum and pedagogic areas for development and informs a popular staff development programme. Good teaching and learning practice are effectively shared in workshops and in an annual guide to outstanding lessons. There is insufficient attention paid to equality and diversity issues in teaching in the college's scheme of observations.
25. Students and teachers have good access to high quality resources, including computers. Teachers increasingly use ILT to improve learning. Some curriculum areas have well developed intranet sites containing good resources for learning. Others are at an early stage of development and the college's self-assessment report rightly recognises the need to further develop the virtual learning environment.
26. An appropriate range of methods are used to identify learners' additional support needs, particularly for literacy and dyslexia. These include initial assessment tests, self-referrals and interviews and good links with feeder schools. Initial screening for numeracy needs is not so well developed.

27. Since the last inspection, the college has improved students' acquisition of key skills. The development of key skills for all students is emphasised. In communications and mathematics, the college uses GCSE, and alternative qualifications, to provide a differentiated curriculum at levels 1 and 2 suited to students' needs. At level 3, these two key skills are generally developed within subjects and courses. This approach is working well. Information technology (IT) key skills are provided for all students using IT key skills qualifications.
28. The needs and interests of students are outstandingly met. The college's range of academic and vocational courses is outstanding, with pathways at all levels. It has academies in psychology, sports and performing arts. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding. Learners with disabilities have good opportunities to gain qualifications. Educationally and socially inclusive projects widen participation and students are encouraged to undertake voluntary work and support local and international charities. Responsiveness to employers is good, with a strong emphasis on employment and skills. The college has 'Action for Business' accreditation. This is used to direct business planning and integrate employer responsiveness across several curriculum areas. Strong partnerships with schools, employers and higher education institutions improve students' internal progression and increase enrolment.
29. The range of enrichment activities for students is excellent. Sports facilities are very good. Students take good advantage of the extensive range of activities and organised trips. The tutorial programme embeds activities that effectively promote personal and social development including Every Child Matters (ECM) themes. The college recognises the need to train and develop staff further on embedding ECM outcomes.
30. Support and guidance for students are outstanding. Their initial advice and guidance are excellent. All applicants have the opportunity to attend the college prior to enrolment and are expertly interviewed. A good induction enables them to settle into college life quickly.
31. The management and delivery of tutorials is very good. Pastoral support and support from student services are extensive, including a wide range of information and guidance on health, welfare and finance. Tutors are highly skilled and well trained. Tutorials contribute strongly to the rigorous monitoring of students' progress. A student database is used very effectively, by both teachers and students, to monitor progress, update and record initial assessment and record support outcomes and attendance. Parents have 'on-line' access for their child. Attendance monitoring is rigorous and keeps tutors, parents and students well informed. The college recognises the need to develop further tutoring and support for level 2 and adult learners.
32. Students' additional learning support is of high quality. They are very well supported to help them achieve. Of those identified as needing support, those receiving it do much better than students declining the offer.
33. Careers advice and guidance are outstanding. Promotion of progression is supported by various events involving employers, higher education institutions

and external agencies. Students with disabilities attend a range of events to promote progression and employment opportunities.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Good: Grade 2

34. Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection, steady progress has been made in maintaining high success rates in many areas of the college's work, improving the proportion of students who make good progress and addressing pockets of poor retention and pass rates.
35. The strategic direction to maintain high quality sixth form provision, whilst providing further opportunities for adult students, meeting employer needs and responding to government reforms, is clearly articulated by staff and supported by governors. The gradual transition to a broader curriculum has been managed well. Appropriate adjustments to the organisational structure continue to reflect the growing emphasis on vocational skills.
36. Middle managers demonstrate commitment to translating strategy into practice and are increasingly accountable for performance in their teaching or business area. They work to negotiated and realistic targets, in terms of success rates and income generation. The self-assessment process provides a focus in the drive to raise standards and, to support their management role, managers have an excellent management information system that provides them with easy access to accurate data.
37. Quality assurance is good and leads to improvements in provision. Detailed and evaluative course reviews are scrutinised at validation panels to ensure rigour and consistency. They feed into the comprehensive self-assessment report, a draft of which is presented to governors for comment and discussion. Inspectors agree broadly with the judgements in the self-assessment report.
38. The lesson observation system provides an accurate assessment of the quality of teaching and the college's own analysis indicates that teaching continues to improve. Teachers are appropriately qualified and they benefit from a good range of professional development activities.
39. Governance is effective. Governors are highly supportive of the college and appropriate use is made of their professional skills, particularly in relation to finance and the accommodation strategy. Given the current predominantly white male membership, they acknowledge the need to recruit more females and also governors from black and minority ethnic groups.
40. The college's response to equality and diversity is good. The college has an inclusive curriculum and places a high priority on welcoming and supporting students with differing abilities and aspirations. Where appropriate, actions are

taken to address issues arising from scrutiny of achievement data, analysed by gender, ethnicity, disability and level of study. The proportion of students from black and minority ethnic groups is small but in line with the communities served by the college.

41. The college is compliant with equality and diversity legislation and appropriate procedures are in place for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The college has a well considered single equality scheme, with associated policies, action plans and impact measures. The disability scheme is well developed and the college is particularly successful in promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. A diversity week each year provides the opportunity for staff and students to share ideas and good practice. The promotion of good race relations features in marketing materials, policy documentation and at staff training sessions; the impact of this on teaching and learning is more evident in some curriculum areas than others.
42. Reflecting the commitment to be responsive to local needs, students benefit from the college's very productive links with a wide range of organisations, including employers, higher education and community groups.
43. The quality of accommodation and resources is good and plans for a major new building programme are well advanced. Financial management is good and the college provides good value for money.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 1	04/05	517	76	64	12	1657	67	57	10
	05/06	565	81	71	10	904	65	57	8
	06/07	565	81	73	8	1023	77	64	13
GNVQs/ AVCEs	04/05	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	15	73	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04/05	39	36	...	...	5	40	...	...
	05/06	35	69	...	...	14	50	...	...
	06/07	31	77	...	...	21	81	...	...
Other	04/05	478	79	63	16	1652	67	57	10
	05/06	530	82	71	11	890	66	57	9
	06/07	519	81	72	9	1002	77	64	13

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 2	04/05	796	74	74	0	1346	57	57	0
	05/06	830	78	78	0	926	59	65	-6
	06/07	983	71	82	-11	1094	68	65	3
GCSEs	04/05	362	76	78	-2	196	77	65	12
	05/06	409	76	82	-6	208	71	67	4
	06/07	419	70	83	-13	179	69	68	1
GNVQs/ AVCEs	04/05	56	63	75	-12	...	...	...	...
	05/06	53	87	77	10	1	100	...	...
	06/07	40	63	78	-15	1	100	...	...
NVQs	04/05	52	44	...	...	104	28	60	-32
	05/06	31	71	...	...	91	53	69	-16
	06/07	79	65	...	...	161	73	70	3
Other	04/05	326	79	62	17	1046	56	53	3
	05/06	337	80	70	10	626	56	62	-6
	06/07	445	74	79	-5	753	67	62	5

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 3	04/05	1970	81	82	-1	469	58	60	-2
	05/06	1995	82	84	-2	624	61	65	-4
	06/07	1911	82	85	-3	470	66	69	-3
A/A2 Levels	04/05	520	94	92	2	37	68	76	-8
	05/06	605	92	93	-1	39	64	78	-14
	06/07	504	92	93	-1	27	67	80	-13
AS Levels	04/05	1263	76	78	-2	82	46	54	-8
	05/06	1173	76	79	-3	62	66	58	8
	06/07	1192	78	81	-3	67	66	61	5
GNVQs/ AVCEs	04/05	55	73	74	-1	3	33	...	...
	05/06	48	77	77	0	3	33	...	...
	06/07	7	86	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04/05	18	78	...	...	36	39	54	-15
	05/06	19	79	...	...	147	54	64	-10
	06/07	16	56	...	...	84	69	72	-3
Other	04/05	114	80	72	8	311	63	55	8
	05/06	150	85	79	6	373	62	62	0
	06/07	192	83	80	3	292	66	66	0

Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the college 2006/07 to 2007/08

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate* (%)	Progression rate** (%)
2006/07	22	50.00	50.00
2007/08	59	50.85	62.71

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period.

Note: E2E 'achieved objective' and 'progression' rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college prior to inspection

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