

Basingstoke College of Technology

Inspection report

Provider reference 130688

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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 care and early years; engineering; hairdressing and beauty therapy; hospitality and catering; art, design, media and music; and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Description of the provider

1. Basingstoke College of Technology is a medium-sized, general further education college in North Hampshire operating mainly from one site near the town centre. The focus of the college's provision is on vocational education and training. Educational attainment in the area at age 16 is broadly in line with the national average. Basingstoke is characterised by very low unemployment and relatively high wages, with a highly skilled workforce, although there are a few pockets of relative deprivation.

2. In 2007/08, there were around 6,200 students enrolled at the college. Approximately 2,000 students, mainly aged 16 to 18, follow full-time courses. The proportion of students of minority ethnic origin was 12%, higher than the proportion in the local community. There has been a significant reduction in enrolments on long courses over the previous two years, especially for adult learners at level 1. More students take long courses at level 2 than at levels 1 and 3.
3. The sector subject areas with the highest numbers of students are retail and commercial enterprises; preparation for life and work; health, public services and care; engineering and construction. The college has substantial work-based learning provision, with around 400 learners on apprenticeship programmes and over 1,000 learners taking qualifications through Train to Gain in 2008/09. Links with the local 11-16 schools are strong, with around 100 young apprentices, a significant number of school pupils taking part-time vocational courses and a vocational skills programme for disaffected school pupils.
4. The college's mission is 'to contribute to the social and economic development of North Hampshire through the delivery of vocational education and professional training that meets the learning ambitions and skills needs of the region'.

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 care and early years	Good: Grade 2
Engineering	Good: Grade 2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade 2
Hospitality and catering	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Art, design, media and music	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of the college is satisfactory, which agrees with the college's self-assessment. Students' achievement is satisfactory. Success rates have risen over the last three years but remain low for adult learners. Success rates for learners on work-based programmes are satisfactory and improving. Students' practical work is good and they are prepared well for future employment.
6. The quality of provision is satisfactory and it is good for school pupils aged 14 to 16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although students make good progress in many lessons, too many sessions are no better than satisfactory. Teaching is better in practical sessions than in theory lessons. Teachers are not always adept at ensuring that the more able students are set tasks that enable them to achieve their potential.
7. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students, and its approach to educational and social inclusion, are good. A wide range of programmes with good progression routes is offered. Partnership working with employers, local schools and community groups is very good. The college works well with school pupils, including those who are disaffected. Students benefit from a good variety of enrichment activities.
8. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Students receive good initial guidance and support and are well cared for at the college. Support for students with additional learning needs is good. However, it remains the case that too many students leave before they complete their course. The rigour with which students' progress is monitored is uneven, as is the effectiveness of target-setting to help them to know what to do to improve. Group tutorials contain good coverage of themes that benefit students' personal development and well-being.
9. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders and governors have a clear strategy for the future direction of the college. Quality assurance procedures are sound but are not yet implemented sufficiently consistently to raise standards across all aspects of the college's work. Self-assessment is broadly accurate despite some over-grading of aspects of provision. Governance is good. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. The college's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The self-assessment report and quality improvement plan provide an appropriate agenda for improvement, although in the past weaker aspects of the college's provision have not been tackled sufficiently swiftly. Quality assurance procedures are yet to have sufficient impact in raising standards across the college. Although

success rates have risen over the last three years they remain low for adults. The management of employer-based programmes is improving. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are not yet sufficiently effective.

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

11. The college has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Most of the strengths from the last inspection have been maintained but not enough of the areas for improvement have been eradicated. The quality of provision in construction and engineering has improved. However, the quality of provision in three curriculum areas has not improved. Pastoral support for students remains good but academic support has not improved. Although students' achievement has improved, success rates for adult learners remain low in comparison to the national average. The quality of teaching and learning has not improved sufficiently swiftly.

Key strengths

- good development of students' practical skills in many vocational areas
- highly effective organisation of key skills provision
- good quality of provision for school pupils aged 14 to 16
- highly effective partnership working with schools, employers and community groups
- open and consultative leadership contributing to a clear strategic direction
- the importance given to listening to, and responding to, students' views
- comprehensive initial assessment and good support for students with additional learning needs
- very broad range of provision with good progression routes.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- success rates for adult students, particularly on level 2 courses
- significant variations in success rates both between and within curriculum areas
- arrangements to improve further the quality of teaching and learning so that a higher proportion of lessons are good or better
- the effectiveness of target-setting to help students to know what they need to do to improve
- the inconsistent implementation and impact of quality assurance procedures
- the slow progress in identifying and remedying pockets of poor performance.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: grade 2

12. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, as recognised by the college's self-assessment report. Overall, whilst pass rates on most courses are high, too many students in the past have failed to complete their qualifications. Inspection evidence indicates an improvement in retention rates in the current year. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 on long courses have risen over the last three years and are broadly in line with the national average. The rate of improvement is significantly better on courses at levels 1 and 2 than at level 3, where success rates are below the national average. Success rates for adults are low, despite improvement. In particular, achievement is low for the large number of students taking qualifications in information and communication technology (ICT) at an off-site centre. Success rates for students taking key skills qualifications are significantly higher than the national average.
13. On most courses, students' progress is broadly in line with expectations based on their prior attainment. However, both the progress students make, and completion rates, on Business and Technology Education Council National Diploma courses have until recently been poor. School pupils aged 14 to 16 who takes courses at the college achieve very well.
14. The achievement of students varies significantly between sector subject areas. For example, whilst success rates on courses in construction are very high, in ICT and in leisure, travel and tourism they are low. Students from minority ethnic groups, who constitute a low proportion of the college's enrolments, overall achieve less well than other students. Male students achieve better than female students. Adult students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve less well than others. Attendance at lessons is satisfactory, although attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was significantly lower than the attendance rates recorded by the college over the academic year 2008/09.
15. Achievement for learners on the college's work-based learning programmes are satisfactory and improving. The proportion of learners on apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes who complete their qualification on time has been low but improved management arrangements have led to a recent improvement.
16. In many vocational areas, students develop good practical skills and can work to appropriate commercial standards. They enjoy their work and enhance their employability. The standard of students' theoretical and written work is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: grade 2

17. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall and is good for school pupils aged 14 to 16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although the college judges them to be good in the self-assessment report. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well qualified and suitably experienced. They develop good relationships and provide high levels of support to students, who enjoy their lessons. Good specialist resources in many curriculum areas provide realistic vocational settings for learning, for example in hairdressing. Information and learning technology (ILT) is used well to enliven learning, although too many staff and students do not benefit from using the college's virtual learning environment. Students develop good vocational skills and technical knowledge in engineering and very effective practical skills in arts and music technology. The teaching of theory is linked well to professional practice in health and social care. Key skills are taught particularly well. Vocational teachers and key skills specialists liaise closely and teach together. This integrated approach is highly valued by students, who develop their numeracy and literacy skills well in a vocational context.
18. Too much teaching and learning is no better than satisfactory. Too many lessons are characterised by teachers providing insufficient challenge to students and not meeting their individual needs. For example, some teachers adopt a whole group approach, focusing their efforts on the less able students and not developing the skills of the more able through extension exercises. Poor classroom management in a significant minority of lessons detracts from productive learning. There is insufficient focus on promoting equality and diversity in many lessons.
19. Assessment is good. Course teams have regular standardisation meetings and coursework is moderated effectively. Students' work is marked carefully with helpful comments to improve their standard of work. Reports from external verifiers are monitored rigorously and appropriate action is taken to remedy any areas for improvement identified.
20. Additional learning support is good. The initial assessment of students' reading, writing and numeracy skills is carried out thoroughly. Students identified as requiring additional learning support value the help they receive and they are more likely to complete their course than other students.
21. The extent to which the college meets the needs and interests of students is good. A wide range of vocational programmes is offered and progression routes are good. The college is flexible and responsive to the needs of different groups. For example, it provides skills for life and ICT courses on employer premises and for the probation service. School pupils and students who are at risk progress well. Engagement with employers is good. The

- college is very responsive to employers' needs. The number of enrolments on work-based learning and Train to Gain provision is growing.
22. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college welcomes all learners and provides good opportunities for students with disadvantages. Good partnerships with community and voluntary organisations widen the participation of under-represented groups. Analysis of data to compare the participation and success rates of different groups of students is thorough. However, this analysis is not always followed up with effective action.
 23. Enrichment is broad and varied. Activities are linked effectively to the Every Child Matters themes. Participation in college-wide events is high. The college gathers and responds promptly to the views of students. Students are fully involved in decision-making; for example, the appointment of the new principal. A programme of relevant and interesting visits, including a wide range of residential study tours abroad, is organised. Students are well prepared for work placements. They gain good skills and experience to progress into employment. However, there is insufficient work experience provision to meet the needs of all students.
 24. Advice, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pre-course information is clear and advice is impartial. Taster days and individual interviews ease learners' transition from school to college. Students receive a well-planned induction to their programme during which they are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities. Students with additional learning needs receive good support. Support for adult students and learners on apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes is satisfactory.
 25. The quality of tutorials is satisfactory. The group tutorial programme comprises a broad range of relevant activities to raise awareness of sexual health, drugs and other aspects of healthy living. Advice and guidance are integrated well in tutorial sessions. Support for learners preparing for higher education is good. Tutors regularly review students' progress in individual interviews. However, the monitoring of students' progress and attendance is insufficiently rigorous on some courses and target-setting for students remains under-developed. Too many students withdraw from their courses before they complete them.
 26. Pastoral support is good. The welfare and counselling services provide good support on personal issues, including financial advice, childcare, personal, health and social matters. Childcare arrangements are good.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: grade 3

27. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although the college judges them to be good. The principal and senior managers provide clear, open and consultative leadership. The recent review of the college mission and strategic priorities has resulted in positive changes that are disseminated well to staff. The college works effectively with a wide range of local and national partners. Communications are good and are underpinned by a coherent framework of meetings. Although progress has been made in improving success rates and the quality of teaching and learning, college leaders recognise that this has been insufficiently rapid.
28. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory but they are not consistently effective across the college. Progress has been slow in identifying and remedying some pockets of poor performance, for example, in ICT and ESOL. Curriculum management varies in quality. Data are not used effectively in all curriculum areas to monitor and improve performance. Course reviews are satisfactory but frequently lack clear assessment of the quality of teaching and learning. The strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning are not collated and evaluated sufficiently for each curriculum area and the college as a whole. As a consequence, staff development to improve teaching is not considered at a strategic level. The college self-assessment report is broadly accurate but there is some over-grading and a lack of rigour in evaluating some key aspects of the provision.
29. The college has detailed policies and procedures for child protection and safeguarding that fully meet statutory requirements and are reviewed annually. Safeguarding training is mandatory for all relevant staff. Appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are carried out and recorded centrally. The health and safety policy has undergone extensive reviews over the last two years and the revised policy includes much more stringent requirements and guidelines for implementation.
30. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Senior managers have worked hard to ensure the implementation of the college's comprehensive policy. As well as mandatory training for staff, a range of good quality training and learning materials have been produced for use with staff and learners. Guidelines and checklists are designed to monitor the impact of policy implementation on learning resources and lessons. Despite this, equality and diversity are not always promoted effectively through the curriculum and some teachers and managers are unclear as to how to integrate the promotion of equal opportunities into lessons.
31. Governance is good. Governors come from a range of backgrounds and make effective use of their business, public sector and educational experience. They receive clear information that helps them to monitor the college's academic

and financial performance. There is a designated child protection governor and all governors have undergone CRB checks.

32. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall but there is significant variation in quality across the college. Resources are excellent in the arts, hairdressing and beauty therapy but some other parts of the college estate are dated. Financial management is good. In the context of satisfactory but rising success rates, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and early years

Good: Grade 2

Context

33. The college offers full- and part-time courses from entry level to level 3 in health and social care, child care, counselling and access to higher education. Currently 185 students aged 16 to 18 are following full-time courses in health and social care and childcare. Thirty-six adults are studying part time on counselling courses and 343 on national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Seventeen adults are following the access to higher education course in health studies. Eighteen school pupils aged 14 to 16 are following an entry level course in child development.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses for adult learners
- good teaching that effectively links theory to professional practice
- productive and well-managed work experience programme
- highly responsive individual support for learners
- good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on most level 2 courses
- under-developed strategies to improve students' literacy on entry and level 1 courses.

Achievement and standards

34. Achievement and standards are good. At level 3, success rates are above national average, and at level 1 they are broadly in line with the national average. However, success rates are low on most level 2 courses. Success rates are high on most courses for adult learners. Students aged 16 to 18 make good progress. Achievement in key skills is good. Attendance at lessons is high. The highly effective work placement provision enables learners to gain very good practical and employability skills. Progression to employment and further study is good.

Quality of provision

35. The quality of provision is good as are teaching and learning. Lessons are carefully planned to engage students' interest through a wide range of vocationally relevant activities. In the best lessons, professional practice is underpinned by appropriate theory and linked to current legislation. For example, in a health and social care lesson students were able to write a health and safety policy drawing upon their placement experience and linking

this effectively to legislation on health and safety and Every Child Matters. The few less effective lessons lack pace and activities fail to engage the interest of students. Strategies to help students on courses at entry level and level 1 to improve their literacy are under-developed.

36. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Students receive detailed feedback on the standard of their work, are set clear targets and know what skills they need to improve. Initial assessment is thorough and support is put in place quickly for students with specific needs.
37. The range of programmes and activities available to meet the needs of students, partner schools and employers is good. Initial advice and guidance are very thorough and effective. Enrichment is very good and makes a positive contribution to students' learning.
38. Support and guidance are good. Personal tutors and course tutors liaise closely to ensure that students receive high quality support based on their individual needs.

Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are good. Strategies to improve success rates have been successful on most courses. Self-assessment is accurate. Quality assurance is rigorous and has contributed significantly to improvements in teaching and learning. Resources and accommodation are good, creating a safe and productive learning environment. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

Engineering

Good: Grade 2

Context

40. Courses in motor vehicle, mechanical and electronic engineering are available at entry level to level 3 and above. Motor vehicle and mechanical engineering apprenticeships are available at levels 2 and 3. At the time of inspection there were 165 full-time and 140 part-time students with 58 learners on apprenticeships. In addition, there were 117 school pupils aged 14 to 16, mostly on level 2 young apprenticeship programmes.

Strengths

- high success rates for students aged 16 to 18
- good development of students' practical skills and technical knowledge
- good development of students' independent learning skills
- very broad and inclusive range of courses
- successful provision for school pupils aged 14 to 16
- very good links with employers, schools and other partners
- effective management actions to secure improvement.

Areas for improvement

- consistently low retention rates on the national diploma in motor vehicle
- insufficient progress made by the more able students
- low timely success rates in work-based programmes.

Achievement and standards

41. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates improved significantly in 2007/08 and on most courses were above national average. Success rates are high on young apprenticeship programmes and on most courses for full-time students aged 16 to 18. Retention rates have been consistently below the national average for the past three years on the national diploma in motor vehicle. Not enough work-based learners complete their apprenticeships in the time allocated. School pupils aged 14 to 16 achieve well.
42. The standard of students' work is good on practical courses. In mechanical engineering students make tools, such as centre punches, to industrial standards. Motor vehicle students competently diagnose engine symptom faults, using their technical understanding and electronic diagnostic tools. Attendance is high on most courses.

Quality of provision

43. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Students enjoy their lessons and teachers effectively encourage students to develop their practical skills through a wide range of activities. In practical lessons students are adept at using a good range of equipment to extend their skills and deepen their understanding and they develop good independent learning

skills. Teachers carefully assess and monitor students' progress during lessons. However, whilst less able students are particularly well supported, insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that the more able students make sufficiently rapid progress.

44. The range of programmes offered, and the progression routes available, are good. Much effort is given to attracting female students, although the impact of this has been limited. Collaboration with local schools is strong and the provision for school pupils is very successful. Links with employers are good. There is good progression between programmes.
45. Guidance and support are good. Initial assessment is used effectively to provide additional learning support for students with specific needs. Apprentices receive good support to help them with science and mathematics.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are good. Highly effective management has improved the provision. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. The self-assessment accurately identifies the strengths and areas for improvement. Quality improvement processes are thorough and regular analysis provides teachers and managers with clear targets for improvement. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good, although teachers lack confidence in integrating aspects of diversity within their lessons.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good: Grade 2

Context

47. The college offers full- and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies. At the time of inspection there were 360 full-time students of whom around two thirds were aged 16 to 18. There were 206 part-time students. The college also has provision for 23 students aged 14 to 16 on a level 1 programme and for 78 work-based learners. Just under half of all students are in beauty and holistic therapies with the remainder in hairdressing.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- good standards of students' work
- good practical teaching and assessment
- highly inclusive curriculum with good progression routes
- well-managed high quality specialist resources.

Areas for improvement

- consistently low success rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing and apprenticeship programmes.

Achievement and standards

48. Student achievement is good. Success rates on most courses have risen significantly over the last three years and are now high. However, success rates are consistently low on NVQ level 2 hairdressing programmes on both college-based and apprenticeship programmes, with around half the students leaving before they gain their qualification. Key skills success rates are significantly higher than the national average. Students demonstrate good practical skills and standards of written work and they enjoy college life. Clients appreciate the quality and level of service they receive.

Quality of provision

49. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good, especially in practical sessions. Teachers leading practical sessions are skilled in enabling students to develop confidence in their abilities. In theory lessons, teachers are less adept at ensuring students' individual needs are met. The virtual learning environment provides good opportunities for independent learning. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good.
50. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs of students and employers is good. There is a highly inclusive range of provision from entry level to level 3, including barbering. Progression rates are high. Over half of the students progress to further training at college and a third go on to employment, mostly in their chosen specialism. Full-time students, and many

part-time students, benefit from an extensive work placement programme in both hairdressing and beauty therapy that enhances their employment prospects.

51. Guidance and support for learners are good. Students benefit from academic and technical support that promotes achievement. Tutorials are valued by students. Accommodation and resources are very good and they are well managed. Salons are well equipped and the hair and beauty product range reflects industry standards in its breadth and quality. There are plentiful displays of students' work and celebrations of their achievement.

Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong team ethos where all staff strive to raise student achievement. The self-assessment report is self-critical and broadly agrees with the inspection findings. Weaknesses from the last inspection have been remedied, although managers have been slow to bring about improvement in the level 2 hairdressing provision. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Hospitality and catering

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

53. The college offers a range of full-time, apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes in hospitality and catering. Full-time programmes are offered from entry level to level 3. At the time of the inspection there were 95 students enrolled on full-time courses, 22 on apprenticeships and 38 on Train to Gain programmes. The college provides a GCSE catering course to a small group of school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Strengths

- high success rates on full-time NVQ programmes
- much good teaching and learning on full-time courses
- particularly effective support for full-time students with additional learning needs.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on the national diploma in hospitality and on Train to Gain programmes
- slow progress made by apprentices
- insufficient challenge for more able full-time students in lessons.

Achievement and standards

54. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on full-time NVQ programmes are high. Although they declined slightly in 2007/08, they remain well above the national average. Success rates on the national diploma are low. Key skills success rates for college-based students are high. Success rates for apprentices are satisfactory but not enough apprentices complete their programme on time. Success rates for Train to Gain learners are low.
55. The development of college-based students' vocational and personal skills is good. Students develop good team working skills and maintain a clean and safe working environment. Progression for full-time students to further education and employment is good.

Quality of provision

56. The quality of provision for full-time students is good. Teaching and learning are good. Well-qualified and experienced teachers adopt a range of strategies to hold students' interest and improve their learning. Individual coaching in practical sessions is particularly effective, although in a minority of sessions there is insufficient production for students to fully develop their skills. Students on level 3 programmes develop good independent learning skills. However, more able students are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The use of ILT is

limited and the extraction system in practical areas is noisy. Assessment practice is effective and assignment feedback is satisfactory.

57. The range of courses to meet the needs of full-time students is satisfactory and the breadth of provision for employers is good. The progression route onto the national diploma in hospitality is not established and there is very limited part-time provision. Curriculum enrichment is good.
58. Care and support for full-time students are good. Students with additional learning needs receive particularly effective support. Appropriate diagnosis is complemented by good support in lessons. Students' progress is regularly monitored, although there is insufficient formal assessment of progress in literacy and numeracy. Students receive good pastoral support.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of full-time courses is good. However, progress to improve provision for apprentices and in Train to Gain has been slow. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, although some features identified as strengths are no more than normal practice. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Discussions on equality take place at induction and in tutorials, and lesson plans include reference to equality and diversity. However, neither students nor staff are confident in their account of this aspect of work.

Art, design, media and music

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

60. The college offers vocational qualifications in art, design, music technology and media. The media provision includes multimedia and games development. At the time of inspection there were 335 full-time students, mainly aged 16 to 18, and 15 part-time adult students. Most students are taking courses at level 3.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses at levels 1 and 2
- good progression to higher level courses
- high quality of students' practical work
- good teaching of practical skills in most lessons
- clear leadership and improving teamwork.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on most courses at level 3
- poor classroom management in a significant minority of sessions
- insufficiently rigorous approach to quality improvement.

Achievement and standards

61. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on level 1 and 2 vocational courses are high and success rates for key skills are above the national average. However, success rates on most level 3 courses are low. Too many students on these courses leave before they have completed their qualification. Inspection evidence shows a recent improvement in retention rates. Students make satisfactory progress overall.
62. The standard of students' practical work is good. They demonstrate strong technical skills and many students use materials and technology with confidence to produce imaginative practical work. On fashion courses students produce work of a particularly high standard and show good understanding of the commercial and retail aspects of the industry. Sketchbooks are of a high standard and are used effectively by students to research and develop their work. Many of the students who do succeed progress to high quality courses at universities.

Quality of provision

63. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons students make good progress and the teaching of practical skills is good. Many teachers work in the creative industries and this helps bring learning alive on many of the courses. On the first diploma in art and design and access to higher education courses, students debate and discuss ideas and concepts confidently. However, in a significant minority of

lessons classroom management is weak, students work too slowly and they are not challenged or stretched. The promotion of equality and diversity is not sufficiently embedded in lesson planning.

64. The range of programmes and activities to meet the needs of learners is satisfactory. A range of short qualifications enables students to develop additional specialist skills. Community and employer links are satisfactory but improving. Students enjoy their studies and their views are valued. There is an active student council and students are well represented at quality reviews.
65. Guidance and support for students are good. Most tutorial reviews provide students with useful feedback on their progress, although target-setting is under-developed. Support for students who need additional help with their studies is good.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new leadership team has improved teamwork. Communication is good and actions are now in place to bring about improvements. There is good strategic vision to make the provision occupationally relevant and to meet industry standards. The self-assessment of the provision is accurate but there is insufficient focus on improving teaching and learning and no analysis of equality and diversity performance. Resources are excellent and learning environments are visually stimulating.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

67. Over 1,500 students following vocational programmes, mainly aged 16 to 18, attend key skills classes in application of number and/or communication at levels 1 and 2; 268 students on these and other programmes receive additional support for their literacy, numeracy and/or ESOL needs. Discrete ESOL programmes cater for 350 students of whom 27 study full time. Part-time adult discrete literacy and numeracy programmes have 225 and 204 students enrolled respectively.

Strengths

- good and improving achievement in key skills at level 1 and 2
- good additional support in literacy, numeracy and ESOL for students in vocational areas
- highly effective management of key skills provision.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on most ESOL qualifications
- too much teaching not meeting individual needs
- slow progress to improve the quality of ESOL provision.

Achievement and standards

68. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Students taking key skills qualifications achieve well with success rates significantly above national average. Students receiving support for additional literacy, numeracy or ESOL needs achieve well on their vocational programmes. Success rates in national tests in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. However, success rates on most ESOL qualifications are low. In 2007/08 success rates were below national average in all ESOL skills for life speaking and listening qualifications.
69. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Students enjoy their classes. In key skills students make good progress from their starting points. Students in most literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes produce work of a satisfactory standard. Attendance is low in many lessons.

Quality of provision

70. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better discrete classes, students practise their skills extensively. However, too much teaching does not meet individual needs. Less effective sessions do not sufficiently challenge the most able or support those with weaker skills. Individual learning plans do not always help students to understand what they need to do to make progress.

71. Programmes satisfactorily meet the needs and interests of students. Key skills classes have a strong vocational emphasis. The adult literacy qualification for some ESOL students does not adequately recognise or accredit their writing skills.
72. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. The outcomes of initial assessment appropriately guide students on to appropriate programmes. Students receive good informal personal support and access to college-wide services. Individual tutorial support for ESOL students is insufficient. Additional support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs in vocational classes is good.

Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-assessment is broadly accurate in identifying priorities for quality improvement. However, progress to improve the quality of ESOL provision has been slow, and it is too early to judge the effectiveness of recent actions to improve students' achievement. Strategies to improve attendance are ineffective. Judgements on the quality of teaching and learning through observation are over-generous and do not sufficiently identify improvements needed. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Programmes effectively help those facing barriers to learning. However, promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum is not well developed.
74. Management of key skills provision is highly effective. The integration of key skills into vocational classes works very effectively and liaison between key skills tutors and vocational tutors is good.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	05/06	785	70	69	1	1364	51	65	-14
	06/07	763	75	74	1	878	47	70	-23
	07/08*	643	78	N/A		593	70	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	93	80	72	8	40	70	74	-4
	06/07	77	78	75	3	26	81	75	6
	07/08*	61	84	N/A		19	95	N/A	
Other	05/06	692	69	69	0	1324	51	65	-14
	06/07	686	74	74	0	852	46	70	-24
	07/08*	582	78	N/A		574	69	N/A	

* college data

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	05/06	1053	59	66	-7	1336	65	66	-1
	06/07	1089	66	70	-4	1622	49	69	-20
	07/08*	952	72	N/A		1259	57	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	104	69	68	1	144	59	67	-8
	06/07	124	61	71	-10	119	65	70	-5
	07/08*	177	68	N/A		100	79	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	442	52	65	-13	443	71	68	3
	06/07	325	66	68	-2	796	43	69	-26
	07/08*	291	68	N/A		794	46	N/A	
Other	05/06	489	62	66	-4	748	63	65	-2
	06/07	615	67	70	-3	706	54	69	-15
	07/08*	484	75	N/A		365	74	N/A	

* college data

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	05/06	784	65	71	-6	712	67	64	3
	06/07	636	69	73	-4	720	70	68	2
	07/08*	649	68	N/A		629	71	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	10	70	87	-17	23	57	72	-15
	06/07	8	63	87	-24	58	66	76	-10
	07/08*	4	50	N/A		20	85	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	44	48	67	-19	79	53	55	-2
	06/07	24	8	69	-61	55	42	59	-17
	07/08*	22	36	N/A		46	52	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	82	76	71	5	229	74	63	11
	06/07	57	77	74	3	251	74	69	5
	07/08*	48	81	N/A		206	81	N/A	
Other	05/06	638	64	65	-1	379	66	64	2
	06/07	547	71	70	1	356	73	69	4
	07/08*	575	68	N/A		357	68	N/A	

* college data

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate** %	National NVQ rate** %	Provider/college framework rate** %	National framework rate** %	
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	39	82	52	79	43	
		timely	38	63	34	63	27	
	06/07	overall	71	65	63	56	56	
		timely	81	41	43	33	38	
	07/08	overall	64	81	81	68	81	63
		timely	64	50	48	48	44	
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	142	65	57	62	51	
		timely	128	51	37	48	33	
	06/07	overall	196	59	64	54	60	
		timely	226	46	47	42	45	
	07/08	overall	167	64	67	62	64	
		timely	161	43	52	39	50	

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College/provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record (ILR)

Table 5a

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the college, 2007 to 2009.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider NVQ rate** (%)
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	101	81
		timely	103	79
	2007/08	overall	796	77
		timely	924	55
	2008/09 (8 months)	overall	912	64
		timely	1502	29

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

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

Table 5b

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain skills for life programmes managed by the college, 2007 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider skills for life rate** (%)
Train to Gain (skills for life)	2006/07	overall	10	70
		timely	11	64
	2007/08	overall	161	37
		timely	232	12
	2008/09 (8 months)	overall	101	40
		timely	233	14

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

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

Table 6

Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the college, 2006 to 2009

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate* (%)	Progression rate** (%)
2005/06	58	57	47
2006/07	36	50	47
2007/08	38	66	42
2008/09 (8 months)	15	67	93

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

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

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

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