

Croydon College

Inspection report

Provider reference 130432

Published date July 2009

Audience	Post-sixteen	
Published date	July 2009	
Provider reference	130432	

Contents

Background information	. 3
Summary of grades awarded	. 5
Overall judgement	. 6
Key strengths and areas for improvement	. 7
Main findings	. 8
Sector subject area reports	13

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); the previous inspection reports (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, public services and care; science and mathematics; information and communication technology (ICT); hospitality and catering; visual arts; preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law.

Description of the provider

- 1. Croydon College is a large general further education (FE) college, with significant higher education (HE) provision, in the London Borough of Croydon. It serves a population of around 335,000. There are two main sites: Fairfield and the adjacent Higher Education Centre. There are two sixth form colleges in the borough and seven of the 23 local secondary schools have sixth forms. There are also many other colleges within easy travelling distance. Just over half of the college's students are drawn from Croydon with many coming from neighbouring London boroughs and more distant areas.
- 2. Although the unemployment rate in Croydon is relatively low at around 5%, there are pockets of relatively high deprivation and educational underachievement. A few electoral wards are amongst the most deprived in London. Pupils from many of the college's main feeder schools have relatively low attainment.
- 3. The college's courses range from entry level to HE. It offers programmes in 14 of the 15 sector subject areas. Around 500 pupils aged 14 to 16, from 27 partner schools, attend vocational courses delivered by the college. In 2007/08, there were 12,160 students, of whom 36% were full time and about 67% were adults. Around 55% of college students are from minority ethnic groups. This is substantially higher than the proportion in the local community. The college offers work-based learning in a few curriculum areas and most significantly in construction and hairdressing and beauty therapy. It is designated as a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for hospitality and catering, and construction.
- 4. The college's mission statement is 'to be at the heart of Croydon's communities, stimulating demand for learning through inspirational and supportive teaching which respects all and transforms our futures'.

Preparation for life and work

Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

Good: Grade 2

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Outstanding: contributory grade 1
240am) or opportunity	grade .
Soctor subject areas	
Sector subject areas	
Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
	_
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
	222210002
Hospitality and catering	Good: Grade 2
Troopitanty and catoring	Cood. Glade 2
Visual arts	Good: Grade 2
visual alts	Guu. Glaue 2

Outstanding: Grade 1

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

- 5. This is a good and improving college. Success rates have risen significantly since the previous inspection and are now generally above national average. Students develop high levels of practical and vocational skills and the standard of their work is good. Success rates for learners on work-based programmes are satisfactory. The achievement of students aged 14 to 16 is good. Student retention and attendance rates are improving and are now good, although attendance in a few subject areas is not yet high enough.
- 6. Teaching and learning are good and are exemplified by well planned lessons that offer students a wide range of activities to challenge and motivate them. However, the development and use of information learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning is limited. Target setting, and assessment and review of students' progress, are generally good, although these vary across curriculum areas.
- 7. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students is good, and to educational and social inclusion it is outstanding. The range of courses for students aged 14 to 16 is outstanding. High participation in the broad range of college-wide enrichment activities helps develop students' personal skills. However, opportunities for curriculum enrichment and work experience are underdeveloped in a minority of subjects. Guidance and support for students are good. Most students benefit from good initial assessment, pastoral and additional learning support and from a wide range of welfare services. However, for Train to Gain learners, provision of support is insufficient.
- 8. Leadership and management are good. Indeed, leadership and governance are outstanding. The quality of middle management is good overall but varies across areas. The self-assessment report accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. The promotion of equality of opportunity and community cohesion is outstanding. Students feel safe and supported in the college and there are no significant achievement gaps between groups. The standard of accommodation is satisfactory and the college is currently undergoing extensive improvements. The college provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

9. Capacity to improve is outstanding. Through strong leadership the college has been successful in establishing a self-critical and outcomes-orientated culture. Performance management is strong and integrated well with effective quality assurance arrangements. Self-assessment is accurate and the college knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Success rates have improved steadily at a rate faster than the national rate. The gap in achievement between males and females, different minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and

disabilities has been closed. Lesson observation procedures are robust and used well to improve teaching and learning.

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

10. The college has made good progress since the last inspection. The quality of provision has improved and six of the seven curriculum areas inspected are good. External provision for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) has been discontinued and college-based ESOL provision is now good. Success rates have improved significantly, particularly at levels 1 and 2, and are good overall. Actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been effective; teaching and learning are now good and there is much better sharing of good practice. The college is highly effective in promoting equality of opportunity.

Key strengths

- high success rates for students at levels 1 and 2
- very successful provision for students aged 14 to 16
- good teaching and learning
- · wide and inclusive range of provision
- extensive enrichment programme with a strong focus on citizenship and community cohesion
- good academic and welfare support
- outstanding educational and social inclusion
- outstanding leadership and governance to bring about improvements
- excellent promotion of equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- success rates on long courses at level 3 and in work-based learning
- quality of provision for Train to Gain
- the development and use of ILT in supporting learning
- the range of curriculum enrichment and work experience in a minority of subjects
- the consistency of effective target setting for students to improve performance.

Main findings

Achievement and standards Good: Grade 2

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain Satisfactory: Grade 3

- 11. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above national average. Long course success rates are above average for all age groups. Although success rates for students on long courses at levels 1 and 2 are high, those at level 3 are satisfactory.
- 12. Success rates for short courses have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above average, particularly for students aged 16 to 18. Achievement and progression to courses at the college are high for students aged 14 to 16. Overall and timely success rates for apprentices are satisfactory; rates in hairdressing have remained static for three years against rising national averages. Success rates for advanced apprentices in building services have improved and are well above average. Overall success rates on Train to Gain have risen in 2008/09 and are now high but timely success rates remain low.
- 13. Success rates vary across curriculum areas. They are particularly high in engineering, languages, ICT and ESOL. Achievement of high grades in GCSE English and mathematics courses are around the national average. The college has recently converted its key skills programme to an adult basic skills programme to satisfy the needs of its students. It is too early to evaluate its success.
- 14. The standard of students' work is good overall. Students develop good work-related skills which help them achieve economic well-being. Their approach to health and safety is good. Attendance and retention rates have improved since the last inspection and are now good, although attendance varies across curriculum areas.
- 15. The college systematically analyses the performance of specific groups of students and takes effective action to address any differences. Consequently there is very little variance in success rates between different groups of students, for example, by gender or ethnic background. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve similar success rates to their peers.

Quality of provision Good: Grade 2

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain Inadequate: Grade 4

- 16. The college has focused strongly on improving teaching and learning since the last inspection and the quality of teaching is now good overall. However, managers are aware that there is still inconsistency across subject areas. Advanced practitioners work well with curriculum teams to support improvements in teaching. Staff new to the college receive good induction and support.
- 17. The college's system for monitoring the quality of teaching is rigorous and moderation ensures consistency of approach and grading. Managers accurately identify strengths, areas requiring further improvement and training needs for teachers and observers. Teachers value the training provided and various opportunities to share best practice.
- 18. In the best lessons observed, students were actively engaged in learning and teachers made effective use of open questioning to check learning and extend students' understanding. Clear objectives and targets helped students to know what they needed to learn. Imaginative and creative assignments, and well-managed group work, helped students share knowledge and reflect on their learning. However, in the minority of weaker sessions, lesson planning and content did not always meet the full range of students' needs and abilities. In a few sessions the teacher dominated the lesson too much, with insufficient opportunities for students to participate actively in their learning.
- 19. The college has increased the provision of ILT across the college. However, managers acknowledge that development is still required to improve how well ILT is used to enhance learning.
- 20. The college's response to the needs and interests of students is good. The college offers a broad range of vocational courses with good progression routes. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. A well-implemented 'Respect for All' policy, accompanied by a strong commitment to citizenship and community cohesion, promote an inclusive ethos and a safe and welcoming environment. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is substantially higher than that of the local population. The college offers an excellent range of vocational courses for students aged 14 to 16 and good opportunities for young people not in education, employment and training to return to learning. There is an extensive cross-college enrichment programme. However, curriculum enrichment and opportunities for work-related experience are not sufficient in all subjects.
- 21. The college responds well to employer and market needs. It is extending its provision in response to the economic downturn and Train to Gain provision has

- increased. Although the range of work-based learning apprenticeships is currently limited, the college has plans to extend this.
- 22. Good initial advice and guidance ensure that students make informed choices and enrol onto the right course. Initial assessment is used well to identify learning support needs and additional support is provided promptly by well-qualified staff. Take-up rates for learning support have improved significantly since the last inspection and college analyses indicate that it has a positive impact on achievement. However, sufficient support is not yet available to work-based learners. Initial assessment of Train to Gain learners is ineffective and does not inform individual learning plans; there is insufficient literacy, numeracy and language support. Impartial information, advice and guidance which should be integral to Train to Gain provision at three points in the programme have not been fully implemented. The college is already taking action to improve this provision.
- 23. Students generally receive good pastoral and academic support. Strong interagency and external links provide specialist support where needed. Monitoring of students' progress varies across the college. In many areas, regular feedback on performance complements effective target setting and monitoring during termly reviews. In other areas, such as work-based learning, target setting is not sufficiently specific, time bound or challenging. An electronic performance-tracking system for full-time students is planned to be extended across the college next year. However, its impact on raising achievement is yet to be evaluated. The quality of group tutorials varies across the college. A common scheme of work for tutorials for full-time students is planned to ensure improved coverage of Every Child Matters themes.

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity Work-based learning Train to Gain

Outstanding: Grade 1 Satisfactory: Grade 3 Satisfactory: Grade 3

Good: Grade 2

- 24. Leadership and management are good. The principal and senior management team provide outstanding leadership. Collaborative arrangements are used well to promote the strategic aims of the college. Senior managers have been successful in establishing a self-critical culture for the college focused on raising standards. Achievement and standards have improved considerably since the last inspection.
- 25. Governance is outstanding. Governors have high expectations of the college and monitor its financial and academic performance carefully. They are fully involved in establishing its strategic direction and in monitoring the achievement of its strategic aims. Governors set demanding targets and are both supportive and challenging of the principal. They meet teachers and students regularly to celebrate success and broaden their understanding of the college.

- 26. Curriculum management is good overall and satisfactory in work-based provision. Managers focus clearly on improving teaching and learning and ensuring students achieve. They use self-assessment well to identify areas for improvement.
- 27. Quality improvement arrangements are thorough and effective in driving up standards. Students' views are sought and acted upon regularly. Self-assessment is accurate and the college knows itself well. Course review procedures are clearly focused on the achievement of individual students. Underperforming students are identified early, triggering mostly timely support. However, college-wide quality assurance arrangements have only recently been applied to work-based learning and Train to Gain provision and are not yet having a sufficient impact on outcomes. Lesson observation arrangements are well established and carefully moderated, providing the college with an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and learning.
- 28. Quality improvement is integrated well with performance management, resulting in a high level of accountability at all levels. Appraisal arrangements are uncompromising in their focus on standards and managers are prompt in taking action to bring about improvement. Where staff fail to improve, despite the provision of support, capability arrangements are implemented.
- 29. Financial management is sound. The college has a clear accommodation strategy and the second of three phases for fully refurbishing and extending the college is being implemented well with minimum disruption to students. Resources are generally satisfactory and good in some areas. Students have good access to ICT facilities. On the basis of efficient staff deployment and improving success rates, the college provides good value for money.
- 30. The college complies with requirements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults. Internal audit arrangements scrutinise compliance with statutory and college safeguarding requirements and regular reports are provided for governors. The college has effective security arrangements. A clear code of behaviour for students is implemented well and any incidences of intimidation and bullying are addressed promptly. The college works well with the police and other agencies to minimise the effect of gang culture, which is a feature of local and wider communities.
- 31. The promotion of equality of opportunity is outstanding. The college is strongly committed to helping individuals achieve and the needs and performance of different groups of students are analysed well. The curriculum is highly responsive to the needs of young people and adults of all abilities. Support for vulnerable students and those at risk of not completing their programmes successfully is targeted well. Promotion of equality and diversity is central to all aspects of the work of the college and the college is compliant with the requirements of race equality, disability and gender equality legislation. The college has been very successful in improving outcomes across the college. There is no significant difference in performance between males and females, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those from different minority ethnic groups. A wide range of activities and events are organised on a

routine basis to promote equality and citizenship, and celebrate diversity. These are highly successful in establishing expectations and a culture of tolerance and understanding. There is extensive working with community groups to promote community cohesion. Students find the college provides a safe, welcoming and harmonious environment.

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Context

32. The college provides full-time courses in health and social care, public services, and child development and well-being at levels 1 to 3. Of the 500 learners, the majority study at level 3. Half of the students study health and social care, with the remainder split evenly between child care and public services. There are 71 students on Access to HE (nursing) and 143 part-time learners follow National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in health and social care and childcare under Train to Gain.

Key strengths

- high success rates on NVQs and access to HE in nursing
- good development of vocational and academic skills on full-time courses
- broad curriculum to meet the needs and interests of students
- effective leadership and management of full-time courses to improve provision.

Areas for improvement

- success rates on full-time childcare courses and Train to Gain
- underdeveloped target setting for students.

Achievement and standards

33. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for NVQs in health and social care, and children's care, learning and development, are high. They are also high for the Access to HE course. However, those for childcare courses are low, due mainly to poor retention, which has improved in the current year. In 2007/08 there was good improvement in the success rates of full-time courses in health and social care and public services to above the national average. However, success rates are low on Train to Gain. Students make good progress in both theory and practical work and good links are made between the two.

Quality of provision

34. Teaching and learning are now good on most courses and lessons are well planned. Teachers focus clearly and successfully on developing students' academic and vocational skills. Significant investment in resources has created well-equipped areas in childcare, and health and social care. Effective links with the Army provide good facilities that enhance teaching on public services. Resources for ILT are satisfactory. Some materials prepared by teachers have spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Assessment of students' work is

- satisfactory; assignments are generally helpfully corrected and returned in good time.
- 35. The range of programmes and activities to meet the needs and interest of students is good. All full-time courses include additional qualifications and activities. For example, public services students combine a unit of their first diploma course with the Duke of Edinburgh's award and the army cadets' training programme. There are good links with a wide range of employers and work experience is well organised. Students appreciate the good guidance and support provided by teachers and tutors. Teachers monitor students' progress effectively. They encourage students to set their own targets for progress. However, this is not always successful and students' targets are frequently insufficiently challenging.

36. Leadership and management are good. Managers have taken effective and imaginative steps to improve provision, recently introducing many new initiatives. The move to a temporary new campus has been well managed. Staff morale is good. However, progress in tackling a minority of the weaknesses at the last inspection has been slow. Achievement on the diploma in childcare and education is still below the national average. The self-assessment report is thorough and evaluative. It contains effective plans to address identified weaknesses. The promotion of equality and diversity is integrated extremely well into all aspects of the students' time at the college.

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Science and mathematics

Context

37. The college offers full-time A- and AS-level courses in biology, human biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics and psychology and a national diploma in applied science. Human biology, mathematics and applied science are also offered part time. Level 2 courses include mathematics, science and human physiology at GCSE and vocational applied science. Vocational science and numeracy are offered at level 1. Of the 559 enrolments, almost 26% are part time and 28% are on vocational courses; just over a quarter are adults.

Strengths

- high success rates in level 3 vocational science and mathematics
- good achievement by adult students
- good range of courses to meet students' needs
- good academic and pastoral support
- effective strategies for evaluating and improving provision.

Areas for improvement

- success rates in biology and psychology
- high-grade pass rates in GCSE mathematics and science
- attention to the individual needs of students in lessons
- development of ILT to support learning
- links with employers and external enrichment opportunities.

Achievement and standards

38. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates in level 3 applied science and mathematics are high, exceeding national rates for the past three years, and students make good progress compared with their starting points. However, rates for A- and AS-level biology and psychology are particularly low. The college has taken action to improve this provision and success rates in the January 2009 modules are significantly higher than those for January 2008. At level 2, achievement on the applied science course is now high. However, achievement of the high grades in GCSE mathematics is at a low national average and for science is very low. There are no significant differences between the achievement of different groups of students, although achievement rates for adults are higher than those for younger students. Students' progression to further study or to HE is good.

Quality of provision

39. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The better lessons are well organised and involve students successfully in activities. The assessment of learning is satisfactory. Students' assignments are marked clearly but with insufficient guidance on how to improve. Too much teaching makes insufficient use of a range of strategies for meeting students' individual needs. Although teachers

- make use of data projectors in their lessons, they make insufficiently creative use of ILT to enable students to improve their learning.
- 40. The college offers a good range of full- and part-time courses and good progression routes for students. However, the range of curriculum enrichment is narrow. The college makes insufficient use of its links with employers or of external enrichment opportunities to motivate and inspire students. Support and guidance for students are good. Tutors are successful in helping students to take responsibility for their learning and progress.

41. Leadership and management are good. Managers have recently implemented effective arrangements for evaluating and improving provision. Their analysis of the quality of teaching and learning is good. Self-assessment is thorough, evaluative and accurate. Managers have clear plans for improving provision and have already introduced a number of changes. Early indications are that these are successful. Arrangements for promoting equality and diversity are satisfactory. Students are well and fairly treated and work well together in their diverse groups.

Information and communication technology

Context

42. The college offers ICT courses from entry to level 3. There are 331 students on full-time vocational courses, comprising first and national diplomas in ICT and an introductory diploma in IT at Work, and 88 on GCE AS- and A-level courses. Around 300 students study courses such as the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) through flexible arrangements, and 123 attend part-time courses in Using IT at levels 1 and 2. Around a third of the students are adults.

Strengths

- outstanding success rates on most courses
- high standard of students' work
- good planning to meet students' needs
- excellent target setting and progress monitoring
- · effective sharing of good practice
- rigorous self-assessment leading to improvement.

Areas for improvement

- success rates in ECDL part 2
- employer links on full-time courses
- progression opportunities for part-time students.

Achievement and standards

43. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates on most courses are excellent and the proportion of students that achieve high grades is above average. Students demonstrate very good personal and analytical skills and use a wide range of software confidently to produce well presented and imaginative assignments. Success rates on ECDL part 2 are low, although rising in the current year. Students enjoy their work and attendance is good.

Quality of provision

- 44. Teaching and learning are good. Learning is well planned to meet students' needs and teachers use a variety of stimulating activities. Productive group work effectively develops students' skills. Teachers use interactive technology well, with some developing innovative materials for the new virtual learning environment. However, a minority of lessons are too teacher-led and insufficiently challenging.
- 45. Arrangements to meet students' and employers' needs are satisfactory. Flexible study arrangements accommodate the needs of adults. Part-time learning is carefully planned according to prior experience and ability but opportunities to progress are limited. The full-time curriculum is appropriately broad. Lessons

- reinforce commercial practice but students have little opportunity to enhance employability with practical experience of the workplace.
- 46. Academic and pastoral support for full-time students are outstanding, and good for part-time students. Target setting and progress monitoring are excellent. Students clearly understand how to achieve challenging targets that are carefully negotiated, rigorously recorded and constantly monitored by tutors. A constant focus on achievement has had significant impact on success rates. Progress monitoring on part-time courses is good. All students have access to well-attended drop-in sessions outside planned lesson times. Well-planned individual support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is highly effective. Advice and guidance are good.

47. Leadership and management are good. Rigorous, inclusive and accurate self-assessment drives improvement. A strong focus on success has steadily raised achievement. Good practice is shared effectively and internal verification is systematic. Advanced practitioners are instrumental in raising the quality of teaching. A strong partnership with schools is working well to develop a new diploma for 2010. However, some areas for improvement remain from the previous inspection. The college recognises that employer links remain insufficient and that some accommodation is still very cramped and poorly laid out, impeding learning. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Students feel welcome and respected. The proportion of females on full-time courses is rising and is high on AS- and A-level courses.

Hospitality and catering

Context

48. The college offers full-time, part-time and Train to Gain programmes in hospitality and catering from entry level to level 3. There are 64 students enrolled on full-time courses and 92 on part-time courses, of whom 32 are aged 14 to 16. The Train to Gain programme currently has 33 learners. Females represent 50% of students. Around half the students are on level 2 courses and a third on level 1.

Strengths

- good development of personal and employability skills
- good practical teaching
- effective assessment tracking for full- and part-time students
- highly effective actions to improve student achievement.

Areas for improvement

- progress for Train to Gain learners
- literacy and numeracy support for Train to Gain learners
- the setting of challenging targets for students.

Achievement and standards

49. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. In 2006/07 success rates on most courses were well below the national average. However, in 2007/08, they improved significantly to above average. In the current year, success rates for Train to Gain learners are above average, although they are making slow progress. The development of students' personal and employability skills is good. Students enjoy college and adopt a good work ethos. The standard of students' work varies but is satisfactory overall. Progression rates for full- and part-time students to further education and employment are high. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

- 50. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in practical lessons. Teachers plan lessons well and offer good individual coaching. They use their industry knowledge well to support learning. Practical resources are of a high standard. The working relationship between staff and students is particularly effective. However, the use of ILT, and training materials for Train to Gain learners, are under-developed. Not all teachers check students' understanding effectively.
- 51. The range of programmes and activities to meet the needs of students and employers is good. There is a good variety of curriculum enrichment for full-time students. Recruitment and induction are carefully planned to ensure students are on the right programme. Students on college courses receive good pastoral support and careers advice. Students with additional learning needs

receive particularly effective academic support. However, literacy and numeracy support for Train to Gain learners is inadequate; the college fails to respond effectively to those learners with low initial assessment scores and formal support is not made available. Good assessment tracking for students attending college is effective in monitoring their progress. Students considered at risk of under-performing receive appropriate support. However, target setting is insufficiently challenging. Targets focus on short-term assessments and generally fail to include personal and long-term aims. Tracking on the Train to Gain programme is ineffective in highlighting learners' slow progress.

Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are good. Actions to improve student achievement are highly effective and sustainable. Quality assurance arrangements are robust and actively support continuous improvements. Students are closely monitored and strategies to support their progress are effective. Managers are aware of the problems with Train to Gain provision and are developing strategies to remedy these. The team ethos is now strong, communication is good and staff share resources well. Weaknesses from the previous inspection have been successfully improved. The self-assessment report accurately reflects inspection findings. Overall the promotion of equality of opportunity is good, although it is insufficiently developed for Train to Gain learners.

Visual arts Good: Grade 2

Context

53. The college offers full-time courses in: introductory diploma in art, design and media; first and national diplomas in art and design; and national diplomas in graphic design, fashion and clothing, and interactive media, as well as full- and part-time foundation diplomas in art and design. The college also offers an Alevel programme in art and design and short part-time courses in graphic and 3D design. There are 423 students, the majority studying full time and of whom about a quarter are adults.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- high standard of work in graphic communication
- good teaching that engages students
- inclusive curriculum promoting diversity.

Areas for improvement

- progress of students in A-level art and design
- retention rates on national and part-time foundation diplomas in art and design
- the standard of some accommodation.

Achievement and standards

- 54. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates for the introductory and first diplomas, and the national diploma in fashion and clothing, are consistently above average. The success rate for the A-level programme is high but students achieve lower grades than expected. Although the pass rates on the national diploma in art and design and part-time foundation diploma are high, retention is low. Overall, students on vocational courses make excellent progress and achieve higher grades than expected.
- 55. Drawing and visualisation skills are developed well. Ideas and concepts are often accomplished and excitingly expressed using a range of materials. Graphic communication students explore letterform and typography in experimental and innovative ways, challenging their audience to interpret and reflect on underlying messages. Photographic, print and moving image work is produced to a high standard.

Quality of provision

56. The standard of teaching is good. The best lessons engage students through good planning and teachers use effective strategies to address different ability levels. Most teachers are creative practitioners and use their experience to inform their teaching. Students contribute willingly to discussion and actively

- support each other in their work. Exemplar work is displayed in most studios and used effectively to stimulate learning. Assignments and tasks are exciting and carefully planned. Assessment practice is good and feedback is supportive.
- 57. The range of programmes and activities to meet the needs of students is good. The curriculum is broad and inclusive and the promotion of diversity is outstanding. Students undertake projects engaging with cultural, social and economic issues for a wide range of community organisations and business. They benefit from a broad variety of enrichment visits and activities.
- 58. Support and guidance are good. Additional needs are identified early and good support is provided promptly. Target setting is used extensively to monitor and promote progress. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their progress and the studio culture is conducive to independent working. Students feel secure and enjoy being at college. They feel confident and able to rely on tutors for effective guidance.

59. Leadership and management are good. Managers feel empowered and able to make decisions that improve students' experience. Teachers understand the need to monitor progress and support students to succeed. Resources are used well and collaboration in accessing specialist facilities is effective. Many studios are stimulating and industrious environments but some are too small and most are in need of refurbishment. Management is self-critical in the analysis of performance and self-assessment is broadly accurate, although course reviews are overly complex.

Preparation for life and work

Context

60. Around 1,470 students attend literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision from preentry level to level 2. Of these, 875 access literacy and numeracy in part-time discrete provision or alongside their full-time vocational programmes. Approximately 63% are aged 16 to 18.

Strengths

- very high success rates on ESOL courses
- high success rates in literacy and numeracy at level 1 in 2007/08
- good teaching and learning in discrete literacy and numeracy provision
- good academic and pastoral support
- good strategies to improve the quality of provision.

Areas for improvement

- success rates on entry level literacy and numeracy
- attendance and punctuality
- teaching and learning in embedded functional skills pilot provision
- the use of individual targets to inform lesson planning.

Achievement and standards

61. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on most ESOL courses, and literacy and numeracy at level 1, are very high. However, success rates at entry level show a three-year declining trend. The standard of students' work is good in discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) make very good progress in verbal communication, literacy and numeracy. Progression from discrete literacy and numeracy provision to the next level is good. However, the standard of work on vocational courses with embedded functional skills is unsatisfactory. Attendance and punctuality on many courses are erratic.

Quality of provision

- 62. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in discrete literacy and numeracy courses for adults and in LDD provision. In ESOL and most vocational literacy and numeracy courses teaching is satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory on a functional skills pilot project within vocational courses. Teachers use individual learning targets very well in literacy and numeracy courses for students in LDD provision. Initial diagnostic assessment is satisfactory. However, teachers do not all use assessment results sufficiently to set individual targets that inform lesson planning, or to record students' small steps towards improvement.
- 63. The college offers a good range of full- and part-time programmes that meets the needs and interests of students well. Students can develop their skills in

- discrete provision or within vocational programmes. Recent changes to accreditation and more frequent opportunities to take qualifications have increased students' chances of success. Pilot embedded programmes are at an early stage of development.
- 64. Guidance and support are good. Academic and personal support for ESOL students is good. Individual ESOL tutorials monitor progress effectively. Additional individual literacy, numeracy and language support by trained teachers helps many students to succeed. Support for students with sensory impairments, and with literacy and numeracy for students with LDD, is very effective.

65. Leadership and management are good. There are good strategies to improve the quality of provision. The self-assessment report is accurate. Classroom observations by specialist staff are rigorous, although those by non-specialist staff in vocational areas are frequently over-generous in their judgements on the quality of lessons. Training and development opportunities for teaching staff are good. However, literacy and numeracy teaching within or attached to vocational programmes is not effective. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The very high profile of teachers from black and minority ethnic groups offers excellent role models to students. Students with disabilities are well represented in college life. Resources are satisfactory.

Business, administration and law

Context

66. The college offers full-time vocational and academic courses at levels 1 to 3, including BTEC introductory, first and national diplomas in business, AS and A levels in accounting, business studies and law, and access to HE. Part-time provision includes NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in accountancy and national and advanced diplomas in management studies. There are 288 enrolments on full-time vocational programmes, 207 on AS- and A-level courses, 111 on part-time accounting and management courses, and 48 on access courses.

Strengths

- very high success rates on all full-time vocational courses
- well-planned learning activities that engage and motivate students
- good academic and pastoral support
- good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- success rates on a significant minority of part-time courses, AS accounting and Access to HE (law)
- employer involvement in provision for full-time students.

Achievement and standards

67. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on all full-time vocational and GCSE business courses are significantly above the national average. More students than expected on these courses also achieve high grades. The success rate on NVQ level 2 accounting is high but is low for the level 3 and for the diploma in management studies. Success rates for AS accounting and Access to HE (law) were also poor in 2007/08. Students' work is of a good standard. Written work exhibits good understanding of business concepts and the ability to apply them in practical situations. Progression between levels and into higher education is good.

Quality of provision

- 68. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. They use a range of well-designed, differentiated activities which engage and motivate students and enable them to develop and demonstrate their learning, many to a high level of attainment. Students enjoy their work and participate enthusiastically. Teachers check learning rigorously during lessons.
- 69. Assessment planning and the monitoring of students' progress are good. Teachers provide clear and constructive feedback on assignments and continuous encouragement and opportunities for students to achieve high grades.

- 70. The range of provision is good and meets the needs and interests of students. Good progress has been made since the last inspection on improving employer engagaement and curriculum enrichment. However, there remain insufficient formal and robust links with employers to support work experience for all full-time vocational students and to inform curriculum design, delivery and assessment.
- 71. Support for students is good. Individual tutorials have a clear focus on student performance with effective setting of targets which are monitored rigorously. Teachers provide high levels of support, academic and pastoral, to all students on an informal basis outside lessons.

72. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum managers and course teams prioritise the improvement of student experience and achievement and work together well to raise quality. Self-assessment is rigorous and accurate. Staff implementation of the strategies to raise the quality of teaching and learning and tackle performance issues has had a significant impact. Teachers share good practice and ideas in a variety of ways including effective peer observations. Managers and course teams use data well to inform target setting, monitoring and quality improvement. Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well in all aspects of the students' time at the college.

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	Evn End	16-18				19+			
Level Year	Exp End Year	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate**	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate**	Diff
1 Long	05/06	1,709	67	69	-2	1,768	62	65	-3
	06/07	1,786	72	74	-2	1,775	75	70	5
	07/08*	1,532	79			1,096	82		
NVQs	05/06	172	59	72	-13	112	78	74	4
	06/07	145	61	75	-14	144	80	75	5
	07/08*	112	84			104	70		
Other	05/06	1,537	67	69	-2	1,656	61	65	-4
	06/07	1,641	73	74	-1	1,631	75	70	5
	07/08*	1,415	79			1,006	84		

^{*}Data for 2007/08 have been provided by the college.

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		16-18				19+			
Notional Level	Exp End Year	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate**	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate**	Diff
2 Long	05/06	1,177	69	66	3	1,454	61	66	-5
	06/07	1,374	72	70	2	2,105	67	69	-2
	07/08*	1,306	87			1,255	82		
GCSEs	05/06	410	78	68	10	252	63	67	-4
	06/07	393	81	71	10	223	74	70	4
	07/08*	388	88			168	82		
NVQs	05/06	111	49	65	-16	250	71	68	3
	06/07	111	52	68	-16	488	77	69	8
	07/08*	112	75			231	75		
Other	05/06	656	68	66	2	952	59	65	-6
	06/07	870	71	70	1	1,394	63	69	-6
	07/08*	767	87			850	84		

^{*}Data for 2007/08 have been provided by the college.

^{**}National rates are not available for 2007/08.

^{**}National rates are not available for 2007/08.

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	Evn End	16-18			19+				
Level	Exp End Year	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate**	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate**	Diff
3 Long	05/06	1,593	69	71	-2	1,681	61	64	-3
	06/07	1,661	73	73	0	1,363	66	68	-2
	07/08*	1,606	75			1,344	74		
A/A2 Levels	05/06	268	84	87	-3	168	78	72	6
	06/07	279	92	87	5	158	82	76	6
	07/08*	282	88			123	90		
AS Levels	05/06	695	64	67	-3	246	64	55	9
	06/07	706	70	69	1	205	67	59	8
	07/08*	601	68			172	70		
GNVQs and	05/06	2	0	66	-66	12	8	57	-49
precursors	06/07								
	07/08*								
NVQs	05/06	23	48	71	-23	242	63	63	0
	06/07	37	59	74	-15	224	66	69	-3
	07/08*	24	79			241	74		
Other	05/06	605	68	65	3	1,013	58	64	-6
	06/07	639	68	70	-2	776	63	69	-6
	07/08*	699	76	-		807	73		

^{*}Data for 2007/08 have been provided by the college. **National rates are not available for 2007/08.

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	05/06	overall	48	56%	52%	40%	43%
Apprenticeships		timely	49	55%	34%	39%	27%
	06/07	overall	27	70%	63%	67%	56%
		timely	30	47%	43%	47%	38%
	07/08	overall	33	97%	68%	97%	63%
		timely	32	91%	48%	88%	44%
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	64	81%	57%	73%	51%
		timely	32	66%	37%	63%	33%
	06/07	overall	125	62%	64%	58%	60%
		timely	126	59%	47%	56%	45%
	07/08	Overall	154	65%	67%	64%	64%
		timely	157	55%	53%	54%	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

^{**} 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	2006/07	overall	72	29%
NVQ		timely	160	18%
2007/08		overall	83	40%
		timely	107	24%
	2008/09	overall	429	86%
	(10 months)	timely	748	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

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

[©] Crown copyright 2009