

# Guildford College of Further and Higher Education

## Inspection report

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

#### Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, public services and care; science and mathematics; agriculture, horticulture and animal care; construction, planning and the built environment; arts, media and publishing; literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); business, administration and law; and residential accommodation.

## Description of the provider

1. Guildford College is a large further and higher education college and offers provision from three main centres, community venues and workplaces across Surrey. In August 2007, Guildford College merged with Farnham Sixth Form College. The Merrist Wood campus, which has residential accommodation, is near Guildford and mainly offers land based and animal care programmes. The Stoke Park campus in Guildford accommodates the college's access to higher education (HE) provision along with a broad range of further education programmes.
2. In 2007/08, the college enrolled around 12,000 students. Just over a third were studying full time and most were 16 to 18-year-old students. The majority of part-time students are adults. The college offers programmes in all 15 sector subject areas. Health and care, land based and animal care, arts, media and publishing, preparation for life and business have the highest enrolments. The college has a well established 14 to 16 provision. In addition, the college has work-based learning provision and Train to Gain programmes delivered across south east England.
3. The college attracts the majority of its students from Guildford, Woking and Waverly. This part of Surrey is generally prosperous although it does contain pockets of deprivation. In 2007/08, students from minority ethnic backgrounds formed about 10% of the student body. This proportion is double that for residents in Surrey. Achievement of five GCSE's in Surrey is 58.6% compared to a national average of 47.6%. The working population in Surrey is generally better qualified with a higher than regional and national average of people working in management positions.
4. The college's mission is to 'inspire and enable individuals, employers and the communities it serves to be successful by equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their ambitions and aspire to new challenges'.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

### Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Science and mathematics	Good: Grade 2
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	Outstanding: Grade 1
Construction, planning and the built environment	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2
Residential accommodation	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates have steadily improved for most age groups and levels over the past three years. Improvements over time at levels 1 and 2 for 16 to 18-year-olds are significant and, in 2007/08, success rates were well above national averages. Success rates for adults, students aged 16 to 18 at level 3, work-based learning and Train to Gain are satisfactory. Overall, students make progress at or slightly above that expected from their prior attainment. Although those on General Certificate of Education (GCE) A level make good progress, students on AS-level programmes make no more than satisfactory progress.
6. Teaching and learning are good. The proportion of good or better lessons has increased since the previous inspection. Teachers build good working relationships with their students that are focused on promoting effective learning. In general, practical classes are more effective than theory lessons. Accommodation and resources are good. Assessment is generally well planned and rigorous. Feedback to students on how to improve their work is not always clear. Students' targets vary in quality and not all are sufficiently detailed or useful.
7. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students and educational and social inclusion is good. Students are consulted well and their opinions have influence on college developments. Partnership arrangements to support the local community are good, particularly for pupils aged 14 to 16. Advice, guidance and support for students are good. Students receive very good academic and personal support. Students' additional learning needs are effectively diagnosed and additional support is good. Support for vulnerable students and those with disabilities is good.
8. Leadership and management are good. Very effective management action has raised students' achievement and the quality of provision since the previous inspection. Provision in land based and animal care is judged to be outstanding. Health, public services and care, science and mathematics, business, administration and law and residential accommodation are found to be good. The provision in construction, arts, media and publishing and literacy, numeracy and ESOL are judged to be satisfactory.
9. Strategic planning is good. Strong leadership has led to improving college performance. The Farnham College merger was managed particularly well. Leadership and management are good. Quality assurance procedures are systematic, thorough and comprehensive and the college rigorously monitors many aspects of college performance. Although the tracking of quality improvement is not always clear, self-assessment is broadly accurate.

10. Equality of opportunity is good. The college has a strong sense of community and provides a safe and harmonious environment for students. Governors know the college well and monitor its work satisfactorily.

#### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

11. The college's capacity to improve is good. The college places a particularly strong emphasis on listening and responding to the views of its staff and students. Staff have confidence in the leadership of the college. Leaders and managers have a good record of setting and meeting targets. Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive and effective. Performance monitoring is systematic and used extensively to bring about improvements. Quality improvement planning at course level following self-assessment is well developed and effective. Course reviews vary too much in quality and whilst most represent an accurate view of the provision a minority are less accurate. Financial controls are strong and the college's financial position is sound. Resources are good and excellent in some curriculum areas. Governors carry out their duties appropriately and challenge senior managers well. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. However, judgements at whole college level do not always clearly identify areas for improvement.

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

12. The effectiveness of steps taken to improve the provision is good. Students' achievement has improved. Success rates are now high for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1 and 2, although for much of the provision they remain satisfactory. The rate of increase in college success rates is generally at or above the national rate. Teaching, learning, guidance and support have improved and are now good. The quality of provision has improved in science and mathematics, land based and animal care and business administration and law, although it has declined in construction. The college has made good progress in addressing key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Good progress has been made in improving the standards of welfare in residential accommodation, which are now good. The college has strengthened its links with employers and responds particularly well to changing local needs and national priorities. It has managed the merger with Farnham College well and the joint working is proving very effective. Areas for improvement around the effectiveness of the Skills for Life agenda and the consistency of tutorial provision have not been fully resolved.

## Key strengths

- high success rates for levels 1 and 2 for students aged 16 to 18
- strong focus on improving teaching and learning
- wide and inclusive range of provision
- very good academic and pastoral support
- strong leadership
- rigorous monitoring of many aspects of college performance
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- outstanding provision in land based, equine and animal care
- good provision for pupils aged 14 to 16.

## Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- low AS-level success rates
- low key skills success rates
- variable quality of group tutorials
- clearer procedures for the tracking of quality improvement.



## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Over the past three years success rates for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1 and 2 and achievement for pupils aged 14 to 16 significantly improved and were well above the national average in 2007/08. Success rates for adults on long courses and students aged 16 to 18 at level 3 have steadily improved to the national average. In 2007/08, students on level 3 and adults on long courses represented approximately 75% of long course enrolments. Students with a disclosed disability achieved higher successes than their peers.
14. Success rates for work-based learning apprentices and Train to Gain learners are satisfactory. There are, however, wide variations in Train to Gain achievement. For example, success rates for customer service programmes are outstanding but are low on Skills for Life programmes. Success rates for short courses are satisfactory. Key skills success rates are low. Retention rates have steadily improved and are now above the national average. Achievement rates are generally satisfactory.
15. In 2007/08, at Farnham, GCE A-level success rates were high against sixth form college averages. AS-level success rates declined significantly in 2007/08 and were well below the sixth form national average. At Stoke Park, GCE A-level success rates were satisfactory and AS-level success rates were low when compared to general further education (GFE) colleges. Students usually make progress at or above that expected from their prior attainment. Students at Farnham make outstanding progress at GCE A level and satisfactory progress at AS level. At Stoke Park, students' progress at GCE A level is good, although unsatisfactory at AS level.
16. The standard of students' work is good and for land based and animal care programmes it is outstanding. The development of workplace skills is satisfactory. Students enjoy attending college and show good awareness of health and safety procedures.
17. The college's self-assessment of achievement and standards was over generous with too much emphasis on improvements over time. Much of the college's provision is around the national average and this was not sufficiently recognised in the self-assessment report.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

18. The quality of provision is good and this was appropriately recognised in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good and are much improved since the previous inspection. The college has a strong focus on improving teaching and learning through a wide range of initiatives. The process of observations of teaching and learning is well established and links well to the college's performance management procedures.

19. Teachers build a good working relationship with their students which is focused on promoting effective learning. Feedback from students about the standard of the teaching is very positive. The college is very responsive to concerns raised by students and takes appropriate action to address their concerns. Teachers plan and pace lessons well. They use a range of teaching techniques to promote active participation in lessons. E-learning is highly effective in enlivening classes and stimulating learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not focus sufficiently on checking learning or responding to individual needs. In general, practical classes are more effective than theory lessons. Learning support assistants provide effective in-class support, predominantly at entry and level 1.
20. Accommodation and resources are good. Resources for land based students are excellent. The availability of information learning technology (ILT) is variable. Assessments are well planned and rigorous, although the quality of written feedback by teachers does not always clearly suggest how students can improve.
21. The extent to which the college meets the needs and interests of students is good as is the college's approach to educational and social inclusion. The college is very responsive to local needs and makes good use of links with a wide network of employers and community organisations. The college has strong and productive links with local schools, especially in working to reduce the number of young people disaffected with learning or at risk of exclusion.
22. The range of provision is broad and the variety of programmes at each level provides students with good progression to further study. In most vocational areas, employers are engaged well in developing the curriculum. Curriculum enrichment, including work experience, visits and external speakers, is strong. However, the provision of, and participation in, extra-curricular activities is limited.
23. Guidance and support are good and are well managed and promoted. Initial advice, guidance and induction effectively help students to prepare for college life and their course of study. Students receive very good academic and personal support from college staff and external agencies who work very effectively together. Careers advice is good. The revised tutorial programme is effectively linked to the Every Child Matters themes and has a strong focus on improving students' health, well-being and academic progress. One-to-one tutorials are particularly effective in reviewing students' progress. However, the quality of target setting is variable and not all targets are specific and measurable. Group tutorials are not always effective and the quality varies too much between subjects and teachers.
24. The identification of additional learning needs for young full-time students is thorough, although not sufficiently so for adults. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of students receiving additional learning support following initial screening and diagnosis. In the current year it is now high. The quality of additional learning support is good. Students receiving support

succeed slightly better than those not requiring support. However, the college does not sufficiently assess the full impact of the support provided.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

*Contributory grade:*

*Equality of opportunity*

*Good: grade 2*

25. Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership has led to improving college performance. Success rates are now high for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1 and 2. The management of residential accommodation is good. The land based and animal care provision is outstanding. Provision in health, public services and care and business, administration and law are good and provision in construction, arts, media and publishing and literacy, numeracy and ESOL are judged to be satisfactory.
26. Strategic planning is good. The college has a clear vision of its goals and objectives that are succinctly expressed through its 'aiming for excellence' three-year plan. The plan sets challenging but realistic targets and lays out an effective agenda for improving the quality of provision. Management information is accurate and appropriately used. Communications are good and ensure sharing of information. The Principal is an open and approachable leader and the college has a particularly strong culture of listening to staff and students. The college managers respond rapidly and effectively to their comments, especially when addressing any underperformance in areas of its work.
27. The merger with Farnham College was very well managed. Since the merger the vocational curriculum at the Farnham campus has been expanded, teaching and learning improved and the college has invested in new teaching resources. Enrolments on long courses at Farnham have increased by 26% and retention has improved.
28. Quality assurance procedures are systematic and comprehensive. Rigorous performance monitoring ensures close scrutiny of all aspects of the college's work. Self-assessment is broadly accurate. However, course reviews vary too much in their quality. Most represent an accurate view of the provision but a minority fail to identify areas for improvement, give too much weighting to strengths and do not make the best use of data. The self-assessment at whole college level is insufficiently realistic and fails to identify areas for improvement clearly enough. Quality improvement planning at course level following self-assessment is well developed and effective. Managers recognise that although some AS and A-level courses perform well, actions to improve others have not yet led to sufficient improvements.
29. The standard of teaching and learning is now good and has improved since the previous inspection. Strong links exist between lesson observation, appraisal and the planning of staff development. However, college managers recognise that more progress is needed to ensure that observations accurately

identify all of the areas for improvement. The management of resources is good.

30. The college works very effectively with a wide range of partners. Excellent links exist with a number of schools and links with employers are developing well. The management of work-based learning and the Train to Gain provision is good.
31. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a suitable range of skills although six are new and not all are fully experienced in their role. Governors know the college well and monitor its work appropriately. They contribute well to strategic planning, take their responsibilities seriously and sufficiently challenge leaders and managers. Financial management is strong. The college is in a sound financial position. With satisfactory and improving success rates, the college offers satisfactory value for money.
32. Equality of opportunity is good. The college has appropriate policies and action plans in place to meet its statutory responsibilities and has made very good progress in implementing them. The college has developed good links with community groups and widened participation successfully through provision in the community. All staff and governors have received appropriate training and have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. The college is accessible for those with restricted mobility.
33. The performance of different groups of students is monitored closely. Managers take prompt and effective action to address any issues identified. Overall achievement and retention rates for students with a minority ethnic heritage are generally at or above college averages. Students receiving support for literacy, numeracy and language make good progress. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good.
34. Promotion of equality of opportunity through the curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in some areas where teachers are broadening students' understanding of the barriers faced by minority groups. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good in work-based learning and Train to Gain. Arrangements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are sound. Staff have completed appropriate training and criminal record checks are well maintained. The self-assessment report appropriately graded leadership and management and equality of opportunity.

## Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

### Context

35. The college offers full- and part-time courses from levels 1 to 4 in health and social care, childcare, public services, counselling and access to nursing. Currently 177 students aged 16 to 18 are following full-time courses in health and social care and childcare. There are 84 students on public services programmes, including 18 aged 14 to 16. There are 17 students aged 14 to 16 following courses in childcare. On counselling courses, 112 adults are studying part-time. Currently 491 are following work-related programmes and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in health-related areas and childcare and 44 adults are following the access to nursing programme.

### Strengths

- high success rates on many courses
- good teaching linking theory to professional practice
- highly effective and responsive employer engagement
- good individual support for students
- good leadership and management.

### Areas for improvement

- low retention rates on most Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses
- insufficient challenge in lessons for students aged 16 to 18
- insufficient quality assurance monitoring.

### Achievement and standards

36. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on many courses, although retention is low on most BTEC courses. Achievement in key skills is satisfactory. Students aged 14 to 16 make good progress and achieve well. Attendance is good, as is progression to employment and further study. The standard of students' vocational skills is high. They have good understanding of relevant theory and current legislation. Adults generally achieve their NVQ and work-related goals.

### Quality of provision

37. The quality of provision is good. Teachers have wide professional experience which they use to make lessons interesting and vocationally relevant. In most lessons, teachers help students develop skills of independent study and research. For example, in a public services lesson, students made high quality presentations based on their research into human rights issues in politically volatile countries. Health and social care and childcare students apply theory

to professional practice well. Work placements are of high quality and contribute well to the development of practical skills. The less effective lessons lack pace and challenge, particularly for students aged 16 to 18.

38. Initial assessment is thorough and ensures that students are on the right course. Assessment and tracking of progress are rigorous. Students receive detailed feedback and know what they have to do to improve. Assessment in the workplace is highly effective. The needs of students with specific difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and support is effective.
39. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of students well through a broad range of courses and levels. Employer engagement is highly effective. Provision is responsive and flexible and meets the needs of employers and the community. Enrichment is good and enables students to engage in a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities.
40. Support and guidance are good. Students receive good individual academic support. Targets are monitored rigorously. Additional learning support is good. Students gain good economic awareness.

#### Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are good. Strategies to improve success rates have been successful on most courses. Self-assessment is broadly accurate. However, quality assurance is not sufficiently robust on some full-time courses. Key areas for improvement are not clearly identified and tracked towards successful completion. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Resources are good. Teachers maintain high standards of subject expertise through regular professional development. Collaboration between staff at the Guildford and Farnham sites is at an early stage of development but benefits have already been identified through the sharing of good practice.

## Science and mathematics

Good: Grade 2

## Context

42. The college offers courses at Stoke Park and Farnham in GCE AS and A level in biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, mathematics and further mathematics. There are around 400 student enrolments on GCE AS courses and 180 on GCE A-level courses. GCSE courses are also offered in biology, science, psychology and mathematics with 180 enrolments. The majority of the students are full-time and aged 16 to 18. Numeracy at levels 1 and 2 is also offered.

## Strengths

- high success rates at GCE A level
- much good teaching
- rigorous assessment of students' work and monitoring of progress
- good individual support for students
- good accommodation.

## Areas for improvement

- low success rates in AS physics and mathematics and GCSE sciences
- no access to vocational provision.

## Achievement and standards

43. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on GCE A-level chemistry, physics and psychology are high. A-level mathematics success rates have improved over the last three years to 100%. Success rates in AS physics and mathematics are low. Students on AS and A-level science courses at Farnham make excellent progress. At Stoke Park progress is excellent in AS and A-level psychology but poor in sciences. The achievement of A and B grades is high for most A-level subjects but low for AS subjects. Success rates in 2007/08 for GCSE mathematics were high, although low in GCSE sciences. Students' work in lessons is of a good standard. In a mathematics lesson students showed good skill in algebraic manipulation. Student retention across the curriculum has improved over the last three years and is now high at 92%.

## Quality of provision

44. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are well qualified and have good up-to-date subject knowledge. Most are well planned with a variety of teaching and learning styles which provide challenge for the more able and appropriate support for others. Links between theory and practical work are clearly developed. There is often effective interactive use of ILT. Academic support for students is good. Effective workshop support is provided for examination revision and where students request individual help. The college intranet is used effectively by students and staff. Accommodation is good.

Base rooms and laboratories are well resourced. Information technology (IT) facilities are good at both sites. Technical support for practical classes is good. Assessment of students' work is rigorous. Written work is regularly set and marked with appropriate comments for improvement. Teachers and personal tutors keep exemplary records of student progress.

45. The range of courses offered, although satisfactory, is narrow and there is no vocational provision. A wide range of enrichment activities takes place, such as field trips, mathematics challenge events, visits and talks.
46. Support and guidance are good. Additional learning support is provided both in the classroom and through one-to-one help in the learning centre. Individual support for students is good. Personal tutors work well with students on their individual learning plans setting realistic targets for improvement.

### Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication with staff is good. Views of students are regularly gathered and acted upon. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Subject self-assessment reports are comprehensive but are not always sufficiently critical in setting action points when comparing student success with national averages. Lesson observations are robust and accurate and lead to appropriate action planning. Subject learning coaches support staff well in the development of teaching and learning strategies and sharing of resources between sites.
48. Heads of learning and standards for science and mathematics have recently been appointed at Farnham and at Stoke Park. The monitoring of courses and the progress of students in the current year has improved. However, staff shortages in physics have continued to have a negative effect on students' attainment.



## Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Outstanding: Grade 1

## Context

49. At the Merrist Wood campus over 1,000 students undertake land based qualifications from level 1 through to level 3 and higher education in animal management, equine, horticulture and landscape, arboriculture, floristry, countryside management and sports turf. Eighty percent of the 638 full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Half of these are enrolled on animal management and equine programmes. There are 40 equine and amenity horticulture apprentices. Eighty pupils aged 14 to 16 attend college each week.

## Strengths

- high success rates on the majority of courses
- outstanding teaching and learning
- good range of provision across all levels
- outstanding responsiveness to employers and lead organisations
- highly effective pastoral and academic support
- outstanding curriculum management.

## Areas for improvement

- success rates on a minority of courses.

## Achievement and standards

50. Achievement and standards are outstanding on the majority of courses with many well above national averages for GFE colleges. Success rates on a minority of courses are below average. However, these courses are placed in 'special measures' and are rigorously monitored for improvement. Success rates of apprentices are satisfactory. Students are highly motivated. They enjoy their work, make very good progress and develop highly effective industry-related skills.

## Quality of provision

51. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teaching is lively and imaginative. Lessons are well planned and successfully incorporate a variety of activities whilst meeting individual needs. ILT is employed effectively to enhance learning. Good use is made of students as 'supervisors' and 'teachers' to develop learning in floristry, animal and equine units, and in organising countryside and landscaping events. Teachers have very good technical knowledge and link teaching skilfully to occupational practice. Practical assessment is thorough. Teachers provide constructive feedback on assignment work which tells students exactly what they have to do to progress.
52. Links with employers and land based sector organisations are outstanding. Employers are directly involved in the design of qualifications. Employers

express high levels of satisfaction with the college's responsiveness to their needs.

53. The extent to which programmes meet the needs and interests of students is outstanding. There is a good range of provision across all levels. Most courses offer a range of optional units to allow students to follow their particular career aspirations. Progression rates between levels and into employment are good. For example, in 2007/08, nearly all animal care students aged 14 to 16 progress onto full-time programmes and 83% of countryside management and 63% of arboriculture students moved on to further training. All level 3 students move to higher education or employment.
54. Support and guidance are outstanding. There is a high level of effective pastoral and academic support. Students value both formal and informal support highly. Communication between teachers and support services is good. Individual learning needs are accurately diagnosed and support quickly put in place. Support for students is very effective in improving achievements. Academic progress is carefully monitored. Tutorials and specialist support arrangements are effective.

### Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are outstanding. Subject teams have a strong sense of purpose and ownership of raising standards. Equality of opportunity is outstanding. The programmes are inclusive and teachers pay close attention to the performance of different groups of students.
56. Teaching and learning are evaluated accurately and effective steps are taken to secure further improvement. Much emphasis is given to feedback from students to support judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. Self-assessment is accurate and appropriate action planning is in place to address any underperformance. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed. Expectations of, and support for, staff are high. Continuing professional development is good.
57. The estate provides a high quality natural resource which is effectively used along with specialist resources to support learning.

## Construction, planning and the built environment      Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

58. The college offers a range of programmes from level 1 to degree level. These include electrical installation, plumbing and craft courses in wood and decorative occupations up to level 3 and trowel occupations to level 2. Technician and professional studies are offered at level 3 and above. There are 1,105 construction students, of whom 958 are part time. Approximately 36% of students are aged 16 to 18, 10% are from minority ethnic groups and 10% have a declared learning difficulty or disability. There are 133 apprentices, 74 advanced apprentices and 22 Train to Gain students. Approximately 100 pupils from 18 local schools attend construction programmes.

### Strengths

- high success rates in 2007/08 on level 2 courses in NVQ wood occupations and the first diploma in construction
- good development of students' practical skills
- particularly good facilities for electrical installation assessments.

### Areas for improvement

- low overall success rates on advanced apprenticeships in 2007/08
- poor attendance in many lessons
- insufficient checking of learning and understanding in theory lessons
- weak target setting in tutorials.

### Achievement and standards

59. Achievement is satisfactory and students' practical skills are well developed. Long course success rates show a three-year improvement, slightly exceeding the national average in 2007/08. Success rates in 2007/08 for level 2 NVQ wood occupations and the first diploma in construction were high. Key skills success rates are satisfactory and improved significantly in 2007/08 to exceed college targets. Success rates for apprentices are satisfactory, although overall success rates for advanced apprentices remain low. Attendance during inspection was poor in many lessons.
60. Practical skills development is good. Pupils on the new 14-19 diploma independently and expertly conducted site meetings for construction of a courtyard. Students in construction crafts demonstrate high levels of practical skills in complex brickwork, site carpentry and decorative techniques. Plumbing and electrical students demonstrate highly proficient workplace practice.

## Quality of provision

61. The quality of provision is satisfactory. In most lessons, the learning objectives are clearly stated and good use is made of activities and technology to involve students. The virtual learning environment offers good resources for some students. Well-managed practical sessions include good attention to safe working. In theory sessions, knowledgeable teachers assist students well but sometimes fail to check their understanding. Too little use is made of well-directed questioning to challenge individual students. Learning objectives are not always clear. Some sessions have a slow pace whilst others fail to effectively recap learning.
62. Assessment of students' work is accurate but constructive written feedback is sometimes missing. Too little use is made of self and peer assessment, particularly in workshops. Progress monitoring is good. Students benefit from the particularly well-planned and resourced area for electrical assessment.
63. The broad construction provision offers good progression opportunities to advanced and professional levels. Employers' opinions are effectively sought and responsiveness to their needs is good. Full-time students lack planned work-experience opportunities.
64. The identification of additional learning support needs is satisfactory, although the planning of some lessons does not sufficiently recognise or include support needs. Tutorials are supportive but not always well planned. Poorly framed targets, not well focused on student progression, often result from individual tutorials.

## Leadership and management

65. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Communications are good and meetings offer opportunities to share good practice. Staff performance management is satisfactory, with good encouragement for professional development. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Aspects of the self-assessment report are over optimistic and improvement targets are insufficiently well defined.
66. Quality improvement measures at course level are good. Target setting and performance monitoring are well established. Access to data is good but too little emphasis placed on the analysis of some aspects of construction performance. Internal verification is robust. Resources are satisfactory but some accommodation is poor and awaiting replacement. Some accommodation is not accessible to those with restricted mobility. Promotion of equality and diversity is good.

## Arts, media and publishing

Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Context

67. The college offers a broad range of subjects. At the time of the inspection, 713 students attend vocational courses at levels 1 to 3 and AS and GCE A levels at three sites in Farnham or Guildford. Almost all students are aged 16 to 18. There are 23 pupils aged 14 to 16 enrolled on a creative and media diploma programme.

## Strengths

- high success rates on many vocational programmes
- good personal and technical skills development
- good practical teaching
- strong partnership links in music to meet students' needs.

## Areas for improvement

- low success rates on many A and AS-level courses
- low key skills success rates
- insufficient sharing of best practice and resources to improve provision.

## Achievement and standards

68. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are high on many vocational courses. For example, success rates in 2007/08 are 85% on the BTEC first diploma in art and design and 85% on the diploma in art and design.
69. Long course success rates in 2007/08 for performing arts, creative arts and media have improved but were below national averages. Retention in the current year has significantly improved and is good. Attendance is good.
70. Success rates in 2007/08 were low on many AS and A-level courses. For example, the success rate for AS-level art and design was 53%. Key skills success rates are also low. At levels 1 and 2, success rates in 2007/08 were 44% and 23% respectively.
71. Personal and technical skills development is good; for example, in research and creative thinking. Students effectively demonstrate the ability to work well independently or in teams. Their confidence improves and they show good presentation skills and enjoy learning at the college. Visual products are supported by good background research and written evaluation. The standard of work is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

72. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good, particularly practical teaching. In most lessons teachers skilfully plan and provide students with an effective learning experience. Teachers have good vocational experience and knowledge which they use well. They generally use technology astutely to add value to the learning. The reinforcement of learning is effective and students demonstrate good contextual and technical understanding of the arts. Learning materials on music courses are good. In some lessons, good ideas are not always successfully implemented and not all students are sufficiently challenged. Assessment and feedback of students' work are good. Initial assessment and additional support are satisfactory.
73. The range of programmes meets the needs of students particularly well. Opportunities to progress are good. The college partnership with a local music academy is strong. Curriculum enrichment is good on most courses.
74. Advice, guidance and support are satisfactory. Students receive sufficient information before enrolment and at induction to ensure they are on the most appropriate course. Pastoral support is effective. Teachers are good at preparing students for interviews and auditions for higher education. Students are clear about the progress they are making. Group tutorials are not always appropriately planned and can be uninspiring and lack purpose.

## Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the college has resolved two of the three areas for improvement and maintained many of the key strengths. The self-assessment is broadly accurate. Equality of opportunity is good.
76. The strategy to co-ordinate the three sites effectively is insufficiently developed. Best practice is not shared effectively and collaboration to evaluate the quality of the provision is not sufficiently co-ordinated. The same situation was reported at the previous inspection and the same grade awarded.

## Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Context

77. Courses from entry level to level 2 in ESOL, literacy and numeracy are provided at the college main sites and in three community venues. There are currently 124 ESOL courses and 76 literacy and numeracy programmes. In 2008/09 this has attracted 2,130 enrolments, of which 1,308 are ESOL students, 722 are literacy and numeracy students and 100 are Train to Gain learners. There are 2,925 enrolments on key skills. Most students take externally accredited qualifications.

## Strengths

- high success rates on most long ESOL and adult numeracy programmes in 2007/08
- good teaching and learning on ESOL programmes
- strong focus on social and educational inclusion.

## Areas for improvement

- low success rates on key skills at level 2
- insufficient attention to students' individual needs in literacy and numeracy lessons
- insufficient sharing of best practice and resources to improve Skills for Life provision.

## Achievement and standards

78. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on most long ESOL and adult numeracy programmes were high in 2007/08, at 77% and 90% respectively. Key skills success rates increased significantly between 2006/07 and 2007/08 and are around the national average. However, in 2007/08, success rates on key skills level 2 programmes were low at 47%. Skills for Life and Train to Gain success rates were low at 49%.
79. ESOL students' language skills are successfully developed and raise students' self-confidence and ability to communicate effectively. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality rates on ESOL programmes are satisfactory, although on literacy and numeracy programmes they are low and not effectively monitored.

## Quality of provision

80. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning on ESOL programmes are good. Students participate and help each other well through a good range of interactive and well-managed learning activities. Students receive very effective feedback, enjoy their lessons and work productively. The quality of teaching and learning on literacy, numeracy and key skills courses is satisfactory.

81. The results of initial assessments for literacy and numeracy students are not always used effectively to place students on the most appropriate level of study. Learning activities are not always differentiated and there is some over-reliance on paper-based materials. Literacy and numeracy students do not receive sufficient constructive feedback on how to improve. Key skills are not sufficiently contextualized to the vocational area of study. Insufficient use is made of ILT to enhance learning. Target setting is insufficiently developed to meet individual student needs, especially in classes with a wide range of abilities.
82. The range of courses satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of students. However, there is insufficient teaching of employability skills across all programmes. Citizenship is not sufficiently embedded on all ESOL programmes.
83. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Social and educational inclusion are good on all programmes. Students are encouraged to work effectively together across a wide range of needs, abilities, cultures, age and gender. Students feel safe and welcome.

#### Leadership and management

84. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvements have been made to the quality of Skills for Life provision since the previous inspection. Staff development is good. However, there is insufficient sharing of best practice and resources between the three departments delivering these programmes. For example, problems with staffing in one department are not appropriately shared. The self-assessment is broadly accurate, although quality improvement measures are not always fully applied.
85. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, although there is a strong ethos of mutual respect and an excellent rapport between students and staff.



## Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

## Context

86. The college offers full- and part-time courses from level 1 to level 4. Full-time courses include GCE A level and AS level in business studies, law and accounting at Guildford College and Farnham College. Full-time vocational provision includes introductory, first and national diplomas in business and courses in administration. At the time of the inspection, there were 393 full-time students and 88% of these were aged 16 to 18. There are 492 students, mainly adults, on part-time courses and 168 on Train to Gain programmes.

## Strengths

- high success rates on A2 business and accounting, national certificates, awards in business and the professional diploma in law and Train to Gain customer service.
- highly motivating teaching and learning on full-time courses
- broad range of courses with good progression to further study.

## Areas for improvement

- low success rates on part-time advanced courses.

## Achievement and standards

87. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on A-level business and accounting, national certificates, awards in business and the professional diploma in law have consistently been above national averages. Many students achieve high grades. Students generally make better progress when compared to their prior attainment. Train to Gain success rates are high, particularly in customer service where the success rate is 99%. Retention rates in 2008/09 are high. However, success rates on many part-time courses at A-level have been low, particularly in accounting. Although rates have made steady improvement they still remain well below national averages. Full-time students enjoy their studies and their behaviour is excellent.

## Quality of provision

88. Teaching and learning are good. Full-time students benefit from well-organised, enthusiastic teachers who work hard to make learning interesting. Learning is enhanced by well-equipped accommodation with good ILT facilities. E-learning is used well to motivate and engage students. Students' individual needs are met well through careful planning and the use of a good range of learning activities. Learning resources are good. Revision activities are particularly well planned to build students' confidence and understanding before taking examinations. Praise, constructive criticism and questioning are used well. Students on vocational business and administration courses develop confidence in their IT skills and they are encouraged to present their

assignment work effectively. However, GCE A and AS-level students have not developed their note-taking skills sufficiently and teachers do not always check their work appropriately. Assessment is thorough and accurate. Good verbal and written feedback enables students to make improvements.

89. The extent to which courses meet the needs and interests of students is good. The curriculum is broad. The college is very responsive to the needs of employers through Train to Gain and the many part-time courses on offer. Full-time students have clear progression routes and progression to other courses and higher education is good. Course teachers are highly effective in supporting students in progression to employment or further study. Strong links with financial organisations through the college's 'Academy for Finance' enhance the career opportunities for national diploma students.
90. Support and guidance for students are good. Full-time students value regular and effective tutorials to discuss progress. They understand why and how target grades are set on their individual learning plans. However, the quality of individual tutorial arrangements for part-time students is variable. Initial advice and guidance are effective and students feel well informed. In a few instances, notably on AS programmes, students are not sufficiently well prepared about the demands of their studies and initially they make slow progress.

#### Leadership and management

91. Leadership and management are good. Management action to improve poorly performing provision is impacting well on full-time courses. Management accountability is strong and staff appraisal is thorough. The standard of teaching has improved. However, ambitious targets on course attendance, retention and pass rates are not always achieved. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The quality assurance system is robust for full-time provision, though initiatives to improve the performance of several part-time courses have been slow to take effect. Self-assessment is broadly accurate.

## Children's Services

Residential accommodation

Good: Grade 2

### Context

92. Guildford College offers residential accommodation at its Merrist Wood campus. Residential accommodation is available for up to approximately 80 students and local host families offer further accommodation to home and international students. At the time of the inspection, of the resident students, 17 were aged 16 to 18.

### Strengths

- students' health needs are met well
- child protection arrangements are very good
- students receive very good individual support from staff
- the promotion of equality and diversity is good
- good systems for risk management which promote the well-being of students.

### Areas for improvement/recommendations

- complete catering franchise employees' recruitment checks prior to starting work at the college.

### Quality of residential accommodation

93. The quality of boarding at Guildford College is good. The college meets all but one of the key National Minimum Standards. Managers successfully promote students' protection and welfare. Clear written policies and procedures underpin practices. The range of evening activities for students has been extended and there is now more car parking space. Facilities in the residential accommodation have been improved. Clear crisis management plans are now in place and there have been improvements to the system for supervising students. Provision for international students has been improved.
94. Students have their health needs met well and the college promotes good health and well-being. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place for students who become ill, or require medication or first aid. In addition, students have good access to personal support. The quality of food in the refectory is good and there is a varied and balanced menu where special dietary needs are met. Students generally enjoy the food but think there is room for improvement regarding evening meals.
95. Students' safety is promoted and protected. The college takes bullying seriously. Students feel safe. There are very good arrangements for child protection. Staff fully understand the child protection policies and procedures. The college has a positive approach to discipline and students think that the rules are fair. Both students and staff members are provided with clear

guidelines about discipline procedures. Policies and procedures for dealing with complaints fairly are appropriate.

96. Students are well protected from the risk of fire. There are regular checks of fire safety systems and a thorough fire risk assessment has recently been undertaken. Students' personal privacy is respected and the college has a philosophy of being supportive but not intrusive. The college has robust policies and procedures for staff vetting. However, the college uses a contract catering company that does not check staff members in line with National Minimum Standards. As catering staff members do not work within the halls of residence, the impact of this shortfall is limited. Students are effectively protected from public intrusion of the residential halls and grounds.
97. The college helps students to enjoy college life and to achieve. Students receive very good individualised support from staff. Students and staff enjoy mutually respectful relationships.
98. Students are consulted both formally and informally and feel listened to. There are regular students' meetings and a recent survey has been carried out to ascertain students' views on all aspects of college life. Positive steps have been taken by the college to promote students' contact with their families, including the provision of laptop computers and Wi-Fi. There are good arrangements for induction that help students settle in quickly.
99. Residential accommodation is well organised. Washing and toilet facilities are good and action has been taken to ensure that students enjoy privacy when using these facilities. There are good arrangements for ensuring that the welfare of international students placed with host families is safeguarded and promoted. International students say that they are very well cared for, feel safe and have all the information they need. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to protect the welfare of students when they stay in accommodation away from the college.
100. The college has a clear statement of principles in relation to student support and the provision of residential accommodation. This ensures the students, parents and staff have the information they need. There are very good systems for risk management and quality monitoring which promote the well-being of students. The college has a very positive approach to self-improvement.
101. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Students are well supervised and speak highly of the staff. Students are confident about how to contact staff members at all times. Staff are well trained, competent and have clear job descriptions. Staff receive good support from management and have the information they need to promote the welfare of students.

## Students' achievement

Guildford College (Stoke Park and Merrist Wood campuses) compared to General Further Education (GFE) national rates

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	488	65	69	-4	1749	61	65	-4
	06/07	850	73	74	-1	2116	72	70	2
	07/08*	754	82	N/A		1675	73	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	0				0			
	06/07	0				0			
	07/08*	0				0			
NVQs	05/06	35	6	72	-66	38	55	74	-19
	06/07	43	91	75	16	12	92	75	17
	07/08*	48	88	N/A		9	100	N/A	
Other	05/06	453	70	69	1	1711	61	65	-4
	06/07	807	72	74	-2	2104	72	70	2
	07/08*	706	82	N/A		1666	73	N/A	

\* college data

Guildford College (Stoke Park and Merrist Wood campuses) compared to General Further Education (GFE) national rates

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	1400	64	66	-2	1453	66	66	0
	06/07	1374	72	70	2	1706	68	69	-1
	07/08*	924	79	N/A		1068	72	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	223	63	68	-5	79	68	67	1
	06/07	202	63	71	-8	100	74	70	4
	07/08*	99	85	N/A		75	71	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	44	66	69	-3	40	83	68	15
	06/07	54	70	73	-3	45	73	71	2
	07/08*	41	95	N/A		34	88	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	180	50	65	-15	294	47	68	-21
	06/07	175	63	68	-5	296	68	69	-1
	07/08*	96	80	N/A		172	74	NA	
Other	05/06	953	67	66	1	1040	71	65	6
	06/07	943	76	70	6	1265	68	69	-1
	07/08*	703	77	N/A		788	71	N/A	

\* college data

## Guildford College (Stoke Park and Merrist Wood campuses) compared to General Further Education (GFE) national rates

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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	05/06	1875	66	71	-5	1430	62	64	-2
	06/07	2083	66	73	-7	1319	65	68	-3
	07/08*	1995	71	N/A		1174	71	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	381	82	87	-5	132	60	72	-12
	06/07	361	78	87	-9	142	60	76	-16
	07/08*	294	84	N/A		109	83	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	651	57	67	-10	109	58	55	3
	06/07	770	54	69	-15	113	59	59	0
	07/08*	710	65	N/A		130	72	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	73	38	66	-28	5	60	57	3
	06/07	4	100	59	41	0			
	07/08*	0				0			
NVQs	05/06	10	60	71	-11	155	62	63	-1
	06/07	34	59	74	-15	186	61	69	-8
	07/08*	34	91	N/A		173	80	N/A	
Other	05/06	760	69	65	4	1029	63	64	-1
	06/07	914	71	70	1	878	68	69	-1
	07/08*	957	70	N/A		762	67	N/A	

\* college data

## Guildford College (Farnham College) compared to Sixth Form national rates

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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	05/06	84	62	71	-9	30	87	57	30
	06/07	36	72	73	-1	18	89	64	25
	07/08*	33	79	N/A		70	70	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	0				0			
	06/07	0				0			
	07/08*	0				0			
NVQs	05/06	0				0			
	06/07	0				0			
	07/08*	0				0			
Other	05/06	84	62	71	-9	30	87	57	30
	06/07	36	72	73	-1	18	89	64	25
	07/08*	33	79	N/A		70	70	N/A	

\* college data

## Guildford College (Farnham College) compared to Sixth Form national rates

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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	05/06	425	74	78	-4	12	33	65	-32
	06/07	399	86	82	4	7	43	65	-22
	07/08*	282	87	N/A		29	55	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	318	75	82	-7	6	17	67	-50
	06/07	269	91	83	8	4	75	68	7
	07/08*	99	94	N/A		3	67	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	50	80	77	3	0			
	06/07	73	79	78	1	2	0		
	07/08*	116	84	N/A		0			
NVQs	05/06	0				0			
	06/07	0				0			
	07/08*	15	93	N/A		0			
Other	05/06	57	65	70	-5	6	50	62	-12
	06/07	57	68	79	-11	1	0	63	-63
	07/08*	52	77	N/A		26	54	N/A	

\* college data

## Guildford College (Farnham College) compared to Sixth Form national rates

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	1256	78	84	-6	32	50	65	-15
	06/07	1033	81	85	-4	23	70	69	1
	07/08*	1060	79	N/A		32	72	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	431	94	93	1	9	56	78	-22
	06/07	317	91	93	-2	7	100	80	20
	07/08*	307	97	N/A		10	80	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	740	69	79	-10	21	43	58	-15
	06/07	645	77	81	-4	13	54	61	-7
	07/08*	694	71	N/A		13	85	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	34	82	77	5	0			
	06/07	4	100			0			
	07/08*	0		N/A		0			
NVQs	05/06	0				0			
	06/07	0				0			
	07/08*	0				0			
Other	05/06	51	63	79	-16	2	100	62	38
	06/07	71	73	79	-6	3	67	67	0
	07/08*	59	88	N/A		9	44	N/A	

\* college data



Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of students*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	31	77		65	43
		timely	27	70		63	27
	06/07	overall	32	53		44	56
		timely	35	43		34	38
	07/08	overall	64	70		60	63
		timely	72	58		48	44
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	319	52		49	51
		timely	344	41		39	33
	06/07	overall	196	68		60	60
		timely	201	46		41	45
	07/08	Overall	155	72		65	64
		timely	153	58		47	50

\* Students who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of students are then added to the students 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)