South Staffordshire College

Inspection report

Provider reference	135658
Published date	July 2009

Contents

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 mini self-assessment reports and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, social care and childcare; engineering; information and communication technology (ICT); hairdressing and beauty therapy; visual arts and media; and foundation programmes.

Description of the provider

1.   South Staffordshire College was established in January 2009, through the merger of the Tamworth and Lichfield, Cannock Chase Technical and Rodbaston Colleges. It is a large general further education college with four main campuses located in the south of Staffordshire. In this area, there is one other general further education college and 31 schools for learners aged 11 to 18.

2.   The college offers courses in 14 sector subject areas. About one third of its learners studies on level 1 courses and about one fifth on level 3 courses. Most learners are from south Staffordshire districts. The college recruits about one eighth of its learners from areas of deprivation.

3.   Many learners aged 16 to 18 come from schools with relatively low GCSE pass rates. The proportion of learners achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades in the area is at the national average and the proportion gaining five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is just above the national average.

4.   According to college data for 2008/09, there are approximately 20,860 enrolments of which just over half are by learners aged 16 to 18. Approximately 40% study on a part-time basis. Nearly 54% are female and over 6% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Within the districts served by the college, fewer than 2% of people are from ethnic minority groups. There are approximately 1,100 enrolments by learners aged 14 to 16 who follow courses on a part-time basis. The number of learners on work-based learning programmes is about 900. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in business. The college's mission is: 'To work together to raise aspirations and success through excellence in all that we do, whilst striving to achieve the best sustainable practices'.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2

Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity	*Satisfactory: contributory grade 3*

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and childcare	Good: Grade 2

Engineering	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Visual arts and media	Good: Grade 2

Foundation programmes	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision   Satisfactory: Grade 3

5.   The effectiveness of provision is satisfactory, which disagrees with the college's self assessment of good. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Most success rates are satisfactory; many pass rates are high and many retention rates are low. Most learners make satisfactory progress. Apprenticeship success rates are satisfactory but advanced apprentices are slow to complete their programme. The standard of most learners' work and their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Key skills success rates are low.

6.   Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is assessment. The new lesson observation system is accurate but many teachers have not been observed. Very effective mentoring helps teachers to improve the quality of their lessons. Many teachers give high levels of support to learners but they do not challenge their learners sufficiently. The use of information learning technology (ILT) to aid learning is underdeveloped.

7.   The approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The wide range of provision in college, the community and in the workplace enables the widening of participation to under-represented groups, including disadvantaged individuals. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. Progression rates within the college are high. Many learners do not benefit from the enrichment opportunities available.

8.   Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Specialist and pastoral support and support for apprentices are good. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Tutorials and target setting are good in parts of the college but are underdeveloped in other areas.

9.   Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and managers organised the complex merger very well. Senior managers set a clear strategic direction, reinforced by strong leadership. The rigour of curriculum management and the effectiveness of the implementation of quality assurance procedures are inconsistent. At some sites the accommodation is poor. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, as are value for money and governance.

Capacity to improve   Good: Grade 2

10.   The college has good capacity to improve. The principal and his executive leadership team provide very good leadership. The college has a clear strategic direction. Financial management is good. Senior leaders have identified areas for improvement rigorously. The quality of curriculum management is variable but generally satisfactory. Staff have yet to complete the first self-assessment cycle but procedures are inclusive and interim documents are largely accurate.

11.   Managers have revised quality assurance procedures radically since the merger and they provide a robust framework for driving improvements. Target setting

in curriculum areas is underdeveloped but improvements to the accessibility and use of data are evident. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Learning resources are satisfactory but some accommodation is poor.

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

12.   The college has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The rate of progress has varied between sites. Success rates have improved significantly at Cannock and overall in-year retention rates have increased. Although some aspects of teaching and learning have improved, previous areas for improvement, including the degree of challenge in lessons and the use of ILT remain. The quality of group tutorials has not improved and although the breadth of the enrichment programme has increased, the take-up of these activities remains low. Since the merger, the college has put in place a range of well-considered initiatives to address these continuing areas of concern.

Key strengths

- high success rates by adult learners at Cannock
- very high success rates by learners aged 16 to 18 on short courses at Tamworth, Lichfield and Cannock
- good mentoring arrangements to support improvements in teaching and learning
- wide range of provision in the college, the community and the workplace
- good engagement with employers
- highly effective management of the merger
- clear strategic direction
- strong leadership.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates at the Rodbaston campus
- the low proportion of high grade achievements
- low key skills success rates
- the slow completion of advanced apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficient good or outstanding teaching and learning
- insufficient challenge for more able learners
- underdeveloped use of ILT to aid learning
- underdeveloped target setting
- variable quality of curriculum management
- inconsistent implementation of quality assurance procedures
- poor accommodation at some sites.

Main findings

Achievement and standards   Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, which disagrees with the college's self assessment. Most success rates are satisfactory. According to college data, they improved significantly in 2007/08 at the Cannock campus, where the success rates of adult learners are high. Success rates declined to about national averages at the Tamworth and Lichfield sites. Success rates at the Rodbaston campus increased but most are below the national average. Success rates on short (5-24 weeks) courses by learners aged 16 to 18 are very high at Tamworth, Lichfield and Cannock but very low at Rodbaston. Success rates in most sector subject areas are satisfactory but in visual and performing arts are mainly above national averages.

14. College data for 2007/08 show that pass rates are high on many courses but retention rates are low. Retention rates, however, are higher at the time of inspection than at the same time in 2007/08. The progress made by most learners at levels 1 and 2 compared with their prior attainment is satisfactory, whereas level 3 learners progress better than expected. The proportion of high grades achieved by learners is low. Key skills success rates declined in 2007/08 and are low.

15. Most learners from minority ethnic communities succeed well, except those from a White Irish background. Male learners aged 16 to 18 succeed less well than females, whereas adult male learners succeed better than adult females. The success rates of learners aged 14 to 16 are satisfactory but many do not progress into further education, employment or training. Most learners receiving additional learning support succeed better than those not receiving support. The success rates of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are satisfactory.

16. Success rates on apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) success rates are broadly satisfactory and improving. Apprentices complete their programmes on time but advanced apprentices are slow to complete.

17. The standard of most learners' work is satisfactory but it is high in visual and performing arts and in health, social care and childcare. The degree to which learners acquire workplace skills is satisfactory, as is the development of skills which contribute to their social and economic well-being. The extent to which learners adopt safe practices and a healthy lifestyle is good. Learners make a satisfactory contribution to their communities. They enjoy their courses and feel safe in college. Their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Quality of provision   Satisfactory: Grade 3

18. The quality of provision is satisfactory, as was judged by the college. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and this also agrees with the self assessment. Managers have introduced a more rigorous lesson observation system. A new

cross-college observation team encourages consistency across campuses. The previous lesson observation system did not identify all staff who needed support and a minority of inadequate teaching persists. Strategies are in place, including good support from mentors, to help teachers whose lessons are inadequate or satisfactory to improve. Training to bring about improvement, however, is insufficiently targeted. The new lesson observation outcomes are accurate but many staff are yet to be observed. Managers have revised a continuous professional development strategy, which aims to strengthen the links between observation, performance management and training.

19.   Most learners enjoy their lessons. Teachers provide high levels of support. The best lessons are well planned, delivered at a brisk pace and incorporate high quality learning materials. These lessons are characterised by good teacher-learner relations. The proportion of good or better teaching, however, is low. Although teachers have good information about learners' prior attainment and skills, many do not use this effectively to plan for individual needs. The use of questioning techniques to stretch and check learning varies. More able learners receive insufficient challenge. The application of ILT to aid learning is underdeveloped. Learners value the opportunity to use the virtual learning environment in areas which have developed materials but this development is not widespread. The delivery of key skills is too variable; in some curriculum areas key skills are contextualised and relevant, and teachers develop learners' skills in a planned and motivating way. In others, teachers fail to engage learners' interest. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory but the variation in quality between campuses is significant.

20.   Assessment is satisfactory. Very good assessment practice and thorough internal verification processes exist in parts of the college but not in others. Marking is accurate but the quality of feedback is too variable and not all learners understand how to improve their work. Managers monitor assessment closely and are aware of variations between areas but are yet to address these thoroughly.

21.   The range of provision to meet the needs and interests of learners is good, which the self-assessment report identifies. The college provides a wide range of programmes across its main sites, in the community and in the workplace. Progression opportunities are good. The range of enrichment opportunities is satisfactory but participation is often low. The extent to which the college promotes a safe lifestyle is satisfactory. The college has well-established and productive links with schools to widen the curriculum for learners aged 14 to 16 and to implement the new Diplomas. Communication and engagement with, and responsiveness to, the needs of employers are good. Employer engagement on apprenticeship programmes is good. The numbers of apprentices in some occupational areas are low but planning for expansion is in development.

22.   Educational and social inclusion are good. The provision, located in community-based venues and in the workplace, widens participation in learning. Staff engage very successfully with a wide range of disadvantaged individuals and groups. Provision for learners at risk of being excluded from school and for a range of vulnerable young people such as pregnant teenagers, offenders on

probation and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is well established. The range of provision to improve learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills is good.

23.   Guidance and support are satisfactory, which the self-assessment report identifies. Learners can access a wide range of effective additional learning support, which is provided promptly at most sites. The take-up of additional support by learners with identified needs is high. Specialist support for learners with complex needs is well planned and is very effective. Pastoral support is strong with good one-to-one work with learners and good use of well-established referral networks. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle is good. Transport arrangements support learners well. The achievement of learners receiving additional support is high at most college sites. Apprentices in the workplace also receive good support, with frequent workplace visits and good communication with staff.

24.   Learners access appropriate information, advice and guidance on entry to their courses and induction arrangements are satisfactory. At the main sites, learners receive helpful careers advice and useful support with applications to higher education. The effective use of one-to-one and group tutorials is inconsistent. Examples of good practice exist across the college but this is not always the case. Although there are good developments in target setting on some sites, examples of insufficient and even poor target setting still exist on other sites.

Leadership and management   Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity   *Satisfactory: grade 3*

25.   Leadership and management are satisfactory, which differs from the college's self-assessment. Governors and managers have managed the merger very well. The strong leadership of the principal, ably supported by his talented executive leadership team has created successfully a clear, unified identity for the enlarged college in a short space of time. The principal has a clear strategic vision for the college which is concisely summarised in the development plan and communicated well to staff. Good progress has been made towards harmonising the working conditions of staff and morale is generally high. The college's very good partnership arrangements and community engagement have expanded further since the merger. Managers welcome the views of learners and respond appropriately to them.

26.   Managers have audited all aspects of provision to determine their appropriateness to the new college's strategic aims. Executive leaders have been quick to evaluate where improvement is most needed and much progress has been made in establishing a series of policies and operating procedures. There has not been sufficient time, however, for these actions to be reflected in learners' achievements or in the quality of provision, which are both satisfactory.

27. The college has placed a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and is keen to increase the rate of improvement but the areas for improvement identified at previous inspections persist. Executive leaders acted swiftly to ensure that future procedures to assess the quality of lessons and the performance of teachers are accurate and are supported by appropriate staff development.

28. Curriculum management is more successful in some areas than in others but it is satisfactory, as is the management of work-based learning. The college inherited a series of quality assurance procedures characterised by their variable quality and inconsistent application, with some unsatisfactory practices in course review and target setting. Managers have developed new procedures and are introducing them quickly; the most recent quality improvement plans are rigorous. Managers have yet to produce the first full self-assessment report but the interim documents are largely accurate.

29. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The college complies with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2005. Staff monitor the performance of particular groups of learners closely and learners from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties have higher than average success rates. The promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum is satisfactory. The college complies with the current government requirements for child protection.

30. Governance is satisfactory. Governors played a critical role in the merger and are passionate about the future of the college. They have established an innovative set of procedures for governance but it is too early to assess their effectiveness.

31. Learning resources are satisfactory and most areas have appropriate ILT facilities available. Much of the college's building stock is ageing and this, in subjects such as art and design, restricts the effectiveness of learning. Accommodation at the main Cannock site is poor. The college's plans to improve its accommodation are subject to national constraints. Financial management is good and value for money is satisfactory.

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and childcare   Good: Grade 2

Context

32.   The college provides courses from levels 1 to 4 in health and social care, counselling, childcare and education for 2,367 learners. Of these, around two-thirds are adults on part-time courses and one-third, mostly aged 16 to 18, are on full-time courses. The majority of learners are white and female with 4% from minority ethnic heritages. Approximately 50 learners follow apprenticeship programmes. Over 120 learners aged 14 to 16 follow courses in health and social care. A broad range of short courses is available.

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- high standards of learners' work
- good teaching and learning on childcare courses
- rigorous assessment and exemplary feedback to learners
- good communication with staff and learners leading to quality improvement.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on the NVQ levels 2 and 3 in health and social care courses and on the level 3 diploma in childcare and education course
- ineffective questioning techniques in a significant minority of lessons.

Achievement and standards

33.   Achievement and standards are good. Pass rates on most courses are high and in many cases are very high. Retention rates are mostly at or below the national average but in-year retention rates have improved compared with the same time last year. On the NVQ levels 2 and 3 in health and social care courses and on the full-time level 3 course in childcare, success rates are low. The standard of learners' work is high. Most full-time learners produce marked coursework which indicates they are working at levels above their predicted grades.

Quality of provision

34.   The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good, especially in childcare lessons. Teachers plan most lessons well. In the best lessons, they use a practical approach which engages learners and ensures that their differing learning needs are met. Good links with vocational practice enthuse learners and help them to understand and learn theoretical concepts. In the less effective lessons questioning techniques fail to involve learners and check their understanding. The use of ILT is limited to electronically projected presentations that are textual and which often lack impact. Assessment is rigorous and learners receive excellent feedback. Teachers introduce assignments well; learners know how they should be planned and written. The

internal verification process is well implemented. Classrooms are well equipped and enhanced with high quality displays of learners' work.

35.   The response to meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers through the range of provision is good. Procedures to engage employers are productive. Progression rates within the college and to employment are high.

36.   Guidance and support are good. Learners have frequent and effective individual reviews and receive extensive feedback from them. The outcomes are recorded on their individual learning plans. Tutors monitor their progress against these improvement targets effectively. Learners' retention rates are improving.

Leadership and management

37.   Curriculum leadership and management are good. Staff are well-informed and value the increasing focus on cross-college teamwork. Good communication with staff and learners enables quality improvement in improving retention and addressing areas of concern. Tri-annual course reviews inform actions for improvement well. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, although some strengths are overstated. Staff have good opportunities to update their vocational expertise. Equality of opportunity is well promoted through the curriculum, although action taken to attract more male learners onto childcare courses has been ineffective. Childcare resources are excellent.

Engineering   Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

38.   The college offers full-time and part-time provision from levels 1 to 4. Courses
      are available in mechanical production engineering, motor vehicle engineering,
      computer aided design, electrical, electronic and electro-technical technology.
      Approximately 160 learners are on level 1 courses, 410 on level 2 and 310 on
      level 3. Of these, 337 are aged 16 to 18, 541 are adults and 4 are female. A
      further 135 learners are aged 14 to 16 and 164 learners are following
      engineering apprenticeship programmes.

Strengths

  •   high success rates on level 1 motor vehicle and level 3 electro-technical
      courses
  •   high progression rates between engineering courses
  •   extensive range of engineering programmes to meet learners' needs.

Areas for improvement

  •   low success rates on the NVQ2 performing engineering operations course
  •   insufficient good or better teaching
  •   insufficiently detailed target setting during progress reviews.

Achievement and standards

39.   Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on level 1 motor
      vehicle and level 3 electro-technical courses are high. The success rate on the
      NVQ level 2 performing engineering operations programme is low. Learners
      make steady progress in lessons and on their courses. Learners' portfolios are
      adequate but some lack a variety of evidence and focus too much on the
      completion of job cards. Learners develop and demonstrate a satisfactory range
      of vocational skills in college workshops and classrooms. In practical sessions,
      learners produce work that meets industry standards. Progression rates
      between college courses are high.

Quality of provision

40.   The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
      In the best lessons a good range of teaching methods maintains learners'
      interest and provides a challenging learning environment. Learners contribute
      enthusiastically. The proportion of good or better teaching, however, is low.
      Teachers do not challenge learners sufficiently. The use of ILT by some tutors
      is variable. Assessment is satisfactory; written comments are clear and provide
      useful information on learners' performance. The tracking and monitoring of
      learners' progress is good. Support for learners with additional learning needs is
      satisfactory.

41.   Responsiveness to the needs of learners is good. The range of provision is
      extensive. Provision is flexible allowing learners to access facilities across the

campuses to meet their requirements. The well-developed links between employers help full-time learners find employment opportunities. Planned enrichment activities are satisfactory but insufficient learners participate.

42.   Guidance and support are satisfactory. During tutorials, learners receive useful practical advice and guidance on their progress and career opportunities. Target setting on review forms, however, is insufficiently detailed to promote the planning and success of future learning.

Leadership and management

43.   Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of change and the strategies to develop the provision are satisfactory. Since the merger, curriculum development activities have started to impact positively on the learners' experience. Standardisation meetings provide valuable opportunities for the sharing of good practice and changes have been made to existing courses. Communication is good through the extensive range of frequent meetings at all levels. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. They reinforce safe working practices frequently. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory and the success rates of different groups of learners are similar. The self-assessment report is detailed, evaluative, self-critical and accurate but it did not evaluate the quality of leadership and management.

Information and communication technology   Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

44. Courses are available in information and communication technology (ICT) from levels 1 to 3. Of 1,480 enrolments, approximately 20 learners are aged 14 to 16, 350 are aged 16 to 18 and 1,110 are adults. About a quarter of the learners are enrolled on full-time programmes. Nearly half of the learners are female. Two learners follow an apprenticeship in ICT. Approximately 3% of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. ICT is delivered at three campuses and at local learning centres.

Strengths

- high success rates on full-time and level 2 part-time courses
- high progression rates from level 1 to higher education within the college
- good support for learners with additional learning needs.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on long level 1 part-time programmes
- underdeveloped industry links to enrich the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

45. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on levels 1 and 3 full-time programmes are high. Success rates on part-time level 2 NVQ courses are also high. Success rates on level 1 part-time programmes are low. Progression rates for learners from level 1 to higher education within the college are high. Improvements since the merger have enabled learners from the Cannock campus to have access to higher education opportunities within the college. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

46. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers meet learners' individual needs well and make good use of a variety of teaching and learning methods. Learners benefit from lively activities where they are engaged fully in learning. In the less effective lessons, learners make slow progress and do not receive challenging targets. Learning resources are satisfactory but some specialist software is not available in all rooms at the Lichfield campus. The layout of the rooms at Cannock does not facilitate a variety of learning activities. Assessment planning and monitoring of progress are satisfactory. Some feedback on marked work lacks clarity and detail to help learners improve.

47. Provision to meet the needs of learners is satisfactory. Learners benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities. Links with employers to enrich the curriculum, however, are underdeveloped. A strategy for the community learning centres affects the curriculum offer for part-time learners. It is too

early to judge the impact of this initiative but managers are aware of the issues that may arise.

48.   Guidance and support are good. Learners are well supported during lessons and are positive about the access they have to tutors to support their progress outside the classroom. Support for learners with additional learning needs is good. Target setting in individual learning plans varies in effectiveness and does not always allow learners to appreciate the progress they are making. Tutorials, however, are effective in providing learners with a good understanding of their progress.

Leadership and management

49.   Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have recently undertaken a comprehensive internal review of the ICT programme area and have produced an action plan and self-assessment report. Staff have a good awareness of these initiatives and learners benefit from some of the changes that have been introduced. Since the merger, staff at different sites have joint meetings where they share good practice. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. It is covered at induction and through enrichment activities. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the self-assessment report is self-critical and accurate.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy   Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

50. Approximately 820 learners study hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapies at levels 1 to 3. Of these, most are on hairdressing courses, are female, full-time and less than 19 years of age. Numbers are spread evenly between the Tamworth and Cannock campuses. About 2% of learners are from ethnic minority backgrounds and 18% have additional learning needs. Nearly 100 learners are on apprenticeships in hairdressing and 135 learners aged 14 to 16 are on level 1 courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Strengths

  • high success rates on the NVQ 3 hairdressing course
  • good teaching and learning in practical lessons
  • good leadership of the new curriculum area.

Areas for improvement

  • insufficiently challenging targets for many learners
  • low apprenticeship success rates
  • underdeveloped vocational relevance of key skills.

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on most courses are satisfactory. They have gradually improved over the last two years and are close to the national average. Success rates on the NVQ level 3 hairdressing course are high. Apprenticeship success rates are low. Although several learners have been successful in recent local and national competitions, learners' acquisition of practical skills is generally satisfactory. In-year retention and attendance rates on most courses are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

52. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching and learning in practical lessons are good. Lesson plans are detailed and teachers use their commercial experience to give examples that illustrate key points and set underpinning knowledge in context. Teachers give good one-to-one support. Learners are expected to work to commercial standards. The emphasis on health and safety is good. Although teachers have good information about learners, the targets set for many learners are insufficiently challenging. The progress towards completion of assessments is slow. The vocational relevance of key skills is underdeveloped. Lessons fail to engage learners in activities that develop understanding. Learning accommodation at Tamworth is good and reflects current commercial standards. At Cannock, accommodation is poor.

53. Responsiveness to meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The range of provision is wide. Enrichment opportunities, including visits to shows, exhibitions and competitions, enhance learners' studies.

54. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good support in vocational lessons. Vocational teaching assistants work alongside teachers to provide good one-to-one coaching and support.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory, which agrees with the self-assessed judgement. Quality improvement plans address the satisfactory aspects of provision as well as areas for improvement. Staff are embedding new quality improvement systems and teachers are involved in reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the provision. They have made reasonable progress in improving low retention and success rates. All staff are appropriately qualified and have good access to staff development. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The leadership of the new curriculum area is good and is improving the quality of the provision. The management of the merger was effective. Communication and teamwork are good. Staff from the two campuses share curriculum development and standardise provision effectively.

Visual arts and media   Good: Grade 2

Context

56.   The college offers courses in visual arts, music and media from levels 1 to 4. Approximately 400 learners are enrolled with around two thirds aged 16 to 18 mainly studying on full-time programmes. Just over half of the learners are female. About 4% of learners are from minority ethnic groups.

Strengths

- high success rates on the national diploma media and foundation diploma art and design courses
- high standards of learners' work
- challenging and supportive teaching
- very effective links with local organisations, employers and schools which increase opportunities for media learners.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient progress compared with their starting point for learners on the national diploma art and design course
- very low success rates on the first diploma in music course
- some poor accommodation and resources at the Cannock campus.

Achievement and standards

57.   Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on the foundation diploma in art and design and the national diploma in media are high. Learners on the foundation art and design course obtain a very high proportion of high grades. Learners produce imaginative and technically accomplished creative work of a high standard. Media learners develop very good personal and work-based skills such as independence, responsibility and team working. The success rate on the first diploma in music is very low. Learners on the national diploma art and design course do not make the progress expected of them in relation to prior attainment.

Quality of provision

58.   The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. In media lessons, learners show a high level of independence and make significant contributions to developing their own capacity for learning. Teachers and learners negotiate challenging targets that ensure learners make very good progress towards their goals. Teachers' good classroom management and well-planned, brisk-paced lessons engage learners fully. All teachers support learners well and give them very helpful advice that helps them improve the quality of their work. Teachers and learners have very productive working relationships in lessons.

59.   The response to the needs of learners is good. Learners have the opportunity to work on a wide range of live briefs and commissions giving them excellent

opportunities to practise their vocational skills. Media learners have particularly effective links with local organisations, employers and schools through a company run by learners for learners. Managers have improved the structure and delivery of the national diploma in art and design to meet learners' needs.

60. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners' additional learning needs are identified in a timely manner. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. The quality of the tracking and recording of learners' progress is inconsistent. Learners do not have the opportunity to benefit from group tutorials.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are good. Recent actions to improve the provision are having a positive impact on learners. Learners from Cannock are given free transport to Lichfield, where they experience better accommodation and resources. Managers have improved retention on the first diploma in music significantly. They have enforced the attendance policy more rigorously; learners' attendance and general behaviour have improved. The accommodation and resources at the Cannock campus are poor for art and design and very poor for music. The self-assessment process is inclusive and judgements are accurate. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Foundation programmes   Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

62. The college provides a range of courses from entry level to level 2 in literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). It also provides the key skills of application of number and communication at levels 1 and 2. Some 130 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend full time and part-time programmes including literacy, numeracy and independent living. Approximately 220 learners take ESOL courses. Over 3,100 enrolments are on key skills programmes.

Strengths

- very high success rates on literacy and numeracy courses
- good teaching and learning on literacy and numeracy courses and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- wide range of provision that meets the needs of individuals and the community.

Areas for improvement

- low and declining success rates in key skills
- insufficiently detailed individual learning plans for learners on ESOL courses and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- insufficient work experience for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Achievement and standards

63. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates in literacy and numeracy are very high. Learners make satisfactory progress in lessons. The achievement by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. These learners make good progress including their development of ICT skills. Success rates and progress by ESOL learners are satisfactory. Key skills success rates have declined and are low. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

64. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Much teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn quickly how to measure shapes and spaces using dough. In literacy and numeracy lessons, learners apply their skills well to daily life contexts. Some key skills lessons do not meet individual needs and are not always related to learners' vocational courses. Individual learning plan targets are insufficiently detailed and challenging for ESOL learners and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Targets for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities focus on literacy and numeracy skills and do not focus sufficiently on personal development and progress.

65. The response to the needs of learners and the community is good, through a
     wide range of provision. Many community sites offer easy access to learners.
     Literacy and numeracy are provided through family learning, the probation
     service and to employed learners. Learners with learning difficulties and/or
     disabilities access a wide range of practical subjects including cooking, animal
     care, horticulture and DIY. Work experience opportunities for learners with
     learning difficulties and/or disabilities are insufficient.

66. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Classes are small and
     support staff work effectively with learners to reinforce learning. Staff work
     closely with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure they
     do not experience difficulties. They encourage learners to participate and
     reinforce social skills development. Pastoral support is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The merger is starting to have a
     positive impact. Good practice identified through reviews is being shared
     effectively among highly motivated staff. Managers are improving the quality of
     individual learning plans, are relating key skills more effectively to vocational
     areas and are offering more appropriate qualifications to learners. The
     promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The self-assessment
     process is inclusive and the report is broadly accurate but it does not identify
     certain areas for improvement.

Learners' achievement

Data are shown for each of the three colleges, prior to the merger in 2009.

Tamworth and Lichfield College data

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	381	64	69	-5	1564	64	65	-1
	06/07	631	79	74	5	1194	78	70	8
	07/08*	950	75			1147	75		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	8	88	73	15	0	-	-	-
	06/07	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	0	-			0	-		
NVQs	05/06	58	38	72	-34	4	0	74	-74
	06/07	59	78	75	3	4	75	75	0
	07/08*	41	85			1	100		
Other	05/06	315	69	69	0	1560	64	65	-1
	06/07	572	80	74	6	1190	78	70	8
	07/08*	909	74			1146	75		

*   college data

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	05/06	877	65	66	-1	1627	54	66	-12
	06/07	1037	75	70	5	1201	77	69	8
	07/08*	1051	72			1062	69		
GCSEs	05/06	35	40	68	-28	40	58	67	-9
	06/07	50	76	71	5	52	90	70	20
	07/08*	38	42			39	74		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	70	79	69	10	7	43	68	-25
	06/07	56	71	73	-2	3	100	71	29
	07/08*	38	66			0	N/A		
NVQs	05/06	187	67	65	2	752	42	68	-26
	06/07	198	63	68	-5	538	71	69	2
	07/08*	327	63			404	64		
Other	05/06	585	65	66	-1	828	65	65	0
	06/07	733	78	70	8	608	81	69	12
	07/08*	648	79			619	72		

*   college data

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	*Diff*	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	*Diff*
3 Long	05/06	518	62	71	-9	1142	61	64	-3
	06/07	459	77	73	4	690	78	68	10
	07/08*	457	79			717	69		
A/A2 Levels	05/06	19	95	87	8	4	100	72	28
	06/07	27	37	87	-50	12	75	76	-1
	07/08*	11	64			0	-		
AS Levels	05/06	47	55	67	-12	28	68	55	13
	06/07	11	100	69	31	2	100	59	41
	07/08*	6	100			3	100		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	138	59	66	-7	17	53	57	-4
	06/07	21	86	59	27	2	100	59	41
	07/08*	5	80			3	67		
NVQs	05/06	35	66	71	-5	540	54	63	-9
	06/07	40	73	74	-1	286	77	69	8
	07/08*	30	73			202	69		
Other	05/06	279	63	65	-2	553	68	64	4
	06/07	360	79	70	9	388	79	69	10
	07/08*	405	79			509	70		

*   college data

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	49	57	52	53	43
		timely	50	38	34	34	27
	06/07	overall	42	76	63	71	56
		timely	40	48	43	48	38
	07/08	overall	51	69	68	67	63
		timely	56	46	48	43	44
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	85	60	57	56	51
		timely	81	42	37	41	33
	06/07	overall	93	80	64	74	60
		timely	88	56	47	55	45
	07/08	Overall	103	71	67	67	64
		timely	97	60	53	58	50

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

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

Cannock Chase Technical College data

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	483	76	69	7	839	60	65	-5
	06/07	559	73	74	-1	663	72	70	2
	07/08*	648	80			368	83		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	4	75	73	2	0	-	-	-
	06/07	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	0	-			0	-		
NVQs	05/06	13	62	72	-10	73	33	74	-41
	06/07	44	75	75	0	23	17	75	-58
	07/08*	31	81			1	0		
Other	05/06	466	76	69	7	766	63	65	-2
	06/07	515	73	74	-1	640	74	70	4
	07/08*	617	80			367	83		

*   college data

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	05/06	815	53	66	-13	1249	59	66	-7
	06/07	513	65	70	-5	1170	60	69	-9
	07/08*	939	75			993	79		
GCSEs	05/06	113	55	68	-13	121	70	67	3
	06/07	56	71	71	0	86	64	70	-6
	07/08*	41	88			53	79		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	06/07	3	0	73	-73	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	1	100			1	100		
NVQs	05/06	128	49	65	-16	457	57	68	-11
	06/07	122	63	68	-5	423	58	69	-11
	07/08*	132	52			251	68		
Other	05/06	574	53	66	-13	671	58	65	-7
	06/07	332	65	70	-5	661	60	69	-9
	07/08*	765	78			688	82		

*   college data

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	*Diff*	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	*Diff*
3 Long	05/06	320	51	71	-20	525	59	64	-5
	06/07	222	57	73	-16	310	59	68	-9
	07/08*	280	72			408	76		
A/A2 Levels	05/06	29	66	87	-21	29	62	72	-10
	06/07	8	38	87	-49	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	14	64			2	0		
AS Levels	05/06	88	13	67	-54	49	49	55	-6
	06/07	1	100	69	31	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	5	60			1	100		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	16	94	66	28	2	50	57	-7
	06/07	21	52	59	-7	2	50	59	-9
	07/08*	0	-			0	-		
NVQs	05/06	40	70	71	-1	134	59	63	-4
	06/07	41	59	74	-15	99	57	69	-12
	07/08*	45	78			133	78		
Other	05/06	147	61	65	-4	311	61	64	-3
	06/07	151	58	70	-12	209	60	69	-9
	07/08*	216	71			272	75		

*   college data

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	15	67	52	20	43
		timely	14	57	34	21	27
	06/07	overall	19	53	63	21	56
		timely	20	40	43	20	38
	07/08	overall	13	69	68	54	63
		timely	12	67	48	50	44
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	56	32	57	20	51
		timely	53	13	37	11	33
	06/07	overall	96	69	64	65	60
		timely	84	63	47	61	45
	07/08	Overall	102	66	67	64	64
		timely	103	62	53	60	50

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

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

Rodbaston College data

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	548	82	78	4	211	64	64	0
	06/07	533	81	82	-1	106	64	76	-12
	07/08*	468	91			105	70		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	06/07	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	0	-			0	-		
NVQs	05/06	1	0	72	-72	18	56	64	-8
	06/07	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	0	0			19	63		
Other	05/06	547	82	78	4	193	65	64	1
	06/07	533	81	82	-1	106	64	76	-12
	07/08*	468	81			86	71		

*   college data

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	05/06	230	65	73	-8	200	61	66	-5
	06/07	212	70	78	-8	267	63	71	-8
	07/08*	250	72			153	65		
GCSEs	05/06	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	06/07	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	0	-			0	-		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	11	82			31	68		
	06/07	26	73	79	-6	47	74	73	1
	07/08*	22	86			28	75		
NVQs	05/06	0	-	-	-	25	32	64	-32
	06/07	6	67			90	58	73	-15
	07/08*	4	100			41	66		
Other	05/06	219	64	75	-11	144	65	66	-1
	06/07	180	70	78	-8	130	62	70	-8
	07/08*	224	70			84	61		

*   college data

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	*Diff*	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	*Diff*
3 Long	05/06	117	68	74	-6	122	30	60	-30
	06/07	134	69	77	-8	157	51	65	-14
	07/08*	132	76			99	63		
A/A2 Levels	05/06	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	06/07	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	0	-			0	-		
AS Levels	05/06	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	06/07	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	0	-			0	-		
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	06/07	0	-	-	-	0	-	-	-
	07/08*	0	-			0			
NVQs	05/06	0	-	-	-	18	50	52	-2
	06/07	1	-		-	35	69	58	11
	07/08*	0	-			30	67		
Other	05/06	117	68	73	-5	104	27	61	-34
	06/07	133	70	76	-6	122	46	66	-20
	07/08*	132	76			69	61		

*   college data

Table 4

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	14	71	52	50	43
		timely	15	47	34	27	27
	06/07	overall	6	50	63	33	56
		timely	8	0	43	0	38
	07/08	overall	14	79	68	71	63
		timely	19	21	48	21	44
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	62	55	57	39	51
		timely	65	43	37	29	33
	06/07	overall	88	67	64	44	60
		timely	90	47	47	31	45
	07/08	Overall	64	72	67	61	64
		timely	68	54	53	50	50

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

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

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