

Salford City College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130509

Name of lead inspector: Mike Berry HMI

Last day of inspection: 14 May 2010

Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Salford City College was established as a general further education college in January 2009 following the merger of Pendleton Sixth Form College, Salford College of Further Education and Eccles Sixth Form College. The new college has four main centres: Pendleton, Eccles, Worsley and the City campus, and two smaller sites at De La Salle and Winton. The city of Salford covers 37 square miles and is situated in the Greater Manchester conurbation; it has a population of around 220,000. Major sectors in the local economy are business and finance, public administration, education, construction and manufacturing.
2. Within the city there are areas of significant disadvantage. Salford is the 15th most deprived of 354 local authorities according to the multiple index of deprivation. Educational attainment at the age of 16 is below the national average with 46% of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C including English and mathematics. Unemployment is 4.5%, slightly higher than in Greater Manchester and above the national average. Approximately 25% of college students are of minority ethnic heritage compared to 7.3% in the local population.
3. The college's provision covers all 15 subject areas. In 2008/09 students aged 16 to 18 studying at advanced level accounted for 56% of all students in learner-responsive provision. Almost all the college's employer-responsive provision is Train to Gain but the college has recently begun delivering apprenticeships in business administration. The college also delivers apprenticeship training on behalf of other providers. The college has a contract for personal and community development learning delivered in the community. The college offers a small but growing higher education provision. Within the college's catchment area there are 17 secondary schools of which three have sixth forms.
4. The college's mission is 'to inspire people, to create opportunities and enrich lives through learning'.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Stegta (apprenticeships in various subject areas)
 - BEST (apprenticeships in building services engineering)
 - Skills Solutions (apprenticeships in various subject areas)
 - ConstructionSkills (apprenticeships in construction)
 - Bolton University (foundation degrees and teacher education).
6. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - Carillion (adult learner provision in preparation for working life)

- HBHG Development Trust Ltd (adult learner provision and personal and community development in various subject areas)
- Manchester Community Information Network (adult learner provision and personal and community development in various subject areas)
- Start in Salford (adult learner provision and personal and community development in various subject areas)
- Hershell Weiss (personal and community development in various subject areas)
- The Interlink Foundation (personal and community development in various subject areas)
- Ordsall Community Café (personal and community development in various subject areas)
- Salford City Council (personal and community development in various subject areas)
- Oasis Academy (personal and community development in various subject areas)
- WNT (personal and community development in various subject areas)
- SALT (personal and community development in various subject areas).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	333 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	5,204 full-time learners 407 part-time learners
Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment	1,367 full-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	1,540 full-time learners 3,761 part-time learners
Personal and community development	4,284 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	3,248 learners
Apprenticeships	11 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 1
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	1

Subject Areas	Grade
Health, public services and care	2
Science and mathematics	2
Construction, planning and the built environment	2
Arts, media and publishing	2
Languages, literature and culture	2
Business, administration and law	2

Overall effectiveness

7. Salford City College is a good college with outstanding capacity to improve. The merger of the three individual colleges has been managed exceptionally well and already the college has established a culture of high aspirations of student achievement. The college is highly inclusive and provides a welcoming environment for students at all the centres. Students of all ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities work harmoniously together and have mutual respect for each other.
8. Outcomes for learners are good and improving. Pass rates for students on GCE A level and BTEC national awards have been maintained at very high levels and a high proportion of these students progress to universities and prestigious higher

education institutions. However, pass rates for students on GCE AS-level have dipped. Achievement rates on Train to Gain have improved significantly and are now high. Almost all students make the progress expected of them and a significant proportion of students make good or better progress. Students enjoy their time at the college as a result of the good teaching and learning and the excellent range of enrichment activities they participate in. Good support for students is provided by learning mentors and teachers who always make the time to help them with their work and any personal problems. Support for students with complex multiple needs is exemplary. Support to meet the literacy and numeracy needs of Train to Gain learners needs improving.

9. The new college has quickly asserted itself in its environment and developed many outstanding partnerships which have direct benefits for students. Employers greatly appreciate the responsiveness of the college in meeting their training needs. Accommodation is variable from outstanding to satisfactory. Plans to improve the overall accommodation have been affected by national funding constraints but further college plans are being developed.

Main findings

- Long course success rates have continued to improve and were high in 2008/09. Most disadvantaged groups achieve highly. Success rates for students on A-level courses have been maintained at very high levels but on AS-level courses success rates have dipped to below average. Success rates on Skills for Life qualifications are low.
- Most students make good progress and progression to further courses and higher education is high. Students across all levels develop good skills and confidence. Many students produce high quality written and practical work. On a small number of courses students make insufficient progress. Success rates in two subject areas are low.
- Initiatives to improve students' social and economic well-being are good and most progress to further or higher education. Students feel safe and the college gives health and safety a high priority. A wide range of initiatives promoting health and well-being has successfully increased the numbers of students accessing services. Students make a good contribution to the college community and the wider community.
- Much teaching and learning is good and some is outstanding. The best sessions are dynamic, with all students fully engaged, focused and demonstrating high levels of attainment. Lesson planning makes specific provision for differentiation. However, satisfactory sessions lack differentiation and challenge and some learners are passive.
- Assessment is good. Feedback on marked work is very detailed and makes clear to students what they need to do to improve. Assessment is well planned and thorough on employer-responsive provision. Monitoring of students' progress is good. Train to Gain learners' progress reviews are weak, with few short or long-term objectives. Equality and diversity and wider welfare issues are not discussed.

- The college's extensive, varied and innovative enrichment programme enhances students' experience. It builds on the students' individual curriculum, provides good links with the community and stimulates challenge for those students who are more able. The college's strong and productive multi-agency partnerships extend learners' experience. The college is successful in attracting those at risk of not succeeding, those with profound needs, and hard-to-reach groups in the community.
- Support for students with extensive or exceptional needs is exemplary. Tutors design innovative individualised programmes for students with physical, health or emotional needs. Students in looked-after care receive extensive support, as do those previously not in education or employment. Literacy, numeracy and pastoral support are good overall. However, arrangements for literacy and numeracy support for Train to Gain learners are insufficiently developed.
- The principal and senior managers provide strong leadership and are the drivers of high expectations and strong ambition for learners and staff alike. The merger of the three distinct colleges into Salford City College has been exceptionally well managed.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors have an exceptional understanding of the college, enhanced through numerous links with curriculum areas and key aspects of college provision. Strong partnership and collaboration with key agencies and employers have ensured that provision is responsive to local and national priorities.
- Equality and diversity are outstanding and exceptionally well integrated into all aspects of the college's work. The arrangements for safeguarding are good. The college sets as a key priority health and safety across all aspects of its work. Encouraging, listening to, and acting upon the learner voice are a high priority for the college.
- Arrangements for quality assurance and self-assessment are good and are clearly improving the quality of provision and outcomes for students. However, there remains some variability in the operational impact of quality assurance in a few areas. Arrangements for quality assurance are presently insufficiently developed in employer-responsive provision.
- The college has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in its teaching. Observations of teaching and learning, the close monitoring of action plans and the very good range of staff development are very effectively improving the students' experience. The observation of employer-responsive provision is too focused on assessment and does not include other aspects of learning.

What does Salford City College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates on AS-level and Skills for Life courses. Ensure that success rates in all subject areas are consistently high. Improve the progress students make on the minority of advanced-level courses where value-added scores are low.

- Improve support and progress review arrangements on employer-responsive provision by the better structuring of literacy and numeracy support, the inclusion of wider welfare issues and better target setting for learners.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning through sharing good practice and moderating the observations of teaching and learning. Extend the observations of employer-responsive provision to include all aspects of learning.
- Tackle the variability and underdevelopment of quality assurance arrangements in a few areas, including employer-responsive provision, so that they are consistent across the college.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the courses, which have boosted their confidence and raised aspirations
- the college environment, which is just like a family that they feel part of
- teachers who are highly enthusiastic, professional and have exceptional experience in their subjects
- support provided to them at any time of the day; there is always someone willing to help
- the new and creative teaching methods which they have not experienced before
- the high grades they achieve which enable them to gain places in the most prestigious universities
- the fantastic opportunities that have changed their lives
- the way that college managers are interested in their views.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the learning resource centre which is sometimes very noisy which makes it difficult for them to concentrate
- the computers in some parts of the college are not to a good enough standard
- the few students who arrive late to lessons and disrupt the learning of others.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- excellent college facilities, which have enabled their employees to develop relevant skills
- the very swift and flexible response in meeting their needs
- the way in which a large college can offer a personal service
- the 'can do' attitude and responsiveness to their needs
- good quality training provided by the college

- the college's good reputation which gives employers confidence in their qualifications
- the very high standard of teaching which meets their business needs
- the college's good understanding of local labour market information.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the provision of more frequent and timely information on the progress of their employees
- more regular information about qualifications and funding changes.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

10. The college demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve. Strong leadership by the Principal and senior managers has led to a successful transition to a merged college. A culture of high expectations and ambitions has been established quickly. Staff are strongly committed to the college's mission and priorities. Success rates are high and improving. Teaching and learning are good. Governance is outstanding.
11. The college has made outstanding progress in developing highly effective and responsive partnerships. Management information is extensive, accurate and used exceptionally well to bring about improvements. The professional development of staff focuses well on improving teaching and learning. Safeguarding procedures are good and equality and diversity outstanding.
12. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and inclusive. Robust quality systems have been established to enable further improvement. Targets set are challenging. All areas for improvement from the previous inspections have been fully resolved. Arrangements for quality assurance need to be embedded further in a few areas and within the employer-responsive provision.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

13. Good improvements have been made to long-course success rates up to 2007/08 at Salford and Eccles and they have been maintained at national averages at Pendleton. In the new college, long-course success rates have continued to improve and are high at 83%, which places the college in the top 25% of similar colleges.
14. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 at the former colleges were generally improving. At foundation level success rates were very high at Pendleton and satisfactory at Eccles and Salford. At intermediate level, success rates were high at Salford, satisfactory at Pendleton and low at Eccles. At advanced level, success rates were satisfactory at all three colleges. In 2008/09 within the new college these success rates are satisfactory at foundation level and high at intermediate and advanced levels, particularly for students on BTEC national courses.
15. For adult students, success rates at the former colleges were generally improving except at intermediate level. At foundation level, success rates were high at Salford and Pendleton and satisfactory at Eccles. At intermediate level, success rates were satisfactory at Pendleton but low at both Salford and Eccles. At advanced level, success rates were high at Pendleton, satisfactory at Salford and low at Eccles. In 2008/09 within the new college, these success rates are satisfactory at foundation and intermediate levels, and at advanced level they are high.

16. Success rates for students on A-level courses were very high at Eccles and Pendleton, and in the new college these have been maintained. Almost half of these students achieve high grades. Overall, students make excellent progress at Pendleton, while at Eccles they make the progress expected of them. Success rates for students on AS-level courses were satisfactory at Eccles and Pendleton, and in the merged college these success rates have dipped to below average. The achievement of high grades is satisfactory. On these courses students make the progress expected of them but value-added scores vary significantly between subjects. Students on advanced-level vocational courses make good progress compared to their level of attainment on entry.
17. In the new college short-course success rates have been maintained at satisfactory levels. Very short-course success rates were high in all the former colleges but they have declined and are now low. Key skills success rates have improved across all the former colleges and are now high. Success rates for Skills for Life qualifications have declined significantly and are low.
18. Both male and female students achieve well. Success rates for almost all minority ethnic groups are in line with, or higher than those for all students. Success rates for students who are looked after are very high. Young people not previously engaged in education or training achieve and progress well. Students receiving additional learning support and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve highly. Success rates for 14 to 16 year old school pupils are high.
19. Success rates are high in retail and commercial enterprise, leisure, travel and tourism, and social sciences while they are low in education and training and preparation for life and work. In-year retention and attendance rates on long courses are good. Retention and achievement on adult and community learning courses are high. Timely success rates for Train to Gain learners have improved and are high in the current year.
20. Good opportunities for progression are increasingly well used by students. Around 90% of AS students progress to A2 courses. Progression to higher education is good for both academic and vocational students. Progression for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. Progression from level 2 to level 3 for Train to Gain learners is good. Students across all levels of courses develop good skills and confidence. Most improve their predicted grades and exceed their aspirations. Many students produce high quality written and practical work. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities gain good employability skills and are able to live independently.
21. Initiatives to improve students' social and economic well-being are good. Where work placements exist they are used well to develop students' employability skills. Students feel safe. Health and safety are given high priority and student concerns are swiftly responded to. An increasing number of students participate in a wide range of initiatives to help promote health and well-being. Students make a good contribution to the college community and their wider community. A wide range of fund-raising opportunities are organised and opportunities for volunteering have increased.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

22. Teaching and learning are good and some lessons are outstanding. The best sessions are dynamic, with all students fully engaged, focused, and demonstrating high levels of attainment. Most learning is very well planned, with a wide range of well-paced activities and differentiated tasks to challenge individuals. Checks on students' understanding are regular and effective. Satisfactory sessions lack differentiation and challenge and some learners are passive. Students are supportive of, and respectful towards, each other. Different ethnic groups work well together. The promotion of equality and diversity in learning is good. Stereotypes are challenged and most learning materials are very sensitive to equality and diversity. On-the-job coaching is good in employer-responsive provision. Tutors have good subject knowledge and are well qualified.
23. Assessment is good. Marked work is returned quickly. Feedback is very detailed and helps students to improve. Spelling and grammar are usually corrected. Assessment in employer-responsive provision is carefully planned and thorough. The college's virtual learning environment (VLE) is well used by most staff and students. High quality resources are shared between teachers, and students have good remote access to learning materials. Students use the internet well for research. Teachers use information and learning technology (ILT) well to enhance learning.
24. Monitoring of students' progress is good. A very good on-line system allows tutors, learning mentors and students to share information about progress, attendance and performance. The system is used very effectively to maintain and improve predicted grades and identify students at risk. Students have a good understanding of the progress they are making. Progress reviews for Train to Gain learners are weak and lack detail, with few short- or long-term objectives. Equality and diversity and wider welfare issues are not discussed. Initial assessment is used appropriately to identify timely literacy and numeracy support. For learners on employer-responsive provision, skills scans and learning styles analyses inform coaching sessions effectively. Initial assessment of basic skills is very limited and is not used effectively for Train to Gain learners.
25. Since the merger, the college has made good progress in expanding the provision at foundation and intermediate levels and strengthened progression routes through an increasingly broad and inclusive offer. Curriculum planning takes full account of local priorities and the views of students and employers. A good range of community initiatives attracts people who are socially excluded and disadvantaged. Highly productive collaboration with employers has increased training opportunities in the workplace whilst also meeting business needs.
26. The college's extensive and outstanding enrichment programme enhances students' experience. Students who are more able, experience additional stretch and challenge through a programme of innovative activities linked to external organisations and events. The sports academy provides excellent opportunities to combine academic study with a wide range of sporting activities. The college's

cross-centre enrichment offer is good but less embedded in one centre. The college is currently extending activities to ensure the involvement of all students. Most vocational students benefit from work experience and the college is planning to make this more widely available.

27. Strong and productive partnerships extend students' experience and effectively engage young people not in education or training, those with profound needs and hard-to-reach groups. The college makes an excellent contribution to multi-agency neighbourhood teams, providing highly responsive and individualised learning in deprived communities. Working closely with 'Salford Skills for Life' the college has significantly increased literacy and numeracy skills in the community, moving Salford from being a low performing council to one that achieves its targets ahead of time.
28. Highly effective partnerships with employers have resulted in the creation of a wide range of bespoke training opportunities. Extensive partnerships with external organisations, agencies, theatre companies and the voluntary sector are integral to the college's rich curriculum offer. Excellent links exist with many universities, specialist schools and academies. Highly responsive links and effective transition pathways exist with special schools. Strong partnerships with local schools are improving the attainment and progression of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
29. The support for students with extensive and complex needs is exemplary. In collaboration with the student, special schools, parents, carers, and the local health trusts, extensive and highly appropriate support plans are developed. For students experiencing specific difficulties, tutors design individualised programmes. Students with health problems benefit from home and hospital visits. The large number of students in looked-after care receive extensive support that involves a range of agencies, as do students not previously in education or employment.
30. Arrangements to help students make choices and prepare them for college are good. Ongoing advice and guidance on progression into further and higher education are particularly good. The college's multi-faith 'Konnekt to Faith' team provides an inclusive pastoral presence during well-constructed group tutorials. A team of learning mentors provides students with good pastoral and academic support. In some centres this newly-introduced form of support is not yet fully utilised by all students. Support for literacy and numeracy is good overall. However, arrangements to provide literacy and numeracy support for Train to Gain learners lacks structure, with few actually taking up the support offered.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

31. Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. The merger of three distinct colleges into the Salford City College in January 2009 has been exceptionally well managed. The new college has established, in a short period, a very clear strategic focus, strong partnerships and a collective ambition

to provide high quality education for its students. The Principal and senior managers provide strong leadership and are the drivers of a culture of continuous improvement and ambition for students and staff alike. Staff across the organisation are set challenging targets and are supported well to improve through good professional development. Curriculum management is good. Staff are clear about their responsibilities, the strategic direction of the college, and their contribution to the college mission.

32. Governance is outstanding. Governors have an exceptional understanding of the college enhanced through numerous links with curriculum areas and key aspects of college provision. In all their endeavours and deliberations, they place the welfare and progress of students as their central priority. Governors work collegiately but also bring independent scrutiny to governance enriched through a wide variety of professional and community backgrounds. They provide an acute strategic sense that is placing the college towards the forefront of local and sub-regional education and training. Governors monitor performance thoroughly and fulfil their statutory duties highly effectively. They support senior managers well but hold them to rigorous account for college performance.
33. The arrangements for safeguarding ensure that students and learners are protected and kept safe. Policies and procedures to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults are in place. All staff and governors have received training and fully understand college procedures and their responsibilities. Two link governors monitor the effectiveness of the college's safeguarding policies. Good links with the Local Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Boards inform and enhance the support and services for learners at risk. All staff receive enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are thorough and implemented effectively. The college sets as a key priority health and safety across all aspects of its work. Students feel very safe and they both welcome and suggest measures to improve safety on the campuses.
34. Equality and diversity are outstanding and well integrated into all aspects of the college's work. Excellent and comprehensive use of data enables targeted intervention and support strategies. Strong targeted actions have been extremely successful in closing the achievement gap between groups of learners. Equality of opportunity and diversity are exceptionally well promoted to the whole college community. The 'Konnekt to Faith' team are key players in fostering a good understanding of equality, diversity and a culture of inclusion. Discrimination, if it occurs, is challenged strongly. Staff and students are fully aware of, and support the college's policies on equality and diversity. A governor monitors policy and practice and reports to the governing body. Equality and diversity are well embedded in the curriculum. The college is a centre of excellence for students with complex and moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college provides a harmonious environment with a strong focus on mutual respect where most students flourish.
35. Students are involved in numerous groups that enable them to take an active role in college decision making. Each campus has a student council and a range of other groups which feed into whole college groups. Students are both

motivated and responsive to these opportunities to participate. Two student governors play a full and valued role in the deliberations, work and training activities of the governing body. The college acknowledges that aspects of communication between different sites, groups of students and student governors require further development.

36. Arrangements for quality assurance and self-assessment are good and improve the quality of provision and outcomes for students effectively. Managers use data effectively to identify, monitor and intervene in underperforming courses and other aspects of provision. Although quality assurance is effective, there remains some variability in its operational impact in a few areas, including the employer-responsive provision. Observations of teaching and learning are very effective in improving the quality of the students' experience. Inspectors found the college's observation process to be mostly accurate but found the proportion of outstanding lessons identified by observers was slightly over optimistic. The observation of employer-responsive provision is too focused on assessment and does not include other aspects of learning.
37. Accommodation is generally good. There is some outstanding accommodation in performing arts at Pendleton and in sport at the Eccles centre. Classrooms are generally well equipped and provide good learning environments. Most are equipped with ILT resources, which are used well in teaching and learning. However, students reported some difficulties in accessing computers in the learning resource centres at peak times. Financial management is sound. With generally high success rates, good teaching, and average class sizes, the college provides good value for money.

Subject areas

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

Context

38. The college offers courses at foundation to advanced levels in health and social care, child care and public services, a foundation degree in early years and counselling programmes at levels 2 to 4. Train to Gain programmes and courses for school pupils are also provided. Courses are located on three sites. On learner-responsive programmes there are 1,291 students, and 41 school pupils aged 14 to 16. Over 700 learners are on Train to Gain programmes. Seventy-one per cent of students are aged 16 to 18, 86% are female, 10% are from minority ethnic groups, and 8% have a disability.

Key findings

- Success rates are outstanding on the 14-16 provision and good on intermediate and advanced level learner-responsive programmes. At foundation level, success rates are satisfactory and on Train to Gain programmes they are low but have significantly improved this year. Retention was low and declining in 2008/09 at two centres but very good improvements have been made during this year.
- Students' progress is good and they make good improvements to their work following feedback. Most students develop a sound understanding of complex topics and are able to express this confidently. Students are well behaved, mature and confident. Transferable skills such as the ability to research and to work independently and as part of a team are well developed. Employers value the improvement in employees' work practices.
- Students use safe working practices in college and at work. Through focused tutorials they develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Students feel safe at college and appreciate the security measures in place. Students contribute their views about how they might feel safer and the college takes action accordingly.
- Students have a good awareness of how to improve their health and well-being. The college promotes and provides a wide range of opportunities and many students participate in physical activity. Students make informed choices and sometimes modify their health behaviours. The Brook Advisory Service visits college once a week and students attend for sexual health advice and testing.
- Teaching and learning are good. Good use is made of ILT which engages students in a wide range of interesting activities. Learning is personalised to ensure that all students are challenged and supported well. Students contribute enthusiastically to discussions that promote their understanding and contextualise complex information. In the weaker sessions, activities are insufficiently differentiated to fully engage all students.
- The needs and interests of students are met well. The range of provision is broad with clear progression routes. Students gain a good range of additional qualifications that enhance their employment opportunities. A good range of

enrichment activities are enjoyed by students. Train to Gain programmes are delivered flexibly to accommodate employers' and students' needs.

- In public services, students benefit from a wide range of partnerships that broaden their experiences and develop effectively their knowledge of available career routes. Good relationships with the NHS Trust extend and support the provision. They provide access to clinical practitioners and allow students to experience a broad range of health care work which is additional to programme requirements.
- Support for students is good. Students are supported well by assessors and teachers and they receive good pastoral care. Higher education advice and guidance are particularly good. Students are well informed about the opportunities available to them. At times, insufficient initial guidance about the importance of CRB checks is given to learners.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff at all levels communicate well and share the college's vision. Staff targets are set and monitored closely. Curriculum teams work together very effectively to improve retention and the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum leaders use data well to plan and monitor the provision. A few teachers lack awareness of progress towards retention targets.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The public services section has increased the number of female students and all curriculum areas are targeting students from underrepresented groups. Equality and diversity are promoted well within teaching. Learning resources and discussion material effectively encourage students to consider the needs of people different from themselves and challenge fixed views on stereotypes.
- Action to improve the quality of provision is good. The self-assessment process is inclusive and rigorous and students' views are considered well. Clear action plans are implemented following observations of teaching and learning which have resulted in improvements such as the use of ILT which is now good. Retention has improved significantly this year.

What does Salford City College need to do to improve further?

- Building on the success in improving retention, ensure that success rates continue to improve at all centres. Continue to provide good support using the new systems to make regular checks on students' progress.
- Improve procedures for CRB checks for students. Ensure that all students at all centres are asked to self-disclose at interview and that the importance of this is understood. Include the checking of this in quality assurance processes to review the impact.
- Take action to further improve the use of differentiated learning in lessons by ensuring all teachers understand how to use the student profiles available to them. Provide training to develop this understanding and more opportunities to share the good practice that already exists.

Science and mathematics

Grade 2

Context

39. Nearly 1,750 students are enrolled on programmes in biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics and psychology. Most students are full time, aged 16 to 18 and on AS- or A-level courses. Around 60 students are on BTEC national courses in applied science, one third of whom are adults on an access to higher education course. GCSEs are offered in mathematics and biology, with 390 enrolments in mathematics and 12 in biology. A pre-access to HE course is offered at intermediate level with 29 enrolments. Around 18% of learners are from minority ethnic groups.

Key findings

- Success rates on A-level biology, chemistry and psychology are outstanding with students exceeding the grades expected from their prior attainment. At Pendleton, success rates on A-level mathematics and physics are high, whereas they are satisfactory with poor progress at Eccles. Success rates on BTEC courses are high, with students obtaining grades above those expected from their prior attainment.
- On AS-level programmes, success rates vary considerably. They are high in psychology. At Eccles, success rates are very low in chemistry, as they are in mathematics at Pendleton. In 2008/09 many AS students at Pendleton did not achieve the grades expected of them in biology, chemistry, mathematics or physics.
- Results for AS-level examinations held in January show improvement in all subjects. In particular, physics success rates increased dramatically, as did the proportion of high grades. The pass rate in the integral investigative skills assignments also improved in all subjects, significantly so in biology and physics. Around 63% of all students who re-took AS-level examinations in January improved their grade, and in mathematics the proportion was 83%.
- The proportion of students achieving A* to C grades in GCSE mathematics is below the national average for similar colleges, although, based on their prior attainment, students generally make good progress.
- Students from different ethnic groups work well together and achieve as well as each other. Students enjoy their studies and are confident they feel safe in the college and more specifically in what are often hazardous laboratory environments. Students develop good teamwork and social skills and their work is at least of the standard expected for the level of course.
- Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons have a variety of activities that motivate students well. The needs of all students are generally met. Ongoing individual checks on understanding results in good learning. ILT is often used to good effect to support and reinforce learning.
- Students' work is now assessed regularly and students understand what is needed to improve their work. Students' progress is rigorously monitored against target grades and remedial actions are put in place whenever targets are not

met. Students have individual learning plans which are monitored and re-assessed at regular intervals.

- The range of advanced level programmes is satisfactory but offers students limited choice. The majority of students progress to higher education. On advanced level vocational courses there is no integral work experience built into the course. However, progression to higher education for vocational students is outstanding with 96% of learners progressing to relevant degrees. The range of intermediate level courses is limited.
- Support for students is good. Teachers provide much encouragement for students and have high expectations of their success. Students appreciate the support offered by their teachers in the classroom and the way in which staff give of their time freely to provide informal individual assistance.
- Leadership and management are good and have created a contagious underlying culture of raising students' aspirations. Communication within the department is good and the inevitable challenges of merging three separate departments whilst retaining much of the individuality of each are being addressed effectively. Staff are positive about the impact of the merger on students.
- Continuing professional development is good, including common staff training days, some sharing of good practice between sites, a focus on developing the teaching and learning skills of all teachers, motivating students and setting inspirational targets. Several new and highly enthusiastic staff have been appointed into key positions. The department has implemented several strategies focusing on improving students' performance, especially at AS level.
- All staff are involved in self-assessment and the self-assessment report is largely accurate. Resources are generally good and used well.

What does Salford City College need to do to improve further?

- Identify and implement strategies for increasing the percentage of A* to C grades in GCSE mathematics to at least the national average for similar colleges.
- Increase the opportunities for vocational students to develop their scientific skills in a real work environment by integrating work placements into the BTEC national course.
- Extend the range and nature of courses offered at advanced and intermediate levels to give students greater choice and increased opportunities for progression.
- Further develop links and good practice between science and mathematics teachers on the separate sites so that the quality of provision is improved and is consistent across the college.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Grade 2

Context

40. The provision includes plumbing, painting and decorating, floor coverings, heating and ventilation, maintenance operations, trowel trades, carpentry and joinery and construction technician studies. Currently, 1,187 students are enrolled on construction courses from entry to advanced level. Of these, 433 students are aged 16 to 18 and 247 are adult students. Some are apprentices managed by other providers and 66 are pupils aged 14 to 16 on school partnership courses. A further 441 adult employed learners are on Train to Gain programmes at levels 2 and 3.

Key findings

- Success rates for students on long qualifications at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels are good. Success rates on national diploma programmes, the certificate in basic plumbing and on construction awards are high. Train to Gain overall and timely success rates were satisfactory in 2008/09; however, they have improved significantly in the current year.
- Students make good progress. They enjoy their studies and develop good practical skills. Students acquire the knowledge and key skills that help them to progress onto higher level courses. Technician students on the national diploma benefit from work placements. Most of them secure company sponsorship, and progression to higher education is very good. However, students on craft courses have no opportunities for work placements.
- During their training, students develop good practical skills and competence which help to improve their economic well-being. All students have a good understanding of health and safety procedures at work and demonstrate safe working practices in college. Many students improve their skills through taking part in regeneration and refurbishment projects in the community. One such project recently won a regional award.
- Teaching, training and coaching are good and some are outstanding. Students benefit from enthusiastic and experienced teachers who share their knowledge and site practice well. They make good use of ILT to enhance learning. Learning is effectively promoted through high quality teaching and assessment materials in technician studies, plumbing, brickwork, and carpentry. Students in other areas do not have access to such resources.
- Teachers assess learners' work regularly and provide timely feedback which helps them to improve. Train to Gain assessors make good use of naturally-occurring work activities to assess learners' skills. Portfolios of evidence are good. Progress reviews are satisfactory. However, some reviews do not set clear, measurable targets for learners' progress or reinforce the learners' understanding of equality and diversity.
- A wide range of programmes in craft and technician areas meets the needs of students and employers. Much of the provision is flexible, which enables students to access learning and progress at their own pace. Provision to meet the needs of

those not previously in education or employment is good. Currently the lack of painting and decorating at advanced level hampers student progression.

- External partnership working with employers, schools and other stakeholders is outstanding. A multi-agency apprenticeship programme involving the college is a highly innovative and effective approach to supporting employment opportunities for disadvantaged young people in the City.
- Support for students is good. All students receive initial diagnostic assessment which effectively identifies support needs. The support provided is particularly effective; most learners who receive support remain in learning and successfully complete their qualification. Few Train to Gain learners identified as requiring support in literacy and numeracy actually take up the support.
- Leadership and management are very good. Managers and staff work together in a positive and supportive culture. A strong commitment to continuous improvement has led to noticeable improvements in teaching and learning and success rates. Data are used well to set targets and to drive improvement. Progress in achieving agreed objectives is carefully monitored.
- Resources are good. Most classrooms are equipped to support ILT and provide a good environment for teaching and learning. The workshops are spacious, clean and well maintained. They are used to good effect to develop students' practical skills. Tools, equipment, and materials are sufficient to support training and assessment.
- Equality and diversity are effectively incorporated into induction, teaching and learning. However, they require further development within the Train to Gain programme. Self-assessment and quality assurance arrangements are good. Strengths and areas for improvement in the self-assessment report are broadly in line with those identified during inspection. Action plans contain clear and relevant targets that are monitored and updated regularly.

What does Salford City College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the sharing of best practice in the development of teaching, learning and assessment materials. Share these through the college's virtual learning environment to ensure that all students benefit from good quality materials.
- Building on the good practice on the national diploma course, provide work placements for students on construction craft courses to help them gain on-site experience and promote work opportunities with potential employers.
- Continue to improve Train to Gain progress reviews to ensure that they set clear targets for learners which are specific and measurable. Rigorously monitor progress to ensure that more learners complete their courses within the agreed timescales. Use reviews to check and reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity.

Arts, media and publishing

Grade 2

Context

41. Currently 1,889 students are enrolled on a range of courses including A- and AS-levels in dance, drama, art, media, graphics, textiles, music, product design and film studies. A range of vocational courses in performing arts, art and design, media, music, interactive media and musical theatre are also offered. Eighty-two per cent of the provision is at advanced and 10% at intermediate level. Almost all students are aged 16 to 18 and 58% are female. A range of teaching spaces and resources include two commercial theatres, art, film, media, and dance and rehearsal studios. Courses are provided at three sites.

Key findings

- Success rates are high overall, and on many courses they are outstanding. On BTEC national diploma in musical theatre, AS- and A-level art, success rates are 100%. Many learners achieve high grades though this is not consistent across the provision. There are also variations in progress, with some learners not achieving their predicted grades. Students feel safe and secure.
- Students develop very good practical and professional skills and produce work of a high standard. Work is often experimental, innovative and well presented, which helps students to progress to high-profile and prestigious institutions. An ambitious and aspirational culture exists that encourages all advanced students to apply to higher education and specialist drama schools, with 82% gaining places in 2008/09.
- Teaching and learning are good. In the better lessons students are encouraged to set achievement targets to ensure they remain focused. The pace of lessons is good with students fully engaged and clearly developing new skills. Students are supported by teachers and challenged to achieve well. In a minority of lessons the pace is too relaxed and students make slow progress.
- Good tracking and monitoring processes ensure that all students are supported to achieve. Programme leaders work closely with individual students to set targets and short-term goals. This feeds into students' electronic profiles that are shared with all relevant staff. The impact of these interventions has been a significant improvement in retention on many courses.
- Assessment feedback is good and clearly improves students' achievement on many courses. Feedback on vocational courses is very detailed and clearly identifies areas for further improvement. Students respond to the teachers' feedback, identifying what they are going to do to ensure they improve. On A-level programmes feedback is often not as detailed, although it does identify improvement actions.
- Teachers frequently take the opportunity to promote equality and diversity within the curriculum. They design projects specifically to promote students' understanding of different aspects of diversity. For example, a project called 'Social Issues' prompted students to use a range of influences such as gay rights, the Iraq war and cultural stereotyping as inspiration to develop their work.

- A wide and varied range of excellent enrichment opportunities are available to students which enhance, complement and reinforce learning within their own subject areas. For example, students have the opportunity to work with the English National Ballet.
- A wide range of courses ensures students' interests are well catered for; these include film, media, dance, theatre, art and design, product design, textiles, music and music technology. Currently there are few students on intermediate courses. As part of the college's strategy to better meet the needs of the local community, it has recently increased provision at this level.
- The college has excellent partnerships with local and national organisations to provide a range of opportunities for students to work on 'live' projects. These include a road safety awareness campaign with Salford City Council and the writing and filming of an episode of CBeebies for the BBC.
- Teachers provide good support to ensure students achieve. Students clearly appreciate the commitment teachers demonstrate outside of lessons. Students are always able to access resources and guidance when required to ensure they achieve to a high standard. Additional learning support is timely, effective and clearly informed by initial assessment.
- Curriculum management is very good. Staff are fully engaged and actively support the change agenda. They feel supported and listened to by their managers. Regular meetings take place and course teams are starting to work effectively across disciplines to ensure different groups of students work on various aspects of the same project, which adds value to the final outcome.
- The self-assessment report accurately identified most of the strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors. Staff are actively involved in the process and have clear arrangements to feed into it through regular team meetings and course reviews.
- Specialist accommodation and resources are excellent, with well-equipped theatres, dance and film studios as well as a range of media and art rooms. Students have good access to computers and software is industry standard. Some practical activities take place in an unsuitable carpeted classroom with no running water.

What does Salford City College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all course success rates and high grade profiles reflect the same high standards across all of the provision by identifying early students who are at risk of falling behind and ensuring interventions have a positive impact.
- Ensure the curriculum offer fully reflects the needs of all students by introducing a wider range of intermediate courses so students in all specialisms have appropriate opportunities for progression.
- Ensure practical activities are timetabled in suitable classrooms to enable high quality teaching and learning to take place.

Languages, literature and culture

Grade 2

Context

42. The provision consists of A- and AS-level courses in English language; English literature; English language and literature; classical civilisation; French; German and Spanish; GCSE English, French and Spanish; and personal and community development learning courses in a range of languages. There are 986 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 230 adult part-time students. A few students study minority languages such as Japanese through flexible learning opportunities. Courses are mainly located at the Pendleton and Eccles centres.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students at advanced level are good. High success rates for 2006/07 and 2007/08 at Pendleton and Eccles have been maintained in the merged college. In 2008/09 success rates are high and above the national average on all advanced level English courses, classical civilisation, A-level courses in modern foreign languages and AS German. Success rates in AS French and Spanish are satisfactory.
- Outcomes for students on intermediate courses are satisfactory. Success rates for GCSE French and Spanish have been above the national average for the last two years but success rates for GCSE English are low. Effective strategies have been implemented to address this and current students have gained good results in recent coursework modules.
- The progress of students in relation to their prior attainment is good. Students make excellent progress on the majority of A levels, and on some AS courses. However, in 2008/09 many students failed to achieve the grades expected of them in AS-level English language, English language and literature, Spanish and French courses. English students took re-sit examinations in January with very significant improvements in their grades.
- Students enjoy their learning and make a positive contribution to the college and wider community. They take part in college events such as open evenings and work with pupils from local high schools preparing for languages oral examinations. Second-year students who successfully completed GCSE English in the previous year peer mentor first-year students on the course.
- Teaching and learning are good. Most teaching is good and some is outstanding, with the better lessons demonstrating dynamic, focused teaching and high levels of engagement and attainment by students. Most students are diligent and enthusiastic. In a minority of cases, lessons are too teacher centred, with students remaining relatively passive.
- Good resources support students' learning. ILT is used imaginatively in lessons by teachers, and students are able to work collaboratively with electronic message boards in class. The college VLE is well used by both staff and students for sharing of resources and accessing course materials.
- Assessment is good. In lessons, teachers support students' learning with continual verbal assessment and guidance. Written feedback is clearly annotated

with helpful comments, students are aware of assessment objectives and what they need to do to improve. Exemplar material is used well to improve examination technique and build students' confidence.

- The wide range of provision is responsive to the needs and interests of learners. English courses recruit high numbers of students. Classical civilisation and Spanish recruitment is increasing from low starting points. Flexible learning opportunities are available for minority languages and Latin. Recruitment to French and German courses is low and declining, despite good initiatives by modern languages staff.
- Excellent enrichment opportunities are available to students. Most students have taken part in conferences, theatre and cinema visits in the local area, or have benefited from lectures and literature talks from visiting speakers. Students in modern languages benefit from European exchange programmes and residential visits. Recently students of classical civilisation participated in a study visit to Rome.
- Support for students is good. Students speak warmly of the support they receive from their teachers in and outside of lesson time. Learning mentors support individual students well, which enables most of them to make good progress and achieve. The college VLE provides an excellent resource for students, who make good use of this in college and at home.
- Leaders and managers are highly effective in raising expectations. A strong culture of raising aspirations has been developed. Staff and students work towards ambitious targets. Quality assurance and peer observation are welcomed by teachers as a means of improving practice. Continuing professional development is effective in keeping teachers up-to-date. Students' views are actively sought through focus groups, and are acted upon.
- The self-assessment report accurately identifies the grade, the strengths, and areas for improvement. There have been effective strategies to improve performance following poor results in 2008/09, most notably in English language and literature, where 100% of students improved their original grade after a January re-sit, in some cases moving from Grade U or E to grade A or B.
- Low and declining recruitment in modern foreign languages has been addressed by the development of a good range of liaison activities with local high schools. However, whilst Spanish enrolments have risen, these initiatives have not as yet been effective in other areas.

What does Salford City College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the satisfactory teaching and learning in the minority of lessons. Further develop systems for sharing of good practice so that the excellent teaching and learning observed in the better lessons extends to all areas.
- Improve achievement in GCSE English by monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of initiatives to raise success rates.
- Review strategies for the delivery of modern foreign languages in the light of low recruitment and attainment patterns on some courses in this area.

Business, administration and law

Grade 2

Context

43. Currently there are 1,112 students on business, administration and law programmes. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18 years and attend full-time programmes. Most of the provision is delivered at the Pendleton centre, with some provision at the other two centres. Over 80% of the provision is at advanced level and 14% is at intermediate level. Around 60% of advanced level students are on courses leading to A and AS level and 40% are taking vocational qualifications. Eleven apprentices in business administration have recently started their training and 363 Train to Gain learners are on NVQ levels 2 to 4 in business administration.

Key findings

- Success rates are high overall. However, they vary considerably between subjects and prior to merger across the different colleges. Success rates on A-level business, accounting and law are consistently high. Success rates in AS-law are low but the January module results are good with many students reaching or exceeding their target grades. In-year retention is good but varies between subjects.
- Overall success rates for Train to Gain learners are satisfactory but timely success rates were high in 2008/09. Both continue to improve in the current year. Apprentices are making very good progress; pass rates on the technical certificate are excellent at 100%.
- Students make good progress and achieve their potential when compared with their attainment on entry. Students from minority ethnic groups and those receiving learning support achieve as well as all students. Most students produce work of a high standard during lessons and in their assignments. In a few lessons, objectives are not always sufficiently challenging for all students.
- Train to Gain learners produce work of a good standard which is highly valued by employers. Many learners gain additional qualifications which improve their employability. Portfolios are well organised and contain a good range of evidence. Progress reviews for apprentices are satisfactory. However, reviews for Train to Gain learners are weak; the targets set lack detail and are not specific or measurable.
- Students enjoy their learning and activities which help them develop business and enterprise skills. Teachers use topics for assignments which help develop students' understanding of the current social and economic climate. Students feel safe and have a good understanding of internet safety. Students take part in various health initiatives and show good awareness of staying healthy.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned with a good range of activities to engage students. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic; they make good use of detailed student profiles to develop effective differentiation strategies. Most students are highly motivated, attentive and contribute well in lessons. A few advanced-level students are less engaged and arrive at lessons inadequately prepared.

- Students use technology extensively for research and access to resources. The use of ILT to support teaching is satisfactory. Assessment is good, and feedback is prompt and detailed and helps students understand how they can improve. A minority of teachers do not ensure that students adhere to deadlines for the submission of assignments. Assessment for Train to Gain learners is thorough and well documented.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of students and employers. A highly flexible business provision is sensitively adapted to suit the needs of female students at the Jewish Seminary. Progression from AS to A2 and into higher education is good. Plans are in place to increase the relatively small provision at intermediate and foundation levels.
- Excellent external partnerships lead to a wide variety of enrichment opportunities. Students' experience is enhanced through visiting speakers from prestigious businesses, mentoring activities from solicitors, and support from local companies for business and enterprise projects. The Eccles centre recently played host to a selection of professional barristers and solicitors at the launch of the Salford Aimhigher programme.
- Students are very well supported by teachers and learning mentors who are always available for them. An excellent tracking system is very effective in identifying at-risk students. The regular and effective support provided ensures that most of these students are retained and achieve well. Support for literacy and numeracy needs of Train to Gain learners is insufficiently developed.
- Curriculum management is good. Staff appreciate the new opportunities brought about by the merger for different job roles and for working at different sites. The recent appointment of programme leaders has greatly increased the support for teachers. Support is particularly good for new teachers and those with development needs. Managers have worked hard to improve the quality of employer-responsive provision.
- Equality of opportunity is well promoted in the curriculum and in teaching and learning. A cross-college 'Konnekt to Faith' team helps increase awareness of equality and diversity through various events such as celebration of Hanukkah. Quality assurance arrangements are effective but the sharing of good practice across sites is insufficiently developed. Arrangements to assure the quality of employer-responsive provision are insufficiently developed.
- The self-assessment report accurately identifies the grade, strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. The resulting action plans are detailed, effective and are leading to significant recent improvements.

What does Salford City College need to do to improve further?

- Improve retention and success rates by continuing to implement action plans and continuously monitor their effectiveness.
- Ensure consistency between teachers in the maintaining of deadlines for assignments so that all students feel they are treated the same.

- Further develop the quality assurance of employer-responsive provision including progress reviews and the observation of key learner processes.
- Fully implement plans to extend the range of provision and increase participation at foundation and intermediate levels as planned.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

44. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspections.
45. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessment and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Salford City College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	5,973	7	5,053	913	0
Part-time learners	4,611	227	270	1,720	2,394
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	1				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	1				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	1				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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