



# Hugh Baird College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

Better  
education  
and care

## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-sixteen

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## Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Hugh Baird College
Type of college:	Tertiary
Principal:	Dr Jette Burford
Address of college:	Balliol Road Bootle Liverpool L20 7EW
Telephone number:	0151 353 4400
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Chair of governors:	Colin Appleton
Unique reference number:	130490
Name of lead inspector:	Josephine Nowacki, HMI
Dates of inspection:	27-31 March 2006

## Background of the organisation

1. Hugh Baird College is a tertiary college, situated in south Sefton, Merseyside. In 2004, learners were recruited from 39 schools in the Sefton and north Liverpool area. The college operates in a competitive environment; within a 20 mile radius there are five general further education or tertiary colleges, three sixth form colleges and over 30 schools with sixth form provision. Following a recent Strategic Area Review (StaR), the local education authority (LEA), the local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC) and other partners are carrying out consultations on the future of post-16 education in Sefton.
2. The college offers courses in all of the 15 Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) sector subject areas. In 2005, the college had 8,388 further education (FE) learners on roll, of which 2,571 (31%) were full-time. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE), in partnership with a neighbouring college, in hospitality and tourism. The college offers around 16 GCE A-levels and a wide range of vocational courses. About 30% of the learners are aged 16–18 years old. In 2004/05 the Work-Based Learning (WBL) Unit co-ordinated the provision for 108 apprentices and advanced apprentices in engineering, construction, floristry, business administration and hairdressing. The college provides adult and community learning courses in 44 venues around south Sefton.
3. The unemployment rate in south Sefton is three times the average for England. More than 60% of the college's learners were recruited from the 5% most deprived local authority wards in England. In 2005, 77% of learners were from areas with high levels of deprivation. The college also attracts students from Knowsley, West Lancashire and north Liverpool. Around 99% of learners at the college are white British. The south of Sefton has a below average proportion of school leavers who have five or more GCSEs at grade A\* to C.
4. At the time of the inspection the principal had been in post for less than one month, although she had been deputy principal at the college for five years. An interim deputy principal had been appointed for three months pending a new appointment for this post. There were no other changes to senior management posts.
5. The college's aim is to establish a learning environment in which learners of all ages and abilities are enabled to develop and progress.

## Scope of the inspection

6. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual

assessment visits and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: grade 2

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

7. Learners' achievements are satisfactory overall. Success rates for 16-18 year olds have been variable. Most adult success rates have been at or higher than the national average. In 2005 there was good improvement in overall success rates especially for 16-18 year olds on level 3 courses. In contrast, adult success rates at level 3 have shown a steady decline in the three years from 2003 although the high success rates on level 1 and 2 courses has been maintained. Students' personal development is good and their behaviour is extremely good.
8. Teaching and learning are good and have continued to improve since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned, with activities successfully matched to individual need and an increasing use of information learning technology (ILT) supports learning. Teachers check learning carefully and provide effective guidance on how to improve. The integration of key skills in teaching across all areas is insufficient.
9. The college's approach to social inclusion is outstanding. A good choice of academic and vocational courses are available at most levels. The college has developed a good range of programmes for 14-16 year olds in schools including a short life skills programme aimed at those from socially disadvantaged areas. Since the last inspection, the college has extended and improved its high quality support and teaching for learners with disabilities by providing more trained support workers and specialist equipment in its outreach centres. Participation in enrichment activities is satisfactory.
10. Support for learners is good. Individual tutorials are effective in monitoring attendance and progress and supporting learners. However, the quality of group tutorials is variable. Additional learning support and support for learners with disabilities and learning difficulties is very effective. The college's approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of individual learners meets statutory requirements.
11. Leadership and management are good overall. Senior leadership and management are effective. Governors provide clear strategic direction. The college has developed comprehensive quality improvement processes and has been particularly effective in improving leadership and management in the curriculum. Following the strategic area review, the college has had little involvement in the collaborative planning of post-16 provision within Sefton 14-19 developments.

## Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

12. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve. Comprehensive and rigorous quality improvement processes are in place and a culture of continuous improvement is well embedded within the college. Performance management is effective in challenging marginal performance in most areas of the college. The lesson observation process is thorough and is effective in driving up the standard of teaching and learning. The college has been effective in securing good improvement in overall success rates in 2005. The college's financial position is good. The self-assessment report is detailed and analytical. Actions plans, clearly linked to the report, are thorough and monitored regularly by managers.

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

13. The college has made good progress in addressing most of the issues raised in the inspection in 2003. Framework completion rates for work-based learning are low but have improved significantly. The college teaching and learning observation grade profile has risen considerably and there is more good or better teaching. There is improved use of ILT in teaching and a considerable increase in the range of IT resources available, including interactive white boards. The college has introduced a 'green card' system which uses prior attainment at GCSE to set motivational targets for individual learners. Weaknesses in key skills continue to be addressed; pass rates in key skills have improved but are still low.

## Key strengths of the college

### *Strengths*

- good improvement in overall success rates in 2005
- learners personal development is good and their behaviour is extremely good
- good teaching and learning
- broad range of courses to widen participation
- good additional learning support
- effective strategies to bring about quality improvements
- robust strategic planning
- outstanding promotion of inclusiveness and equality of opportunity

## Areas for improvement

### *The college should address:*

- low pass rates on key skills courses
- inconsistency of group tutorials
- ensure the college plays a full role in Sefton 14-19 developments



## Main findings

### Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

14. The college's self-assessment report judged achievement and standards as good; inspectors found them to be satisfactory. Success rates in 2003 were around the national average for similar colleges for 16-18 year olds. In 2004 success rates fell to significantly below the national average for 16-18 year olds at levels 1 and 2 and they remained average at level 3. One reason for the fall was the college's decision to introduce the Certificate in Adult Basic Skills for the majority of 16-18 year old learners. Pass rates on this course were very low. In 2005 there was good improvement in overall success rates to above the national average for similar colleges. For 16-18 year olds at level 3 success rates are now well above the national average. However, for substantial numbers of 16-18 year olds on level 1 and level 2 courses, success rates have returned to a similar level to those in 2003 and remain around the national average level.
15. In 2003 success rates were above the national average for adults at all levels. In 2005, success rates at levels 1 and 2 continue to be above the national average. However, success rates for adults on level 3 courses have declined since 2003 and are now at national average.
16. GCE AS and A-level pass rates are around the national average. Value added measures, which compare learners' results at GCE AS and A-level with their performance at GCSE, show that learners on GCE AS and A-level biology and GCE AS and A-level media studies achieve consistently well. Learners in GCE A-level chemistry, English language and literature, information communications technology (ICT) and psychology and AVCE double award in performing arts and media, make significantly below average progress. The vast majority of other students make satisfactory progress.
17. Pass rates on GCSE courses are generally good for 16-18 year old learners and they are high for adults. Retention rates for all learners on GCSE courses are at or below the national average.
18. On key skills courses pass rates have improved since the last inspection but remain low. On work-based learning courses, achievement of the full apprenticeship framework has improved significantly from 17% in 2004 to 37% in 2005. The college has set itself a target for 41% full framework achievement for 2006 and the indications are that this target will be exceeded. Pass and retention rates for 14-16 year old learners have improved and were satisfactory in 2005.
19. Standards of work are generally good and learners enjoy their courses. Their personal development is good and their behaviour is very good. In particular, learners value the variety of activities in lessons.

20. Most learners understand the importance of exercise and a healthy lifestyle but do not always make healthy choices which are available from some of the college menus. Too few learners participate in sporting activities.

#### Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

21. Inspectors agreed with the college that the quality of provision is good. The college expects the outcome of teaching and learning to be at least good and refers any that is not to a group of advanced practitioners who provide excellent support. New teachers are well supported and their early performance is carefully monitored. Teachers are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Teaching and learning are good across all aspects of the provision. Most lessons are well planned, incorporate a variety of teaching methods and include a good range of activities which take account of all learning styles. ILT is increasingly used to enhance learning. Good IT resources are available in most classrooms and at the various sites. There is good integration of on and off-the-job training for work based apprentices. Teachers work closely with support assistants in planning and conducting lessons. This helps those learners receiving support to make very good progress.
22. In the better lessons learners are fully engaged, enjoy their work and are successfully encouraged to learn and improve their knowledge and skills. Some learners make good use of e-portfolios to collate evidence of key skills achievement. However, there is insufficient integration of key skills in some areas. In a minority of lessons there is insufficient challenge for learners, especially those at the higher levels. The college is aware of these areas for development and plans are in place to bring about improvement.
23. Initial assessment of full time learners to identify support and specific learning needs is comprehensive and timely. Those at risk of underachievement are identified and where appropriate, support is arranged and provided quickly. A 'green card' system for tracking and monitoring learner progress is successfully embedded across the provision and the majority of curriculum areas are making good use of the information to motivate learners. Work is thoroughly assessed and most learners receive helpful feedback with suggestions for improvement. Where appropriate, communication with parents/carers and employers is very effective.
24. The college offers a good range of courses to meet the needs of the local community and businesses. There are good progression routes from levels 1 to 3 in many areas. Curriculum links with around 20 schools are generally good for 14-16 year olds. An increased flexibility programme provides opportunities for vocational training for around 177 school pupils. This is supplemented by a number of partnerships with individual schools that support vocational training for pupils in their own schools. However, at post-

16 level, the college has had little involvement in recent collaborative planning arising from the strategic area review.

25. The college has built on its extensive community provision for adults by improving support for learners in its 44 outreach centres and extending its basic skills training in the workplace. The good range of community partnerships has been extended since the last inspection; links with industry continue to improve. The business centre provides a valuable service to industry and commerce, offering individually designed courses on employers' premises, often during unsocial hours. The college enrichment programme has improved but there is insufficient take-up of the enrichment programmes offered.
26. Support for learners is good. A broad range of advice, guidance and counselling services is available in the college and is well used and valued by learners. Learners have good access to Connexions advisers and receive effective careers advice and guidance. Initial assessment is comprehensive and learners who need or request support receive it. Support systems are generally well managed at all levels and are subject to the same rigorous performance review as other college departments. Achievement of learners receiving additional support is routinely monitored and analysis shows that they achieve well in comparison to those not needing support. A similar level of support is available in most outreach centres to that available in the main college centres. Tutorial support has been improved since the last inspection. Following recent development in managing registers, individual tutorials in many curriculum areas are effective in monitoring attendance, progress and punctuality. The college continues to develop its approach to group tutorials having identified shortcomings in the consistency of implementation across the college.

## Leadership and management

Good : grade 2

27. Leadership and management are good. The college benefits from a team of highly supportive and committed governors; however, women are under-represented on the corporation. A clear strategic direction is provided by governors and the senior team. Demanding targets are set for success rates, teaching and learning and inclusiveness. Progress and improvements are monitored carefully. However, there remain inconsistencies in a few aspects of curriculum management. In-year retention on some part-time courses is low. There are too many courses identified as weak, with success rates significantly below the national average. Group tutorials and enrichment are insufficiently developed. Resource performance indicators, such as average class size, are used infrequently. The use of data by curriculum managers is adequate.
28. The college has a comprehensive range of quality improvement strategies which are well understood by staff and which have been effective in raising standards in many areas. Annual performance reviews of each school and

service area are graded and given action plans for improvement. Management reviews of each school take place twice per year, tracking progress against demanding targets. The college has made good progress in improving teaching and learning. Unannounced teaching and learning observations are carried out and 70 per cent of teaching is graded good or better. The internal verification process is effective and closely linked to the college quality improvement system. The self-assessment process effectively involves all staff and governors; the views of students are routinely incorporated. Communications in the college are good.

29. The college's commitment to equality of opportunity is strong. There is a wide range of appropriate policies which meet the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002. Monitoring of equality of opportunity is robust. Arrangements for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults are adequate; the annual review of this policy has not taken place. Students receiving additional support make good progress.
30. Financial management is good. Most success rates are improving, though some remain at national average level and for adults at level 3 they are declining. Value-for-money is good. Most buildings provide a very good standard of accommodation. Many classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and provide a good environment for teaching and learning. Workshop accommodation is good but is unsatisfactory for some construction students. Learners and staff have easy access to computers. The college's virtual learning environment (VLE) is growing and is used increasingly by many learners. Staff development is effective and well targeted at college priorities. A comprehensive plan identifies targets which are clearly focussed on raising achievement. Ninety-two per cent of full-time staff are qualified teachers. All staff have an annual appraisal which rigorously identifies personal targets and training.
31. Governors receive regular, timely reports on all key issues which enables them to carry out their roles effectively. However, there has been a lack of clarity on the reporting of some data. Governors undertake a range of appropriate training but have not completed training in child protection. The college has strong links with the local community and some curriculum areas have good links with employers. Since the outcomes of the strategic area review for Sefton, there has been too little collaboration with other providers on 16-19 developments in the area. However, collaborative delivery with schools for 14-16 year olds is well developed.

## Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to 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	02/03	2,212	61	55	5	2,351	62	53	9
	03/04	1,569	41	59	-18	3,075	64	57	7
	04/05	1,188	62	-		3,062	73	-	
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	70	70	58	12	3	33	48	
	03/04	94	62	63	-1	3	33	55	
	04/05	11	74	-		5	40	-	
NVQs	02/03	114	67	57	9	25	32	63	-31
	03/04	77	65	57	8	24	13	63	-50
	04/05	87	59	-		*	*	-	
Other	02/03	2,028	60	55	5	2,323	63	53	10
	03/04	1,398	38	59	-21	3,051	65	57	8
	04/05	986	61	-		3,046	73	-	

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to 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	02/03	1144	52	50	1	1193	57	50	7
	03/04	1155	49	56	-7	1244	51	52	-1
	04/05	1044	58	-		1141	60	-	
GCSEs	02/03	197	60	58	2	244	57	54	3
	03/04	144	61	64	-3	209	60	57	3
	04/05	96	64	-		203	64	-	
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	160	58	53	5	43	40	47	-8
	03/04	186	62	58	5	35	40	55	-15
	04/05	165	69	-		34	53	-	
NVQs	02/03	247	53	41	12	178	61	54	7
	03/04	260	54	49	5	266	57	52	5
	04/05	289	60	-		260	57	-	
Other	02/03	540	46	47	-1	728	57	48	9
	03/04	565	39	52	-13	734	46	51	-5
	04/05	492	52	-		629	60	-	

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to 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	02/03	1527	59	58	2	1002	61	50	11
	03/04	1573	60	60	1	950	55	51	4
	04/05	1290	69	-		884	52	-	
A/A2 Levels	02/03	166	75	80	-5	36	69	66	3
	03/04	194	82	83	-1	41	83	69	14
	04/05	220	83	-		20	75	-	
AS Levels	02/03	627	51	57	-6	91	57	48	9
	03/04	618	56	59	-3	78	46	49	-3
	04/05	352	60			68	47	-	
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	492	67	47	20	129	60	46	14
	03/04	449	63	49	14	80	54	43	11
	04/05	369	77	-		48	73	-	
NVOs	02/03	46	54	47	7	102	60	46	14
	03/04	50	60	49	11	140	56	47	10
	04/05	96	56	-		176	45	-	
Other	02/03	196	54	50	3	644	62	51	11
	03/04	262	48	49	-1	611	55	52	3
	04/05	254	63	-		590	53		

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2004 to 2005

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVO rate **	National rate **
2004	Apprenticeship	26	15	32	35	47
	Advanced	40	25	31	45	48
2005	Apprenticeship	44	30	38	34	50
	Advanced	44	18	34	68	48

\* 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 and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2004	Apprenticeship	29	14	16	34	24
	Advanced	39	15	19	33	30
2005	Apprenticeship	50	12	29	10	21
	Advanced	46	13	21	59	31

\* The number of learners who planned to complete their learning programme in the given year

\*\* College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'