



Dudley College of Technology



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

Published
March 2007

Provider reference
130475

Contents

Basic information about the college	3
Background of the organisation	4
Scope of the inspection	4
<hr/>	
Summary of grades awarded	6
Curriculum areas	6
<hr/>	
Overall judgement	7
Main findings	9
Curriculum area inspections	14

Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Dudley College of Technology
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Jeanne E Harding
Address of college:	The Broadway Dudley West Midlands DY1 4AS
Telephone number:	01384 363000
Fax number:	01384 363311
Chair of governors:	Viv Astling OBE
Unique reference number:	130475
Name of lead inspector:	Nigel Flood, ALI
Dates of inspection:	5 – 9 February 2007

Background of the organisation

1. Dudley College of Technology is a large general further education (GFE) college situated in the Black Country metropolitan borough of Dudley. The college is located at four main sites: The Broadway, Mons Hill Centre, Castle View and Wolverhampton Street. Its administrative site is at The Broadway. The college's mission is: "Putting learners and our community at the heart of all we do".
2. Around 40% of learners are from Dudley, 25% from Sandwell and most of the remainder are from the other neighbouring Black Country borough, cities and counties of the West Midlands. Dudley has two GFE colleges including Dudley College of Technology, a sixth form college and a tertiary college.
3. Dudley's population is 305,155. Dudley has a ranking 109 out of 354 for the highest levels of deprivation in England. Dudley's unemployment rate is 3.8%; the national unemployment rate is 2.5%. Some 6% of the local population are from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils gaining five GCSE's at A*-C in Dudley in 2006 was 55.8% compared to a national average of 59.2%.
4. In 2005/06, the college had 23,843 learners. Of these, 85% were adult learners. Some 53% learners aged 16-18 were male and 52% of adult learners were female. Of the learners aged 16-18, 37% were from minority ethnic groups and of adult learners it was 23%.
5. The college offers courses in all sector subject areas with the exception of sector subject area three. The highest number of learners are in preparation for life and work; information and communication technology; health, public services and care; arts, media and publishing; business, administration and law; construction, planning and the built environment; and engineering and manufacturing technologies. The college provides education and training for apprentices, advanced apprentices, and Train to Gain learners. The college is the lead partner in the BlackCCAT engineering Centre for Vocational Excellence (CoVE). The CoVE has four other local partners.

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); 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
- specialist provision in: health, public services and care; construction, planning and the built environment; information and communication technology (ICT); arts, media and publishing; preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Inadequate: grade 4
Capacity to improve	Inadequate: grade 4
Achievements and standards	Inadequate: grade 4
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Inadequate: grade 4

Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.

Curriculum areas

Health, public services and care	Inadequate: grade 4
Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: grade 2
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Good: grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: grade 3
Business, administration and law	Inadequate: grade 4

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Inadequate: grade 4

7. The college's effectiveness is inadequate. Achievements and standards are inadequate. Most success rates were low in 2005/06 and not improved since the last inspection. Standards of learners' work overall and attendance are satisfactory.
8. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, often dull and uninspiring. Assessment is fair and accurate. Use of learning targets and feedback to learners are variable.
9. The broad range of provision meets well the needs of learners, employers, the many underrepresented in education and the priorities of the LSC. The college contributes significantly to regeneration. Social and education inclusion is satisfactory. Enrichment is very limited.
10. The college has an established and extensive range of satisfactory support, information and guidance services. Additional learning support centres provide good support for learners but support is weaker in lessons. Tutorials are satisfactory.
11. Leadership and management are inadequate. The principal provides strong strategic leadership in meeting local, regional and national priorities and resolving financial difficulties. Equality of opportunity is good. Managers have not secured increases in standards of teaching and learning and low success rates. Quality assurance arrangements have insufficient effect and self-assessment lacks rigour.

Capacity to improve

Inadequate: grade 4

12. The college's capacity to improve is inadequate. Responsiveness is good and remedying of financial problems efficient. However, the college has not raised the standard of provision overall learners receive. A significant number of weaknesses identified at the last inspection have not been resolved and some strengths have not been maintained. The college has not invested effectively in improving teaching and learning and success rates. Significant weaknesses exist in quality assurance arrangements, self-assessment and sector subject areas.
13. Self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous. The self-assessment report gives insufficient attention to areas for improvement, overstates the strengths and grading is often inaccurate. Plans to remedy areas for improvement do not recognise all weaknesses and have insufficiently measurable targets.

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

14. The college has made insufficient progress since the last inspection. The college has maintained a number of key strengths since the last inspection. Some improvements have taken place. Nevertheless many weaknesses from the last inspection remain. The college has not been effective in bringing about better teaching and learning and increasing success rates. Quality assurance initiatives have had little effect. Although some grades have improved since the last inspection, others have deteriorated.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- good provision in construction, planning and the built environment
- good provision in arts, media and publishing
- successful employer engagement
- good breadth of provision
- strong strategic direction
- good equality of opportunity.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates for long courses
- low success rates for short courses over five weeks
- inadequate provision in business, administration and law
- significant levels of satisfactory teaching and learning
- insufficiently critical self-assessment
- ineffective implementation of quality initiatives to improve teaching and learning and low success rates.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Inadequate: grade 4

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning

Satisfactory: grade 3

15. Achievements and standards are inadequate. The self-assessment report did not record that in 2005/06; the overall long course success rate was well below the national average and stayed at a similar level since the last inspection. The overall success rate for long courses for learners aged 16-18 improved slightly in 2005/06 since the last inspection to just below the national average but at an increase significantly less than the national rate. The overall success rate for adult learners in 2005/06 was low and lower than at the time of the last inspection.
16. The overall short course success rate for programmes between 5 and 24 weeks in 2005/06 was low and declined slightly since the last inspection. However, the overall short course success rate for programmes less than five weeks was high in 2005/06 and similar to the national average.
17. In 2005/06, just under half of success rates for sector subject areas for learners aged 16-18 were below the national average and just over an eighth were above. For adult learners, just over half of success rates for sector subject areas in 2005/06 were below the national average, and less than a tenth were above the average.
18. Success rates for male and female learners and white and minority ethnic learners were mostly similar.
19. Since the last inspection, success rates for work-based learners increased significantly. Advanced apprentice success rates in 2005/06 were above the national average. In 2005/06, the apprentice success rate was around average. The number completing the Employer Training Pilot in 2005/06 successfully, was high.
20. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. In construction, planning and the built environment and arts, media and publishing, learners have high standards of vocational skills. In ICT, learners develop an appropriate range of skills, particularly work-based learners. Preparation for life and work learners have satisfactory levels of numeracy, literacy and language skills. Business, administration and law learners are confident in using a range of vocational

skills but some do not work effectively on their own. Health, public services and early years learners effectively use theory to develop professional skills. Learners' progress in lessons and attendance is satisfactory and most enjoy their studies.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

21. Much teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The use and standards of learning resources are good. In the better lessons, well organised teachers use a range of good teaching and learning methods and take account of individual learning needs. Lessons are demanding and the development of learners' skills is good. Training in work-based learning is good. However, as at the last inspection, most teaching and learning is only satisfactory, often dull, and insufficiently challenging; an area for improvement the self-assessment report did not record. In the less effective lessons, the use of learning objectives is weak, planning is insufficient, teachers do not use approaches to meet individual learning needs and fail to engage with learners. The college is continuing to develop its key skills provision, which is leading to improving success rates. Teachers often do not challenge learners' poor punctuality. Learning in the workplace for apprentices and advanced apprentices is good.
22. The college has a comprehensive teaching and learning observation process. Inspectors evaluated a small number of observations and found most accurate. Managers take action when staff receive an inadequate grade but not when the grade is satisfactory.
23. Assessment is fair and accurate. Well trained staff thoroughly moderate and internally verify learners' work. Some teachers use targets effectively to improve learning and record learners' progress, but in other instances targets have insufficient detail to be useful and the recording of progress is weak. Feedback to learners is variable. Where it is good, learners develop and improve their skills.
24. The college's response to the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. A wide range of courses meets local needs well, particularly the expansion of levels 1 and 2 provision; a strength in the self-assessment report. The college has a broad range of vocational provision available for school leavers and employers, helping young people to achieve economic wellbeing. Provision includes work-based learning and specialist courses for local industry. The college maintains a wide range of GCE AS and A level subjects to meet demand in north Dudley. Planning of provision takes note of other post-16 providers. The college contributes significantly to regeneration through employer engagement, its response to The Black Country LSC priorities and full involvement with Train to Gain. School links are good. The college provides courses for learners aged 14-16. Over half progress to college.

25. The college and its students' union actively promote learners' health, security and enjoyment through frequent events. Learners in business and health care make a positive contribution by supporting good causes locally. Enrichment overall is very limited.
26. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. It successfully widens participation. A significant minority of learners are from areas of high deprivation. Partnerships with a wide range of community groups and schools provides learning for hard-to-reach groups. The proportion of minority ethnic learners is larger than in the local population. A good range of courses is available for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college is addressing local basic skills needs through its literacy, numeracy and language provision. However, the provision is not as extensive or flexible to meet demand. Teachers, in many lessons, do not provide learning which recognises learners' different abilities.
27. Guidance and support are satisfactory. The college has an established and extensive range of support, information and guidance services. All full-time learners and part-time learners on substantive courses receive initial assessment to assess additional learning needs. The college uses results from the assessments to plan appropriate support. Additional learning support centres provide good support for learners but support in lessons is weaker; a strength and an area for improvement not recorded in the self-assessment report. The college provides a range of appropriate guidance services to help learners make choices before enrolment and to progress to further training, employment or higher education and to provide support with personal issues. The college provides a safe environment for learners.
28. Tutorials provide a satisfactory level of support. Tutorial schemes of work cover the five themes of the Every Child Matters. A new senior tutor post is improving the monitoring of tutorials and providing support for tutors. It is too early to assess effectiveness.

Leadership and management

Inadequate: grade 4

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning

Satisfactory: grade 3

29. Leadership and management are inadequate. The principal provides strong strategic leadership in supporting Black Country and regional initiatives and realigning the college's provision to meet better local and national priorities. The principal promotes an open and consultative management style. Communications are good. The reorganisation of staffing and sector subject areas provides the college with a clearer management structure.
30. The college has undergone a period of financial difficulty. During this time, the principal provided clear leadership, supported by the governors to resolve financial issues and improve staff morale. The significant financial deficit moved to surplus and financial management is very thorough. However, the college did not invest effectively in improving achievements and standards of provision.
31. Quality assurance initiatives to improve teaching and learning and success rates have been slow. These areas have shown little or no improvement since the last inspection. The college revised its quality assurance procedures from a compliance system to one of quality improvement. The procedures lack consistency. Managers have only recently introduced many of the quality improvement initiatives. Early indications show some improvements in sector subject management and increased retention rates in the first term of 2006/07. However, these are not consistent across all areas and it is too early to judge if the college can sustain these improvements. Self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous. Despite the introduction of a more thorough management information system, staff have difficulty using data effectively across the college to analyse learners' performance. Targets in the quality improvement plan are often insufficiently precise, particularly for sector subject areas.
32. Equality of opportunity is good. Arrangements for safeguarding learners are appropriate, including a central register of child protection information. The college is compliant with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act. All staff have had training in their responsibilities under this legislation. The college has made improvements to accessibility. Away from the main site, some areas are not accessible but the college makes alternative arrangements for learners with mobility difficulties.
33. In the context of insufficient improvement in teaching and learning, low success rates, and the deterioration of grades since the last inspection, the college provides poor value for money.

Curriculum area inspections

Health, public services and care

Inadequate: grade 4

Context

34. The college offers full-time and part-time courses from levels 1 to 4. Learners work towards national vocational qualifications (NVQ), BTEC First and National Diplomas and other vocational qualifications. Courses cover health, child and social care, public services, safety and counselling. Of the 2,279 enrolments, 1,610 are adults, 1,611 are part-time, 1,481 are female, 436 are from minority ethnic groups and 29 are aged 14-16.

STRENGTHS

- high success rate on the diploma in childcare and education in 2005/06
- high success rate on the certificate for entry to the uniformed services courses
- good range of courses.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates for adult learners
- low success rates for most learners aged 16-18
- insufficiently challenging teaching and learning
- insufficiently rigorous self-assessment.

Achievements and standards

35. Achievements and standards are inadequate. Success rates in 2005/06 were high on the diploma in childcare and education and the certificate for entry in to the uniformed services. However, success rates overall in 2005/06 were low for both learners aged 16-18 and adults, below the national average, particularly for adults, and have not improved since the last inspection. The self-assessment report did not clearly identify these issues. Learners' written and practical work is satisfactory. They make relevant use of theory to understand, develop and improve their professional skills. Learners' wall displays are informative and of a high standard. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Where teaching and learning are good, teachers make lessons interesting and regularly question learners to assess their understanding. Resources are good. Teachers make effective use of ILT in lessons. However, much teaching and learning is insufficiently demanding, does not meet learners' individual learning needs and not all are fully engaged in learning. Teachers do not effectively check understanding and lesson objectives

are not achieved. Occasionally teachers do not challenge the poor behaviour of some younger learners.

37. The good range of courses meets learners' and employers' needs well and allows learners to progress. Links with employers are productive. Provision is available on employers' premises. Around 40% of learners on public services course are women. Learners regularly take part in charitable events.
38. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Learners receive initial assessment to identify any support needs. Most identified as needing support receive help. Individual learning plans have measurable and realistic targets for learners. Tutorials take clear account of the needs of young people to be healthy, safe, enjoy study, contribute and attain wellbeing.

Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are inadequate. Team meetings are frequent. Staff work well together to share good practice and are supportive of each other. Staff are aware of the college equality policies and apply the policy to learning. Self-assessment has insufficient rigour. Not enough account is taken of learners' low success rates, grading is generous and a number of outcomes in the quality improvement plan are difficult to measure. Quality assurance of teaching observations is ineffective. Internal grading of lesson observations is over generous, and strategies to improve satisfactory teaching and learning have had little impact on raising standards. Although managers of public service have maintained learners' achievements at a satisfactory level, this has not been the position in health, social care and early years.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Good: grade 2

Context

40. Full-time and part-time courses are available in bricklaying, electrical installation, wood occupations, plumbing, refrigeration, air conditioning and technician studies. The college offers provision from entry level to level 4 including NVQ, AVCE and other vocation qualifications. Of the 941 enrolments, 697 are adults, 657 are part-time, 33 are female, 162 are from minority ethnic groups, and 31 are aged 14-16. The college has 121 work-based construction learners.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on one-year courses
- high work-based learning success rates
- very good standard of learners' vocational work
- good teaching and learning of practical subjects
- good leadership and management
- excellent resources in refrigeration and air conditioning.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low retention on heating and ventilation level 2
- slow progress by work-based electrical installation learners
- insufficient checks of learners' written work in theory lessons.

Achievements and standards

41. Achievements and standards are good. In 2005/06, success rates were high for one-year courses and for work-based learning overall, and above the national averages. However, retention rates for NVQ level 2 heating and ventilation provision have remained low. Advanced electrical installation apprentices make slow progress towards the completion of their apprenticeships. Overall success rates have increased since the last inspection to around the national average in 2005/06.
42. In all occupations, learners develop good vocational practical skills. They set out and use hand tools accurately to cut and assemble brick walls, wood joints and copper piping to high industrial standards. Learners work well individually and apply effectively the standards attained at college in the workplace. Comprehensive learners' portfolios have clear indexes and use photographs from the workplace well. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

43. Teaching and learning of practical subjects are good. Teachers and technicians all work well together to provide good quality tuition to learners to develop their

vocational skills to a high standard. In bricklaying, teachers take particular account of learners' different levels of ability. Teachers take health and safety seriously. The college prominently displays up-to-date risk assessments in all workshops. Teachers regularly remind learners about maintaining safe working areas. In practical lessons, teachers regularly and effectively monitor learners' progress. However, teachers do not check sufficiently learners' written work in theory lessons. They do not challenge learners when sketches and grammar are poor and notes untidy. Assessment is accurate and fair.

44. The range of courses to meet the needs of learners and employers is appropriate. The college offers a strong range of full cost specialist courses for industry including electrical and gas inspection and testing.
45. Support, advice and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Tutorials for full-time and work-based learners use targets effectively to help learners achieve their qualification and learning goals. Tutors regularly review learners' progress.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are good. Managers have worked hard to raise standards. They have been effective. At the last inspection, provision was unsatisfactory; it is now good and teaching and learning and success rates are improving. Management arrangements have an established and effective focus on quality improvement. Self-assessment is accurate. Internal verification is good. The college provides learners with good quality resources and those for refrigeration and air conditioning are excellent. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

47. Full-time and part-time courses are available for ICT users and practitioners from entry to level 5. Learners work towards a range of awards, including computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), GNVQ foundation and intermediate awards, and other vocational qualifications. Of the 2,917 enrolments, 2,141 are adults, 2,314 are part-time, 1,526 are men 541 are from minority ethnic groups and 5 are aged 14-16. Some 15 learners are apprentices and advanced apprentices.

STRENGTHS

- very good range of courses
- good support for individual learning
- good management of work-based learning.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- insufficiently detailed and challenging action plans for learners
- no work experience for full-time learners
- insufficiently critical self-assessment report.

Achievements and standards

48. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates since the last inspection for learners aged 16-18 and adults, have improved to just below the national average in 2005/06. Although the provision is small, work-based learning success rates in 2005/06 were high and increased on the previous year. Learners develop an appropriate range of ICT skills, particularly in work-based learning. Written work is of a satisfactory standard. Learners make reasonable progress on prior levels of attainment. Some learners give inadequate attention to safe working practices, including properly adjusted chairs and correctly positioned keyboards. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers and staff provide strong support for individual learning and good technical guidance for learners at ICT workstations. In the better lessons, teachers plan effectively, take good account of the learners' different needs and use a good range of learning activities. However, as at the last inspection, too much teaching is uninspiring. In these lessons, teachers do not provide learning which is stimulating and interesting to learners. Learners on full-time ICT courses do not have work experience. They have insufficient opportunity to learn from the workplace, and to develop and test the skills and knowledge they acquire at college in industry.

50. The range of ICT provision to meet the needs of learners and employers is good. Courses are available at college sites, at community venues and specialist ICT facilities in the local area. The college regularly reviews its provision and withdraws it if it is no longer appropriate. The range of courses provides plenty of opportunities for learners to progress from entry to higher level programmes.
51. Support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. Learners find the tutors approachable and value the support they receive. Learners' action plans to improve their performance are insufficiently detailed and challenging. Tutors and learners do not use them to plan and monitor individual learning. Learning targets are insufficiently specific and measurable and do not have sufficient impact on learners' progress.

Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management of work-based learning is good. Managers have ensured the standards of learning in this area have improved and overall rates have increased to well above the national average. Communications between staff are good. Staff awareness of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Managers effectively deploy resources. Observations of teaching and learning have not led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment report overstates strengths, understates weaknesses, grading is too generous and takes insufficient note of overall success rates.

Arts, media and publishing

Good: grade 2

Context

53. Full-time and part-time courses range from level 1 to level 4 in craft studies, visual arts and design, performing arts, music, media and film and glass. Awards include BTEC National Diplomas and certificates, Foundation Diplomas and certificates and other qualifications. Of the 1,988 enrolments, 1,426 are adults, 1,312 are full-time, 1,271 are female, 458 are from minority ethnic groups and 18 are aged 14-18.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on most national diplomas
- high standards of learners' skill and work
- good teaching and learning
- high quality resources.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates on most GCE AS and A level programmes.

Achievements and standards

54. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates are high for national diplomas in performing arts, music technology and fashion and textiles but low on most GCE AS and A level programmes. Since the last inspection, overall success rates for learners aged 16-18 have increased but have declined slightly for adult learners.
55. Learners have high levels of skills and creativity. They produce work of a very high standard. Learners make good and extensive use of sketchbooks to develop ideas. They work well on their own and learn well from one another. Learners are well organised and punctual. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

56. Teaching and learning are good; a strength in the self-assessment report. Teachers plan lessons well. They use a wide range of learning methods effectively catering for the wide range of learners' requirements. Teachers make strong use of their own experience to link theory and practice. Discussion between learners and teachers on ideas and skills is good, particularly when considering learners' own work. Teachers write good challenging assignment briefs. These make learners think for themselves and strongly develop their ability to analyse. Assessment is robust and verification thorough.

57. Resources are very good. In addition to a wide range of contemporary and historical books and journals, the college provides an excellent range of compact discs, videos and scripts as well as critical and theoretical works on theatre, dance, music and media. Teachers use ILT successfully to improve learning. For example, the use of ILT to project the work of David Hockney as visual reference for experimental pieces on water and movement was very effective. In media studies, the use of the radio play "War of the Worlds" directed by Orson Wells helped learners to understand the power of aural entertainment particularly strongly.
58. Links with local schools, community groups and employers are strong. Managers and staff use these well to help establish wide and relevant range of courses for learners and employers.
59. Support and guidance for learners are good. Tutorials are effective and tutors use them well to develop learners' skills in self-evaluation and to ensure they are enjoying their studies.

Leadership and management

60. Leadership and management are good. New sector subject area leadership is making effective progress in resolving weaknesses and maintaining strengths. The self-assessment report clearly identifies areas for improvement and the quality development plan effectively indicates the actions managers need to take to remedy issues. The college provides learners with high industry standards of accommodation and resource. Facilities for glasswork are inspiring. Teachers have good subject knowledge, are well qualified and many are practitioners.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

61. The college offers provision in English as a second language (ESOL), literacy and numeracy, foundation studies from pre-entry to level 2 and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Key skills and additional learning support are available across the college. Learners can work towards accredited awards in literacy, numeracy, ESOL and life skills. Programmes also include vocational tasters and work preparation courses. Of the 4,534 enrolments, 3,653 are full-time, 3,168 are aged 16-18, 2,200 are female, 1,445 are from minority ethnic groups and 129 are aged 14-16.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates for adults receiving additional learning support
- effective planning for individual learning needs in literacy and numeracy
- wide range of foundation provision and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low ESOL success rates
- declining overall success rate on adult courses in 2005/06
- insufficiently clear setting of targets for learners.

Achievements and standards

62. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. The success rate for adults receiving additional learning support was high in 2005/06 and well above the college average. Success rates on application of number and communications key skills courses at levels 1 and 2 were low in 2005/06, but were above the national average and had increased since the last inspection. Success rates on ESOL provision were low in 2005/06. The overall success rate on adult courses has declined since the last inspection. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory with learners making effective progress in developing and applying numeracy and literacy skills. Learners contribute well during class discussions.

Quality of provision

63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy teachers are particularly effective at providing learning which takes good account of the individual learning needs. Most planning of teaching and learning is effective. However, some lesson plans are vague and have insufficient detail. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and use learning resources appropriately to develop learners' skills. Some individual learning plans use language unhelpful to learners. Teachers do not always identify errors in written key skills work.

64. The good range of courses meets learners' and employers' needs and allows learners to progress to a higher level or to employment. The range for foundation courses and provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is strong.
65. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Support assistants work effectively with teachers to help learners with specific learning needs. Target setting in individual learning plans does not clearly identify what learners need to do to improve. Teachers often do not record learners' progress against learning targets.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have taken robust action to resolve weaknesses identified at the last inspection, particularly for the low success rates. Managers now share good practice across the provision. They have ensured induction is more thorough. Analysis of success rate data is more effective and managers relate results to different teaching and learning approaches. Where staff need assistance, stronger support and mentoring arrangements provide help. Early indications for the current academic year show a marked improvement in pass rates. Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements in the self-assessment report but considered some judgements as areas for improvement not strengths. Some observations of teaching and learning are insufficiently evaluative and focus more on teaching than on learning.

Business, administration and law

Inadequate: grade 4

Context

67. Full-time and part-time courses are available from levels 1 to 4. Provision includes accounts, administration, business, law management and professional studies. Learners can work towards NVQ, BTEC National Certificates and Diplomas, AVCE, GCSE AS and A level and professional qualifications. Of the 1,757 enrolments, 1,248 are part-time, 1,462 are adults, 1,040 are female, 465 are from minority ethnic groups and two are aged 14-16. The college has 59 work-based learners.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates for work-based learners
- wide range of flexible provision
- stimulating enrichment programme.

WEAKNESSES

- low success rates
- too much tedious and dull teaching
- low expectations of learners in many lessons
- slow progress in bringing about improvements.

Achievements and standards

68. Achievements and standards are inadequate. Success rates for learners on work-based programmes are high, and have increased significantly since the last inspection. Success rates on most courses for learners aged 16-18 and adults in 2005/06 were significantly below national averages. The overall success rate increased since the last inspection for adults but for learners aged 16-18 it declined markedly.
69. Learners on vocational courses are confident in using a range of skills and applying theory in an appropriate business context. They work co-operatively and productively in groups and complete tasks in a businesslike way. GCE AS and A level learners do not develop their understanding of business learning topics well. Some learners lack the ability to work independently and for some others, grammar and spelling are poor. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

70. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Some lessons are lively and learners work purposefully. In these lessons, teachers ensure learners produce good work, take pride in what they are doing, tackle tasks confidently and identify what they need to do to improve. However, too much teaching is tedious. Teachers talk unremittingly and do not question learners or check their

understanding sufficiently. They do not take account of learners' different abilities. Teachers do not challenge learners to think widely or to undertake tasks using a variety of business skills. Instructions from teachers are unclear. In some lessons, teachers give learners an exaggerated impression of their progress.

71. The wide range of flexible courses meets the needs of employers and learners well. Strong links with industry helped the college to develop NVQ management training in the workplace. The enrichment programme for learners is stimulating and includes the planning and provision of events for charities.
72. Support for learners is good. Individual learning plans identify effectively targets for learners. Tutors carefully monitor learners' progress and attendance and take action if necessary. Careers guidance is effective. Attendance at tutorials is good.

Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management overall are inadequate but for work-based learning are good. Quality assurance is improving and course teams are beginning to use data more effectively but progress is slow in raising standards of teaching and learning and increasing success rates. The self-assessment report did not identify the low success rates on many courses. Managers carry out lesson observations regularly and there is staff development but these have not improved teaching and learning. However, teachers now work well in teams and share a clear vision for the future.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	03/04	974	62.8	60.3	2.5	5,635	63.9	59.1	4.8
	04/05	1,343	54.8	64.2	-9.4	5,674	40.5	61.6	-21.1
	05/06	1,489	63.0	*		6,103	50.2	*	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	88	71.6	65.1	6.5	4	75.0	52.3	22.7
	04/05	87	66.7	67.9	-1.2	2	100.0	58.1	41.9
	05/06	54	81.5	*		2	50.0	*	
NVQs	03/04	31	64.5	61.0	3.5	90	51.1	62.3	-11.2
	04/05	123	64.2	67.2	-3.0	127	58.3	66.9	-8.6
	05/06	127	68.5	*		259	80.7	*	
Other	03/04	855	61.9	60.0	1.9	5,541	64.1	59.0	5.1
	04/05	1,133	52.9	63.6	-10.7	5,545	40.1	61.4	-21.3
	05/06	1,308	61.7	*		5,842	48.8	*	

* Not available

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	03/04	1,241	46.2	56.3	-10.1	3,758	43.9	53.6	-9.7
	04/05	1,258	55.6	60.9	-5.3	4,303	49.6	59.5	-9.9
	05/06	1,576	59.3	*		4,706	52.2	*	
GCSEs	03/04	359	57.4	61.3	-3.9	263	48.3	58.8	-10.5
	04/05	252	66.3	64.1	2.2	221	61.5	62.5	-0.1
	05/06	210	61.9	*		302	49.0	*	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	198	54.2	63.0	-8.8	35	34.3	56.6	-22.3
	04/05	147	59.2	66.8	-7.6	46	50.0	70.4	-20.4
	05/06	90	54.4			65	40.0	*	
NVQs	03/04	223	34.1	51.9	-17.8	1,381	42.6	53.5	-10.9
	04/05	186	60.8	57.0	3.8	1,236	50.4	59.6	-9.2
	05/06	185	56.7			1,008	52.5	*	
Other	03/04	461	39.7	54.1	-14.4	2,078	44.3	52.7	-8.4
	04/05	673	49.5	60.1	-10.6	2,800	48.3	58.8	-10.5
	05/06	1,091	59.7	*		3,209	54.1	*	

* Not available

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	03/04	2,659	59.1	64.1	-5.0	2,833	39.5	53.5	-14.0
	04/05	2,379	61.2	67.6	-6.4	2,476	44.5	57.3	-12.8
	05/06	1,999	61.5	*		2,415	47.0	*	
A/A2 Levels	03/04	638	84.5	83.8	0.7	101	71.3	65.5	5.8
	04/05	590	81.0	85.6	-4.6	107	72.0	69.1	2.9
	05/06	453	79.5	*		104	70.2	*	
AS Levels	03/04	1,246	53.4	62.9	-9.5	246	39.4	49.6	-10.2
	04/05	1,094	54.8	65.5	-10.7	229	40.2	52.2	-12.0
	05/06	860	56.4	*		224	38.4	*	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	364	51.1	52.4	-1.3	57	36.8	43.5	-6.7
	04/05	195	57.9	60.2	-2.3	27	40.7	52.9	-12.2
	05/06	55	85.5	*		13	76.9	*	
NVQs	03/04	70	50.0	53.7	-3.7	811	39.5	47.0	-7.5
	04/05	39	51.3	62.4	-11.1	585	52.0	53.0	-1.0
	05/06	28	75.0	*		471	48.4	*	
Other	03/04	333	42.9	56.3	-13.4	1,618	37.6	55.7	-18.1
	04/05	461	53.6	60.0	-6.4	1,528	40.5	58.3	-17.8
	05/06	589	52.4	*		1604	46.0	*	

* Not available

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2003/04 year to 2005/06 year.

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	249	18%	32%	54%	47%
	Advanced	77	18%	31%	51%	48%
2004/05	Apprenticeship	252	28%	38%	42%	50%
	Advanced	89	26%	24%	51%	48%
2005/06	Apprenticeship	218	51%	53%	57%	58%
	Advanced	72	53%	44%	63%	54%

* 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 **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	220	18%	24%	5%	16%
	Advanced	70	11%	19%	27%	30%
2004/05	Apprenticeship	240	20%	22%	23%	29%
	Advanced	66	23%	21%	30%	31%
2005/06	Apprenticeship	176	29%	33%	31%	38%
	Advanced	64	39%	27%	46%	34%

* 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'

Outcomes for Employer Training Pilots by the college for 2005/06.

Year	Number of starts in year	Planned learning completed *	Still in learning
2005/06	309	77%	22

* These are key learning objectives identified for each learner following an ETP or NETP programme