

# Highbury College

## Inspection Report 30 April – 4 May 2007

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## Background information

## Inspection judgements

### Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

### Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, social care and early years; construction; information and communications technology (ICT); hospitality and catering; literacy and numeracy; and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Description of the provider

1. Highbury College is a large general further education college situated in Portsmouth. Portsmouth has a population of close to 200,000. It is home to the Royal Navy, and has a very broad employment base, including many leading edge blue-chip companies. Despite this, on many key indicators Portsmouth is one of the more socially and economically deprived areas of south-east England. Educational achievement at age 16 is significantly below England averages. The proportion of young people aged 16 and 17 who stay on in full-time education or training is lower than average.
2. The college offers a wide range of vocational programmes in most sector subject areas. Most courses are based at the Highbury campus to the north of the city. There is a separate centre for construction and building services, and a city centre site providing courses in basic skills, information technology (IT) and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Provision for school pupils aged 14-16 is extensive, and includes a separate centre devoted to construction and motorcycle repair. The college also provides community provision in partnership with Portsmouth Council. The college has achieved Action for Business accreditation. Around one third of all students are sponsored by employers. The college has two Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), in gas installation and maintenance, and business, accounting and financial services. Apprenticeship programmes are offered in several areas, including construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality and catering, engineering and motor vehicle maintenance.
3. In 2005/06, the college had around 13,000 students on roll, of whom around 80% were adults, 15% were aged 16-18 and 6% under 16. In terms of full-time equivalent students, around a third of the college's provision is for younger students. The largest number of enrolments are at levels 1 and 2 for both age groups. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is low, although higher than the proportion in the city and surrounding areas.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

## Sector subject areas

Health, social care and early years	Satisfactory: grade 3
Construction	Satisfactory: grade 3
Information and communications technology	Outstanding: grade 1
Hospitality and catering	Outstanding: grade 1
Literacy and numeracy	Good: grade 2
Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Satisfactory: grade 3

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

4. Highbury College provides a good standard of education and training. Over the last three years, success rates have improved rapidly and are now good. Pass rates are generally high, although in some areas too many students fail to complete their courses. Many students on vocational courses demonstrate practical skills of a high standard.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In a minority of curriculum areas, the quality of lessons is very good, particularly in practical sessions. The college has put much effort into improving students' learning and this is beginning to reap rewards; most students enjoy their lessons. However, it remains the case that there is still much to do to ensure that students on all courses benefit from high quality teaching that engages them and leads to rapid learning.
6. The college has much to be proud of in its outstanding recent record on social and educational inclusion, and its response to the needs and interests of learners is good. Much of its work is directed at socially or educationally disadvantaged individuals and groups, and the college is increasingly successful in providing appropriate provision to enable these students to succeed. Partnership working, particularly with employers, is a clear strength, as is the college's work with school pupils aged 14-16.
7. Guidance and support for students are good. Significant improvements to initial advice and guidance procedures have had a demonstrable impact in ensuring that students are on the right course and have a good chance of success. Personal support for students is good. Tutorials are effective in enriching the curriculum, although their contribution to academic support and monitoring is more variable.
8. Leadership and management are good. The significant improvements witnessed in the college over the last four years are testimony to the clear and appropriately focused strategic priorities implemented by the principal and senior management team, with the support of governors and other college staff. Curriculum management is good in most areas and improving in others. Quality assurance procedures have been effective in driving improvement. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and is a useful tool for identifying the next steps that the college needs to take to continue its progress.

## Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

9. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve. Strategic management is strong and the college prioritises actions for improvement well. Finance is controlled tightly to achieve college objectives. Quality assurance procedures are implemented systematically and are helping to drive up standards. Self-assessment is accurate in identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Overall success rates have improved rapidly. Lesson observation procedures have been strengthened and the quality of teaching and learning is improving. Employer and partnership links are strong and the college has well considered plans for improving the quality of accommodation and resources.

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

10. The college has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified during the last inspection. Strategic management is now strong, performance is carefully monitored and success rates have improved and are good. Quality assurance arrangements and lesson observation procedures have been strengthened. The level of inadequate teaching is now low and the overall quality of teaching and learning is improving. Accommodation and resources have been improved considerably. The curriculum has been restructured and provides a broad range of opportunities that promote inclusion well.

## Key strengths

- strong strategic management leading to improvements in the quality of provision
- significant improvement in success rates over the last three years
- the effectiveness of employer engagement and partnership working
- the college's outstanding approach to educational and social inclusion
- high standard of students' work in several curriculum areas
- outstanding provision in ICT and hospitality and catering
- good integration of literacy and numeracy into the vocational curriculum
- the strategy to improve the college's accommodation and resources.

## Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- low retention rates in several curriculum areas
- the need to increase the proportion of high quality teaching
- the inconsistent quality and impact of curriculum area and course reviews.

## Main findings

### Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

11. Inspection evidence supports the college's judgement that achievements and standards are good. Students' achievements have improved significantly since the last inspection. In 2005/06, success rates on long courses at all levels, for both age groups, were at or above national averages. Students taking courses at level 1 are particularly successful, with nearly all of those who complete their courses achieving a qualification. There are no significant variations in outcomes between students from different ethnic backgrounds, nor between students of different ages. Female students achieve significantly better than male students overall. However, this is explained by differences in the courses that are chosen by the sexes. Within the separate sector subject areas, the gender difference in success rates is not significant.
12. The college rightly recognises that there are some significant variations in students' outcomes in different curriculum areas. In some sector subject areas, for example, ICT, hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality and catering, and preparation for life and work, students' achievements are very good indeed. However, in others, for example, construction and business administration, too few students complete their courses successfully. Students' progress in comparison to their starting points is satisfactory.
13. Success rates in work-based learning have improved consistently over the last four years, and are above the national averages. Apprentices do particularly well in hairdressing and in hospitality and catering; however, progress has been slower for apprentices in construction crafts. Success rates in key skills have also improved and are now satisfactory overall.
14. The standard of students' work is very good in several curriculum areas. For example, students in hospitality and catering work to high professional standards, and demonstrate real excitement as they acquire new culinary skills and knowledge. In ICT, students' development of both theoretical knowledge and practical skills is impressive. Much work done by students in construction is of a very high standard. Students who attend college courses to improve their basic skills make good progress, improving their self-confidence and their employability.
15. Most students enjoy their lessons and a high priority is given to health and safety in practical classes. Attendance at lessons is good, although it was low in some of the classes observed by inspectors. Punctuality is generally good.

## Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

16. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Inspectors agreed with the college that the proportion of teaching and learning that is good or better has increased and the proportion that is inadequate has declined since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the college recognises that there are still too many lessons that are no better than satisfactory.
17. Most lessons are well planned, with a good range of varied learning activities that hold students' interest and develop their practical skills. In the best lessons, teachers share their enthusiasm for their subjects, students enjoy learning and are highly motivated, and quickly acquire new skills and knowledge. Teachers are adept at holding students' interest and checking understanding thoroughly. Learning support assistants work well with teachers to support individual students in lessons.
18. In the weaker lessons, students are not challenged effectively. Work set is not well matched to students' abilities, and the pace of learning is often slow. Classroom management is sometimes weak, and this is not helped by the occasions when groups are too large for the classroom.
19. The college has significantly improved the way teachers are supported to improve their teaching and learning. Advanced practitioners are helping to share good practice across the college. Senior managers have improved the college's internal lesson observation scheme in order to improve its impact, and external observers are being used to good effect. However, it is not always clear how the action plans that follow on from lesson observations will lead to improvements in teaching and learning.
20. Progress has been made in developing the use of information and learning technologies (ILT) to help students to learn, and technology is used effectively in some lessons. However, the necessary equipment is not always available to teachers. The virtual learning environment is being used well by some teachers and students, but in some curriculum areas its development and use are embryonic.
21. The college has been particularly successful in integrating literacy and numeracy into vocational courses. Specialist literacy and numeracy staff are beginning to work effectively to support vocational tutors in teaching key skills.
22. Assessment is well planned and organised. Teachers provide good verbal and written feedback to students that helps them to improve, although

target setting for students in some curriculum areas is less helpful. Individual learning plans do not always include clear targets or actions to help students to improve their progress.

23. The college does much to attract under-represented groups into education and training, and its outstanding approach to educational and social inclusion permeates its work.
24. The college provides a very good range of vocational programmes to meet the needs and interests of students, and is highly responsive to employers, the local community and schools. Provision at levels 1 and 2 has increased significantly in recent years to meet demand. Progression routes in most sector subject areas are good. The college makes a significant contribution to local developments for the 14-19 age group. Progression onto full-time college courses by school pupils aged 14-16 who attend the college for a day a week is very high. Provision in family learning and other community-based programmes is highly valued in the community.
25. Work with employers is imaginative and widespread. Adult learners are attracted through the CoVEs in gas installation and maintenance and business, accounting and financial services, and the Train to Gain provision in construction and health care. In construction, a specialist heritage plastering course has been established with the National Trust. The college's strong focus on developing students' employability is very successful.
26. The range of enrichment activities offered by the college is very broad, varied and stimulating. For example, departments organise overseas trips, take part in competitions, run team-building exercises and visit relevant trade shows and sporting events. Cross-college activities include fitness testing, sport, dancing, and community radio. Students are encouraged to devise and run their own enrichment activities.
27. Guidance and support for students are good. Support for full-time students is comprehensive and includes excellent pastoral support through group and individual tutorials and access to counselling, advice and other forms of support. Additional support needs are effectively identified through initial assessment, and high quality individual support for those who need it is put swiftly into place. Success rates for students who receive additional learning support are higher than for other students. Liaison with external agencies working with vulnerable young people is good.

28. The outcomes of interviews and initial assessments are used effectively to guide students onto appropriate courses. Induction into college is good for full-time students and satisfactory for part-time students.
29. An effective tutorial programme provides students with opportunities to learn about matters such as personal finance, staying healthy, and maintaining fitness. Tutorials are less consistent in providing rigorous academic support and challenge. Students feel safe around the college site and are encouraged to pursue healthy lifestyles. External speakers regularly lead tutorials on subjects including substance and alcohol misuse, sexual health and drugs awareness. Careers guidance is good.

Leadership and management Good: grade 2

*Contributory grade:*

*Equality of opportunity* *Good: grade 2*

30. Leadership and management are good. The principal and senior managers provide strong leadership and set a clear direction for the college. Actions to bring about improvement have been prioritised well. Managers and teachers are consulted and share a sense of common purpose. Financial difficulties have been overcome and accommodation and resources improved. Students' success rates have improved and are good. Standards of curriculum management are more variable. Governors work well with senior managers, providing both support and challenge. They have a good overview of the work of the college and use their expertise well to support its development.
31. The college has comprehensive quality assurance systems which are driving up standards, although not uniformly across all curriculum areas. Management information is reliable and is used well to monitor performance. Teaching and learning standards are improving and are satisfactory overall. The college has recently strengthened its process for ensuring the accuracy of the lesson observation system. Self-assessment is accurate in its overview of the performance of the college but reviews of individual programmes and curriculum areas and associated action plans are more variable in quality.
32. Resources in areas such as construction, hairdressing, beauty therapy and automotive studies are good or better. Conversely, some buildings, which are scheduled for demolition, are tired and reaching the end of their useful life. Staff are appropriately qualified, enthusiastic about the college and many have extensive industrial experience. Training and development

opportunities are linked to the strategic aims of the college and teachers have good opportunities for personal development. The college has developed a range of highly effective links and partnership arrangements with employers and public organisations.

33. The college places high priority on promoting equality and diversity and its approach to equal opportunities is good. It fulfils its obligations in respect of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2002 and the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000. Equality and diversity targets are monitored carefully and equal opportunities are promoted through the curriculum. Staff and governors have completed child protection training and appropriate procedures are in place for vetting the suitability of staff to work with children and young people.
34. Financial management is good and the college has achieved surpluses for the last four years. Sale of land and prudent borrowing are enabling the college to implement a well thought out accommodation strategy. Developments include relocation of areas of learning to a new building in Portsmouth city centre and replacement of the entire building stock by 2009. On the basis of good financial management, efficient deployment of resources and good success rates, the college provides good value for money.

## Sector subject areas

Health, social care and early years

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

35. The college offers full- and part-time courses in health and social care, early years, oral health, health and safety, and first aid. Courses offer progression routes from entry level to level 4 in health and social care and early years. There are 111 full-time students, mainly aged 16-18, and 985 part-time students, mainly adults. The college also has provision for school pupils aged 14-16.

### *Strengths*

- high success rates on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes
- high standard of students' work in most lessons
- good range of courses with clear progression pathways
- good use of employer links to develop adult provision
- well managed NVQ programmes.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low retention rates on the full-time level 2 health and social care course
- poor classroom management and poor use of resources in a minority of lessons
- declining enrolments on full-time level 2 and level 3 early years courses
- low progression rates to higher education from the level 3 early years course.

### Achievements and standards

36. Students' achievements are satisfactory. On NVQ courses, success rates are very high. Success rates on full-time childcare courses have improved to above national averages, but the number of enrolments has declined on both the level 2 and 3 courses. The retention rate has been low for three years on the full-time level 2 health and social care course, although it has improved this year. Retention rates on childcare courses improved at levels 2 and 3 in 2005/06, but have declined again this year.
37. The standard of students' work in lessons is high. Many are able to relate their workplace experience to the theory teaching and bring relevant examples into discussions. Displays of students' work in classrooms are good and reinforce learning effectively.

## Quality of provision

38. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, imaginative use is made of a good range of resources to bring lessons to life. For example, one teacher provided a wide range of interesting resources that the students used to explore the development of activities for young children. However, there are too few good lessons. In the weaker lessons, a few students dominate and disrupt learning for other students. Classrooms are sometimes too small for the groups using them. The work given to students in some lessons is too difficult.
39. Assessment is satisfactory, but the quality of marking varies widely. Some teachers provide insufficient constructive feedback to help students to improve their work.
40. There is a good range of programmes with clear progression pathways. Progression from the diploma in childcare and education course into higher education is low. Good employer links are used effectively to develop courses for adults. The NVQ provision is extensive and meets local employers' needs.
41. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Tutorials include references to the Every Child Matters outcomes.

## Leadership and management

42. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The NVQ programmes are well managed with a clear focus on improving provision. The quality improvement plan for this area is detailed and the actions identified are focused and measurable. However, self-assessment for other aspects of the curriculum is weaker. Appraisals are up to date and staff have good opportunities for industrial updating.

Construction

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

43. Courses are provided in plumbing, painting and decorating, trowel trades, plastering, wall tiling, wood occupations and electrical installation. Technician courses are available at first and national level. Enrolments in 2006/07 total 2,168 of which a third are aged 16-18. The majority of students study at level 2. The college has a large work-based learning programme including 131 apprentices. Introductory courses are run for local schools for 237 pupils aged 14-16. The area has been awarded CoVE status in gas installation and maintenance.

*Strengths*

- high standard of students' work
- highly effective teaching and learning
- very good employer engagement benefits students
- excellent physical resources.

*Areas for improvement*

- low proportion of students who complete courses
- unsatisfactory success rate of apprentices in construction crafts.

Achievements and standards

44. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. The proportion of students who complete their courses is low, but is improving as a result of current initiatives. Framework success rates in construction crafts at apprentice and advanced apprentice levels are unsatisfactory, although there are recent signs of improvement. Success rates in other programmes are satisfactory overall. The integration of key skills into the vocational curriculum is improving and success rates in key skills are now satisfactory.
45. The standard of students' work at college and in the workplace is high, and students make good progress in lessons. Practical assessment tasks are successfully completed to industry standard within realistic time scales in customers' premises or in a simulated environment. Students are entered for and win external competitions. Many students aged 14-16 progress on to full-time courses at the college.

## Quality of provision

46. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to ensure that the learning needs of all students are met. Targeted questioning is used extensively to confirm and extend understanding. Lesson plans are detailed and evaluated at the end of each session to inform future classes. Praise is used to good effect. Courses are structured to promote and develop independent learning. There is strong reinforcement of health and safety. Students make good use of the college's virtual learning environment.
47. The range of courses is good. Very good employer engagement provides students with links into employment. Some students benefit from individual sponsorship. Employers and manufacturers contribute additional materials and equipment, enabling students to use current industry-standard facilities. Employers also help to develop new programmes, for example, an English Heritage traditional plastering course.
48. Students receive particularly good personal and academic support. Disaffected and vulnerable students are well cared for. A wide-ranging programme of enrichment activities is offered and many students take advantage of the opportunities available. A strong tutorial programme promotes a safe and healthy lifestyle.

## Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new management team has recently been appointed. Quality assurance procedures have been considerably improved, and the self-assessment report is broadly accurate. However, effective actions to improve the proportion of students who complete their courses have not yet been fully identified or implemented. Physical resources are excellent. Staff were fully involved in the design and installation of facilities in the new building. Successful efforts are made to increase the participation of under-represented groups.

Information and communications technology Outstanding: grade 1

Context

50. Full-time and part-time ICT courses provide progression from introductory level to foundation degree level. Full-time courses include IT at work, BTEC first diploma and BTEC national diploma for IT practitioners in both the software and systems options. These courses are taken by approximately 260 students, mostly aged 16-18. Over 3,400 students, mainly adults, study part-time courses such as the European computer driving licence (ECDL) or computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT). There is also a wide range of short introductory level courses.

*Strengths*

- high success rates on most courses
- very good teaching that enthuses students
- very good range of provision to meet individual, community and employers' needs
- highly effective advice, guidance and support for students
- very good leadership and management.

*Areas for improvement*

- ineffective layout of some IT rooms.

Achievements and standards

51. Students' achievements, and the standard of their work, are outstanding. Success rates on most courses are high and on long courses they are significantly above the national average. Most students gain qualifications and many achieve high grades. Students on national diploma courses can gain an additional, industry standard qualification. Many students progress successfully onto higher levels of study.
52. Students enjoy their learning, make very good progress and apply their skills effectively. Students on a BTEC national computing course successfully configured sophisticated computer networking equipment. Students' theoretical and practical work is very good. They can explain concepts and justify their decisions. In practical lessons, they can apply their skills well to different situations.

## Quality of provision

53. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are well planned with plenty of different activities that are successful in motivating students and promoting the good acquisition of skills. Students are very enthusiastic and their practical work is good. In an ECDL lesson, students eagerly discussed how they would use their new skills at home and at work. Students review the quality of their own work and are self-critical.
54. Assessment is very effective. Marked work is returned quickly and detailed comments from teachers help students to improve. Although resources are generally good, the poor layout of some IT rooms hinders learning.
55. The range of courses is very good and provides clear progression routes. Links with employers are good and provide full-time students with relevant industrial experience. Full-time students develop websites for local businesses as part of their courses.
56. Advice, guidance and support for students are very good. Teachers provide good personal support, both during lessons and at other times. Support with literacy and numeracy is effective. In tutorial reviews, students are set challenging targets and progress towards these is carefully monitored. Students feel safe and are encouraged to eat healthily. Communications with parents are effective. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are very good. Managers set high standards and involve their staff in planning and development. Good use is made of reliable data to inform management decisions. Staff development is linked to regular appraisal and to the requirements of changing teaching roles. Self-assessment is rigorous and accurate. Course teams meet regularly and share good practice. Communications across all sites are effective. Staff are valued and there is a strong team spirit.

## Hospitality and catering

Outstanding: grade 1

### Context

58. The college offers NVQ courses in hospitality and catering from levels 1 to 3, and a range of short courses and apprenticeship training, delivered both at the college and in the community. Approximately 60% of students are aged 16-18 and most are on full-time courses. Approximately 30% of students are over 19 and mostly study part-time. Pupils aged 14-16 from local schools also study part-time courses in catering.

### *Strengths*

- high and improving success rates on most level 1 and level 2 courses
- particularly high standard of students' work in practical classes
- much good and some outstanding teaching and learning in practical classes
- highly effective links with employers
- very good curriculum leadership and management.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low and declining success rates on part-time level 3 food preparation and cooking programme.

### Achievements and standards

59. Students' achievements are very good, and the standard of their practical work is outstanding. Success rates on level 1 and level 2 courses are high and in most cases improving. On the majority of courses, nearly all students gain their qualifications. Success rates on the part-time level 3 food preparation and cooking programme, however, have declined and are low.

60. The standard of students' work and the skills they demonstrate are outstanding. Students in the kitchens and college restaurants are encouraged to develop high quality practical craft and presentation skills, and are passionate about food and high quality service. Many students participate successfully in culinary competitions.

### Quality of provision

61. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding teaching in practical classes. Teachers are highly experienced and students gain excellent knowledge of the ingredients they use and serve. Strong

emphasis is placed on health and safety and there is good promotion of healthy eating and cultural diversity through tutorials and themed culinary events held throughout the year. Theory teaching on restaurant service courses is generally good, but it is rather lacklustre on other programmes. Attendance at lessons is good.

62. The range of programmes is good, and links with employers are excellent. Many students leave to gain good jobs in the industry and some ex-students now hold top catering positions. The department has developed a wide range of programmes to meet the needs of local and national employers. Students particularly enjoy the opportunity to work alongside well known celebrity chefs who have visited the college. Links with local schools are effective.
63. A broad range of enrichment programmes has been developed to help motivate students. An annual exchange programme with a catering college in France is particularly good.
64. Student support is good and students identified with learning difficulties are given particularly effective help to improve. Personal support is also good and students are given valuable guidance to ensure they succeed.

#### Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are very good, and internal and external communications are excellent. The self-assessment report is clear and concise and generally accurate. Successful actions have been taken to improve the provision following a thorough review. Equality and diversity are reinforced throughout the curriculum area. Accommodation is adequate and there are plans to move to new purpose-built premises in the centre of Portsmouth later in the year.

## Literacy and numeracy

Good: grade 2

### Context

66. At the time of inspection, there were over 2,500 enrolments on entry level, level 1 and level 2 courses in literacy, numeracy, communications and application of number. Learners are a mixture of full-time students, mainly aged 16-18, and adult students taking part-time courses. Classes take place both on the college sites and in the community.

### *Strengths*

- high pass rates on level 1 courses
- good specialist teaching of literacy and numeracy
- effective strategies to embed literacy and numeracy throughout the vocational curriculum
- good leadership and management.

### *Areas for improvement*

- low pass rates in key skills level 2
- ineffective teaching of key skills in a minority of vocational areas.

### Achievements and standards

67. Overall, achievements and standards are good. Success rates have improved and are now above the national averages on level 1 courses in the key skills of communications and application of number. Success rates are high in national tests in literacy and numeracy. At level 2, too many students who complete their courses in the key skills fail to achieve the qualification.
68. Students make good progress in lessons and develop good practical skills. For example, in communications they develop good presentation skills. Students in numeracy lessons acquire helpful practical budgeting skills, and learn how to calculate averages. In literacy lessons, students learn how to read instructions competently. The standard of students' work is good and students' files show progression in class work.

### Quality of provision

69. Teaching and learning are good overall, with particularly effective specialist teaching of literacy and numeracy on both discrete courses and vocational programmes. Teachers use a good range of methods and use well

produced learning materials, including ILT, which help to motivate students. In one lesson, fresh fruit and vegetables were used very effectively to illustrate work on adjectives. In vocational programmes, topic-based teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Key skills teaching is variable. In the best lessons, skills are taught well. In one lesson, students' work was used for constructive peer evaluation. In weaker lessons, teachers are less successful in helping students to develop their skills in a vocational context.

70. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are thorough. Good use is made of initial assessment, individual learning plans are clear and targets are closely monitored.
71. The range of programmes and activities is good. Strategies to embed literacy and numeracy throughout the vocational curriculum have been effective in giving students more opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Provision in the city centre attracts many adult learners. Links with employers are satisfactory.
72. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. The initial assessment of full-time students has improved and is now good. Students receive good personal support and satisfactory academic support.

#### Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are good. Effective management strategies have remedied weaknesses found at the last inspection. Communications between and within teams is good. Vocational teachers are well supported to include literacy, numeracy and key skills in their lessons. Development and training opportunities provide staff with a range of relevant skills. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, and managers have used the outcomes of self-assessment to plan effectively for improvements.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

74. The college provides a wide range of full- and part-time courses at pre-entry and entry level for students with moderate and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students have access to an enrichment programme and work experience placements as part of their programme. Most provision is located at the main college site. In addition, there are six outreach centres. At the time of the inspection, there were 103 full-time, 30 part-time and 41 community-based students. Approximately 60% of students are adults.

### *Strengths*

- good development of students' social and communication skills
- very good enrichment activities
- very effective strategies for widening participation and promoting inclusion.

### *Areas for improvement*

- the slow progress of too many students
- insufficiently challenging teaching in too many lessons
- insufficient use of data to inform plans for improvement.

### Achievements and standards

75. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. The small number of students who are entered for externally accredited awards are usually successful in achieving them. Most students achieve units of Open College Network (OCN) accreditation.

76. Students develop effective social skills, improve their communication skills and increase their self-confidence. They join in group discussions and demonstrate that they can recall information previously learned. Students develop their skills through regular trips and through the enrichment activities.

77. There is insufficient focus on encouraging progression out of the college or into mainstream courses. Only eight students over the past three years progressed into employment and a small number of students enrolled onto

vocational courses at foundation or level 1 last year. Too many students make slow progress.

### Quality of provision

78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers' enthusiasm generates a positive response from students, who produce good standards of work, sometimes exceeding what is expected of them. Lessons are generally well planned and managed. However, there is insufficient challenge to students in too many lessons. In a very small number of lessons, the content is inappropriate.
79. Initial assessment is thorough and includes diagnostic testing of students' literacy and numeracy levels. A very useful student profile is produced from the baseline assessment and used effectively to set targets and inform lesson planning. Students' reviews of progress are detailed.
80. The range of programmes offered is satisfactory. The main curriculum offers satisfactory scope for students to progress to courses that offer them different experiences. The very good range of enrichment activities is well attended and gives students extensive opportunities to develop skills linked to their interests, including work experience.
81. Support for students is satisfactory. Learning support assistants support students appropriately. Tutorials help to improve students' knowledge and skills in dealing with personal and social issues. There is insufficient support to meet all the needs of students in a few lessons.

### Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is largely accurate, but some identified strengths are no more than satisfactory. Managers have a good understanding of areas that need to be developed. However, not enough use is made of data to inform plans for improvement.
83. Partnership working with employers, local communities and other organisations is very effective in widening participation and promoting inclusion.

## 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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	03/04	655	65	60	5	1039	79	59	20
	04/05	721	78	64	14	841	85	62	23
	05/06	1234	80			499	76		
GNVOs and precursors	03/04	45	76	65	11	*			
	04/05	16	75	68	7	*			
	05/06	*				*			
NVQs	03/04	146	70	61	9	41	56	62	-6
	04/05	156	81	67	14	49	80	67	13
	05/06	190	89			56	89		
Other	03/04	464	62	60	2	989	80	59	21
	04/05	549	77	64	13	787	85	61	24
	05/06	1044	79			443	74		

\* fewer than 10 starts enrolled

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	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	03/04	900	55	56	-1	2976	61	54	7
	04/05	1000	60	61	-1	2779	62	60	2
	05/06	893	63			1783	68		
GCSEs	03/04	63	76	61	15	193	72	59	13
	04/05	90	61	64	-3	171	76	62	14
	05/06	50	74			204	77		
GNVOs and precursors	03/04	50	48	63	-15	*			
	04/05	38	45	67	-22	35	51	70	-19
	05/06	*			-	11	18		-
NVQs	03/04	385	52	52	0	1341	61	53	8
	04/05	345	59	57	2	1532	61	60	1
	05/06	316	64			902	66		
Other	03/04	402	55	54	1	1433	60	53	7
	04/05	527	61	60	1	1041	63	59	4
	05/06	525	61			666	70		

\* fewer than 10 starts enrolled

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	413	53	64	-11	1422	61	53	8
	04/05	335	65	67	-2	1353	59	57	2
	05/06	343	70			1239	68		
A/A2 Levels	03/04	*				*			
	04/05	*				*			
	05/06	*				*			
AS Levels	03/04	23	43	63	-20	37	54	50	4
	04/05	13	100	65	35	28	54	52	2
	05/06	13	54			22	50		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	70	59	52	7	138	54	44	10
	04/05	24	75	60	15	25	36	53	-17
	05/06	*				14	43		
NVQs	03/04	39	56	54	2	527	61	47	14
	04/05	56	77	62	15	526	60	54	6
	05/06	58	76			509	68		
Other	03/04	278	51	56	-5	718	63	56	7
	04/05	242	59	60	-1	768	60	58	2
	05/06	259	69			688	69		

\* fewer than 10 starts enrolled

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college in 2004/05 and 2005/06

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2004/05	Apprenticeship	108	45	39	56	50
	Advanced	64	27	34	50	48
2005/06	Apprenticeship	77	69	52	71	58
	Advanced	67	51	44	64	53

\* 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 **
2004/05	Apprenticeship	94	28	22	31	29
	Advanced	61	15	21	31	31
2005/06	Apprenticeship	74	65	34	65	38
	Advanced	64	48	27	58	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'