

# Coulsdon College

Inspection report

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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 achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: science and mathematics; information and communication technology (ICT); art and design; and English and modern foreign languages.

#### Description of the provider

1. Coulsdon College is a sixth form college in Croydon, on the borders of Surrey. Other sixth form colleges, general further education colleges and schools with sixth forms serve the area providing students with a wide choice of options for study post-16. Approximately 75% of students come from the borough and the remainder from neighbouring parts of South London.
2. Croydon is a diverse borough and, during 2007/08, 68% of the students attending the college were from black and minority ethnic heritage. Black

African and Black Caribbean are the majority groups and economic migrants from Eastern Europe add to the diversity of the student population. Coulsdon College students have some of the lowest qualifications on entry of any sixth form college in the country. Some 10% of students receive additional learning support.

3. In 2007, 44.4% of young people in Croydon achieved five GCSEs grade A\* to C including English and mathematics compared to 46.8% for England as a whole. A higher proportion of Croydon's working-age residents is qualified at level 2 than for the London region overall but fewer at level 4 and above. The borough is a major commercial centre and the UK base for a number of international companies. Unemployment in the area is low at 2.4% but the proportion of 16-18 year-olds who are not in education, training or employment is high despite recent reductions.
4. The mission of the college is to maximise student achievement and progression by providing a broad curriculum offer with a range of learner pathways for predominantly 16 to 18 year-old students. To achieve its mission the college aims to ensure students and staff are valued and developed as individuals, supported to achieve success, provided with enriching experiences and the opportunity to benefit from participating in a truly diverse and inclusive community. During 2007/08, 1,211 students aged 16 to 18 and 72 adults were on roll following programmes at levels 1 to 3 in ten of the fifteen areas of learning.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

### Sector subject areas

Science and mathematics	Inadequate: Grade 4
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Art and design	Good: Grade 2
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. Coulsdon College provides satisfactory provision. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The college provides opportunities for many students with low attainment at age 16 and overall success rates are lower than average for sixth form colleges. Success rates for vocational programmes are good, however, and those for A-level courses are in line with the national average. Many students who enrol on AS-level courses drop one or more subjects and success rates are low. Most of these students do however remain at college and achieve qualifications. Attendance rates are low but the majority of students produce work of a satisfactory or better standard and make the progress expected of them.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but the quality of teaching has not improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers use a good range of resources and teaching methods to support learning and ICT is used extensively. However, this does not always result in effective learning, particularly for less able GCE AS-level students. Teachers do not pay sufficient attention to the individual needs of students during lessons. There is insufficient subject support for AS and A-level students to enhance learning.
7. The college's response to meeting the needs of students, employers and the local community is good as is its promotion of social and educational inclusion. The vocational curriculum has been broadened since the last inspection. Foundation level programmes are provided for students from disrupted educational backgrounds and many of these students progress to level 2. There are good opportunities for work-related learning but insufficient opportunities are offered for students to gain work experience across the college. Enrichment opportunities are good as is participation in enrichment by students.
8. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Pre-course guidance is not sufficiently successful in matching students to GCE AS-level programmes at level 3. Pastoral support is good and students who have additional learning needs are well supported and achieve well. Students report that they feel safe and cared for. Individual tutorial support is satisfactory overall and good for vocational students. Procedures for setting and monitoring personal targets for individual students, particularly AS-level students, are unsatisfactory and do not help them improve.
9. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college is clear about its mission to widen participation and equality of opportunity is good. Financial management is strong and resources and accommodation have been improved. Appropriate action is being taken to improve teaching and learning. Quality assurance procedures are not effective in driving up standards. Strengths and areas for improvement are mostly correctly identified through self-assessment but the significance of weaknesses is often underestimated. Target setting and

action planning to bring about improvements are poorly developed across curriculum areas.

## Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. The college's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Financial management has improved and is now good and the college is in a better position to invest in further improvement and strengthen capacity. The college has broadened its curriculum and has a clear strategy for inclusion and for widening participation. Overall success rates are improving but slowly. Recently implemented improvements have not yet had sufficient time to demonstrate impact. Appropriate action is being taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The college has recognised that quality assurance arrangements are not sufficiently effective in driving up standards and has recently appointed a quality improvement manager to implement improvements. Staff are appropriately involved in self-assessment and the college's self-assessment report accurately identifies key areas for improvement. However, self-assessment is not sufficiently self-critical and the significance of identified weaknesses is not always fully reflected in the grades allocated. Target setting and action planning are underdeveloped across curriculum areas.

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

11. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The college has improved its financial position significantly. Accommodation has been improved as has access for people with restricted mobility. Agreement in principle has been secured for funding to rebuild the remainder of the college. Governance is now good. The quality of and access to additional learning support have improved. Both access to and use of ICT have improved considerably. Teachers now use a much wider range of materials and methods in their lessons. However, these do not always contribute effectively to learning and the quality of teaching and learning has not improved significantly. Weaknesses in key skills in communication and application of number have been addressed through offering alternative provision. Punctuality and attendance have improved but continue to be low. Success rates have improved but progress has been slow overall. Quality assurance remains an area for improvement. The quality of provision in science and mathematics has declined and is inadequate.

## Key strengths

- safe and inclusive environment
- strong financial management
- good success rates on vocational courses
- good pastoral care for students
- effective additional learning support
- good enrichment activities.

## Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- success rates particularly at AS level
- attendance and punctuality
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the impact of quality assurance and self-assessment procedures.



## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The average level of attainment of students enrolling on level 3 programmes at the college is significantly lower than that for sixth form colleges nationally. Although overall success rates for advanced programmes are below the national average for sixth form colleges, success rates for students following advanced vocational courses, which constitute 40% of the level 3 provision, are good. College data indicate rates for GCE A-level courses improved in 2007/08 and are similar to those for sixth form colleges nationally. For AS courses, however, success rates declined in 2007/08 and are low, mostly due to below average retention. Many students who enrol on four AS-level courses or an AS subject in addition to a vocational course find their programmes too challenging and drop a subject. The majority of these students do, however, remain at college and gain qualifications which enable them to progress. The proportion of students achieving high grades in GCE examinations is lower than average reflecting the attainment profile of students attending the college.
13. The progress AS and A-level students make relative to their attainment on enrolment is satisfactory overall. Progress varies across subjects and is significantly higher than average for two AS and one A-level subjects; contrastingly, progress is significantly lower than average for six subjects at AS level and three at A level. In comparison with students nationally, students following national diploma programmes make good progress.
14. Success rates for level 2 programmes have improved significantly since the last inspection and are at the national average for sixth form colleges. A higher than average proportion of students gain A\* to C grades in GCSE English whilst the proportion gaining A\* to C grades in mathematics is low. The college no longer offers key skills qualifications in communication and application of number having found adult literacy and numeracy courses at levels 1 and 2 to better meet the needs of their students. Success rates on these courses are good.
15. In line with its mission to widen participation, the college has expanded its level 1 provision which mostly caters for vulnerable young people, many of whom have disrupted educational backgrounds. Success rates in 2007/08 were below average. Some of the provision which did not meet the needs of students well has, however, been discontinued.
16. As identified by the college in its self-assessment report, students enjoy their time at college and appreciate the safe and inclusive atmosphere it offers. Success rates for the main minority ethnic groups are in line with both the sixth form college national averages for the same groups and the rates for white students attending the college. However, rates for the latter are below the sixth form college national average for the same group. The work students produce is mostly of a satisfactory standard and the extent to which they make a positive contribution to the life of the college and the wider community is

satisfactory. Males attending the college perform slightly better than females. Attendance rates are low overall and vary across levels of work and areas of learning. The proportion of level 3 students progressing to higher education is satisfactory and improving, with 67% progressing to university in 2007/08. Of those who applied, 86% were successful in gaining places.

#### Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. College lesson observations identify strengths and areas for improvement but do not focus sufficiently on the extent of students' learning. The college has correctly identified in its self-assessment that observers overstate the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged to share good practice and develop their teaching strategies through staff development opportunities but this has not yet impacted sufficiently on learning.
18. In the most effective lessons, objectives are clearly identified. Teachers provide challenging and interesting activities that engage students of differing abilities and support their growing understanding and knowledge. A good range of learning materials and resources are used which contribute well to consolidating learning. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support teaching, learning and assessment. Students are challenged sufficiently and they make good progress.
19. In less effective lessons, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to the differing needs and abilities of students. The use of information technology fails to promote learning. Classroom management is weak with insufficient involvement of students to promote independent learning. Questioning techniques are poor and are not always fully successful in promoting learning. There is insufficient reinforcement of learning and too few opportunities are provided for learners to reflect on their work and take responsibility for improving their knowledge, understanding and skills.
20. Initial assessment of learning support needs is good and good in-class support is provided for students at levels 1 and 2. However, there is insufficient planned and systematic subject support for AS and A-level students to enhance learning, particularly those with low prior attainment.
21. As identified by the college in its self-assessment, the college's response to meeting the needs of students, employers and the local community is good. A good range of programmes and progression opportunities are available at levels 1 to 3 for 16 to 18 year-olds and the level 3 vocational curriculum has been broadened considerably. The college makes a good contribution to promoting the social and economic well-being of students. There are good opportunities for work-related learning in sport, early years education and business. The Finance Academy offers high quality industrial experience but there are insufficient opportunities for students to gain work experience in other curriculum areas.

22. The college's response to social and educational inclusion is good. The student body is diverse and a high proportion is of black and minority ethnic heritage. Opportunities are provided for students with relatively low attainment at age 16 to follow AS programmes but many do not complete all the subjects for which they enrol. Progression pathways from level 1 to 3 are flexible and there is a much improved focus on literacy, numeracy and employability skills. Foundation level programmes cater for a high proportion of learners from disrupted educational backgrounds and the college collaborates well with the local Connexions Service to keep them on course. The majority of these students progress to level 2 programmes. Learning is enhanced through a good range of enrichment opportunities. Take-up is good and the activities week is popular with students.
23. The college's provision for advice, guidance and support for students is satisfactory, as is the support provided to help students be healthy. Initial information is clear but initial guidance is not always successful in matching learners to programmes at level 3. Extended induction and diagnostic screening arrangements for students were introduced this academic year but it is too soon to determine their impact. Pastoral care is good and there is a good range of support services which include counselling, health care, financial and careers advice.
24. The tutorial programme is well thought out and embraces political awareness, financial literacy, health and social responsibility. Although support materials are clearly set out, tutors' confidence in delivering the programme varies as does the quality of group tutorials. Support and guidance provided through one-to-one tutorials are variable but satisfactory overall; vocational students receive good support as do those with complex needs. Procedures for monitoring the progress of AS and A-level students against minimum expected grades have been established but the setting and monitoring of personal targets by subject teachers and tutors are unsatisfactory. The college self-assessment correctly concludes that the use of electronic learning plans is improving communication between teachers and tutors. Liaison with parents is good and teachers and tutors have good access to attendance information. Despite a range of measures which are having an impact, attendance rates continue to be low overall and particularly so for the more vulnerable groups of students.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

*Contributory grade:*  
*Equality of opportunity*

*Good: Grade 2*

25. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Governors and senior managers provide clear direction for the development of the college, emphasising its role in meeting the needs of the diverse communities it serves and in promoting participation by young people. Social cohesion is promoted well through a good range of activities, many of which are organised by students themselves. Although overall success rates remain below sixth form college averages, the

performance of students of black minority ethnic heritage, who constitute the majority of the students attending the college, has improved and is in line with the performance of similar groups attending sixth form colleges nationally. Curriculum management is variable, ranging from inadequate to good.

26. Financial management has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In the context of broadly satisfactory success rates, this represents satisfactory value for money. The improved financial position is enabling increased investment in actions to improve the quality of provision. Access to information and communication technology is now good and is benefiting both teaching and communication between staff across the college. New premises for sport and recreation have been constructed and capital funding has been agreed, in principle, for rebuilding the remainder of the college.
27. The college recognises that quality assurance arrangements are not having sufficient impact on provision and standards and has recently appointed a quality improvement manager to implement improvements. Staff are now more involved in self-assessment but the process is not sufficiently objective and self-critical. Strengths and areas for improvement are identified but the significance of some weaknesses is underestimated when grading provision. Target setting and action planning are not always used well to promote improvement across curriculum areas. Checks on the implementation and impact of quality improvement arrangements are not sufficiently thorough. Appropriate lesson observation procedures have been established but observers do not pay sufficient attention to the impact of teaching on learning when grading lessons. Despite weaknesses in quality improvement arrangements, review procedures for underperforming provision are effective in bringing about improvement. However, these are only applied to a small number of the least successful courses. The college is responsive to students' views; for example, changing timetabling arrangements and ensuring continuity in staffing in response to feedback.
28. The college places particular emphasis on staff development and arrangements are satisfactory. Much of the activity focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Although teachers now use a greater variety of teaching methods and make extensive use of information and communication technologies, they are not always successful in promoting learning. The performance management arrangements for staff are satisfactory, as are the appraisal arrangements for the principal. The open and consultative management style adopted by senior managers is successful in helping staff feel valued and supported.
29. College procedures for safeguarding meet current government requirements. It carries out systematic checks of all new appointments and all staff undergo child protection training. Information about child protection arrangements is easily accessible to staff and students. Students report the college to provide a safe environment for learning and the college's contribution to students staying safe is good.

30. Equality of opportunity is good and the college provides a welcoming and harmonious environment. The college is inclusive and successful in attracting students from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds as well as disadvantaged and disaffected learners. Learners with multiple barriers to participation are supported well. The college's response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 is good. Preparation of single equality scheme is well under way. Equality, diversity and social cohesion are promoted through a range of activities and the college monitors the impact of actions carefully. Access for people with restricted mobility has been improved considerably. Instances of bullying or harassment are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students with additional support or learning needs receive good support. However, despite offering many opportunities, the college is not always successful at placing students on programmes that best meet their needs.

## Sector subject area

Science and mathematics

Inadequate: Grade 4

### Context

31. The college offers AS and A-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, mathematics and further mathematics as well as use of mathematics and GCSEs in science and mathematics. Vocational courses include first and national diplomas in applied science. One year certificates in adult numeracy are also offered at levels 1 and 2. Almost all the 770 learners are aged 16 to 18 and attend college full-time.

### Strengths

- high success rates in numeracy courses at levels 1 and 2
- high retention rates for GCE A-level subjects
- high success rates in A-level chemistry and mathematics
- good use of computers and practical work to motivate students.

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates on many courses
- insufficient learning in many lessons
- insufficient feedback to students to enable them to improve
- poor use of target setting for individual students
- inadequate implementation of quality improvement procedures.

### Achievement and standards

32. Achievement and standards are inadequate. Although success rates are high for GCE A-level chemistry and mathematics and satisfactory for the national diploma in science, rates are low across a range of courses and particularly so for AS subjects. High grade pass rates in GCSE subjects are poor. The retention of students on A-level courses is good but pass rates are low in physics, biology and psychology. The progress students make relative to their qualifications on entry to the college is generally satisfactory but poor in psychology. Many students aged 16 to 18 take the certificate in adult numeracy at levels 1 and 2 and success rates are high. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory or better for A-level subjects but often low at AS level. Progression rates to higher education are good. Attendance rates are satisfactory but students are often late, particularly for the first lesson of the day.

### Quality of provision

33. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons a wide range of activities are used to engage students who learn well and feel comfortable answering and asking questions. Computers and practical work are often used

well in these lessons to motivate students and promote learning. However, in too many lessons teaching does not meet the needs of individual students. Students are occupied by the activities provided but are not challenged sufficiently and weaker students often fail to grasp basic concepts. Teachers do not provide sufficient written comments when marking students' work to help them improve.

34. The curriculum is satisfactory but support for students is inadequate. Teachers provide additional subject support outside lessons but take-up of these sessions is often low. Target setting for individual students is underdeveloped. Minimum target grades are identified, based on previous GCSE scores, but few specific targets are set and used to determine students' progress. Tutors review students' progress each term but there is insufficient communication between tutors and subject teachers and insufficient dialogue with individual students concerning their progress.

### Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management are inadequate. Staff are committed to their students and to promoting equality of opportunity but many areas of weakness identified in the previous inspection remain. Overall standards of achievement remain low. Although sharing of good practice in teaching is encouraged it is not having sufficient and consistent impact on learning. Self-assessment is not sufficiently rigorous and self-critical and the significance of key weaknesses is not recognised. Some of the reported strengths are no more than standard practice. Quality improvement plans lack detail and specific targets by which improvements can be measured.

## Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Context

36. The college provides full-time courses at levels 2 and 3 for 120 full-time students, approximately half of whom follow vocational courses. Computing and information technology courses are offered at AS and A level and the vocational offer includes diploma, certificate and award level qualifications for information technology practitioners. The area also offers key skills qualifications in information technology.

*Strengths*

- high success rates on A-level and national diploma courses
- well targeted support for vocational learners
- improved leadership and management.

*Areas for improvement*

- low success rates on AS information and communication technology and on information technology key skills
- insufficient attention to the needs of learners in lessons
- slow improvement in standards since the last inspection.

## Achievement and standards

37. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on the level 3 diploma in information technology have been well above the national average for the last two years. GCE A-level information and communication technology and A-level computing success rates have improved and were high in 2007/08. Success rates on AS information technology have been low for the last three years but rates for AS computing improved in 2007/08 and are satisfactory. Despite improvement, few students achieve key skills in information technology at level 2.
38. The quality of learners' written and practical work is generally satisfactory but varies considerably reflecting the low initial entry qualifications of many students. Progression rates from level 2 to 3 are satisfactory and progression to higher education is good.
39. Attendance is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

40. As identified by the college in its self-assessment report, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and most lessons are well planned. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that students are challenged appropriately, take responsibility for their own learning and focus on their work. In less successful lessons, activities take too long, students do not participate sufficiently in discussions and teachers do not spend enough time checking the



extent of individual students' learning. Students do not have sufficient opportunities to practice their skills in the workplace.

41. Assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. Work is usually marked thoroughly and returned promptly with comments that help students understand how they can improve. Resources are satisfactory but the use of whiteboards as projection screens limits teachers' options for making best use of the technology available. The range of courses is satisfactory overall and good at level 3. The provision is highly inclusive both educationally and socially and learners feel safe and welcome at college.
42. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners on vocational courses receive good targeted support through additional workshops and the tutorial system is effective in ensuring timely completion of coursework. Good in-class additional learning support is provided for level 1 and 2 students. Additional learning support is less extensive at level 3 but most students who need it receive it and achieve well.

#### Leadership and management

43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new curriculum manager has implemented a number of changes which are having an impact. There is a clear focus on improving teaching and learning. Staff communicate well and are enthusiastic about promoting equality and diversity. Data are used well to identify areas for improvement but the targets set for improvement are not always sufficiently challenging. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement. Despite recent improvements, progress in eliminating the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection has been slow overall. Links with employers, for example, continue to be weak.

## Art and design

Good: Grade 2

### Context

44. The college offers AS and A-level courses in applied art, art and design, graphic design, photography and textiles and a first diploma in art and design. The majority of the 220 students are aged 16 to 18.

### Strengths

- high success rates on many courses
- good standard of students' work
- much good teaching and support for students
- good use of information technology to support teaching, learning and assessment
- good management of the area and the curriculum.

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates on AS and A-level art and design
- poor punctuality in a minority of lessons
- insufficiently detailed quality improvement plans.

### Achievement and standards

45. Achievement and standards are good on the majority of courses; for example, success rates in GCE A-level applied art, graphic design and photography have been at or above the high national averages for sixth form colleges for the last three years. Success rates are also good in A-level textiles and AS applied art and graphic design. However, success rates in AS and A-level art and design and AS textiles were below the national average in 2007/08. The standard of students' work is good. Students demonstrate a good range of skills and creativity in their exploratory work, design methodology, observational drawing, graphic design, photography and textiles. Good visual research and development of ideas are evident in sketchbooks. Attendance in lessons is good and students clearly enjoy their studies and are highly motivated.

### Quality of provision

46. Teaching and learning are good. The best lessons are well planned with project briefs that provide clear aims, learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Learning is primarily achieved through a variety of challenging tasks and projects and students are encouraged to discuss their work with their teachers and each other. Only in a minority of lessons are some students insufficiently challenged. Support and guidance are good and the progress made by students with diverse needs and abilities is monitored carefully. Students rightly speak highly of the support they receive and are regularly encouraged to improve their performance.

47. Assessment and the marking of students' work are good with very effective use of the college electronic learning system. Since the last inspection access to computers and software has improved significantly and the range and use of specialist computer technology is a notable strength. The range of provision is good and a good variety of additional activities enables students to enrich their learning experience. These include visits to galleries, visiting speakers and additional opportunities to study life drawing and photography.

#### Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are good and staff are committed to achieving high standards. Students' performance is monitored regularly and managers make good use of data to bring about improvement. The self-assessment report is generally accurate and identifies most strengths and areas for improvement. However, many quality improvement plans do not identify precise actions, deadlines and responsibilities.
49. Teachers are well qualified and where appropriate have up-to-date professional experience. Annual reviews for full- and part-time teachers result in effective individual development plans and there is good take-up from a range of subject specific professional training activities. Specialist accommodation and resources are good. Equality and diversity are well promoted through a range of successful and focused projects.

## English and modern foreign languages

Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Context

50. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in a variety of English courses and French and Spanish to 200 full-time students. Over 240 students follow GCSE English and a further 200 study for adult literacy qualifications. Qualifications are also offered in 11 different community languages although take up is low. Nearly all the students are aged 16 to 18.

## Strengths

- outstanding success rates in A-level French
- good teaching in GCSE English
- good use of technology to support teaching, learning and assessment
- wide range of courses at different levels meeting students' needs.

## Areas for improvement

- low retention in AS English language, English literature and French
- low attendance and punctuality in many courses
- inconsistent impact of quality assurance.

## Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. A-level French has sustained 100% success rates over four years and A\* to C success rates in GCSE English have risen to well above the national average in the last two years. Students following adult literacy courses achieve well. However, retention rates are low for AS French, English language and English literature but students who complete their courses achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
52. Standards of work are satisfactory and students of French and Spanish develop good speaking skills. Progression rates to higher education are good. Although most students enjoy their lessons, attendance rates are low and punctuality, particularly for the first lesson of the day, is poor.

## Quality of provision

53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In GCSE English, teaching is good, developing confident and articulate learners who are strongly motivated to succeed. Teachers of all subjects are enthusiastic and use a good range of methods and activities to interest and motivate students. In the best lessons, students are challenged through skilful planning, questioning and task-setting. In weaker lessons, however, students are kept busy but are not given enough opportunities to explore and extend their ideas, or to develop the independence and confidence.

54. Assessment and monitoring of progress are good. Work is promptly and helpfully marked and students can access assignments and course materials electronically, getting valuable feedback from their teachers to support learning outside lessons. The use of data to help students set improvement targets is improving but is not used consistently across the area and is not benefiting all students.
55. The area offers a good range of courses at all levels and also gives good support to students who speak other languages to gain qualifications in them. Good enrichment opportunities, such as visits abroad, theatre trips, revision days and speakers, are also provided.
56. Learners get good individual support from their teachers who are approachable and generous with their time in giving help outside lessons. However, teachers are not always demanding enough over homework tasks and are sometimes too accommodating when work has not been completed. Students are not fully enough informed of the implications of the work load they are undertaking when selecting programmes.

#### Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Day-to-day management, teamwork and communications are good. Teachers feel well supported, responsibilities are shared and increasing attention is given to improving teaching and learning. Managers and teachers are proud of the diverse nature of the student population and promote diversity well. Self-assessment is improving but analyses are not yet sufficiently objective or thorough. Managers have not adequately identified and addressed the causes of low retention on AS courses. Quality assurance measures are not having uniform impact and areas for improvement are not followed through systematically.

## Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	05/06	220	48	71	-23	...	...	...	...
	06/07	481	61	73	-12	10	20	64	-44
	07/08*	342	63	N/A		15	73	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other	05/06	220	48	71	-23	...	...	...	...
	06/07	481	61	72	-11	10	...	...	...
	07/08*	342	63	N/A	...	15	73	N/A	...

\* college data

Table 2

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	05/06	674	68	78	-10	10	80	65	15
	06/07	742	85	82	3	9	100	65	35
	07/08*	665	82	N/A	...	32	78	N/A	...
GCSEs	05/06	411	68	82	-14	7	86	67	19
	06/07	373	85	83	2	7	100	68	32
	07/08*	378	80	N/A	-3	22	77	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	81	74	77	-3	...	...	...	...
	06/07	1	0	78	-78	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	1	100	N/A	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	...	...	...	...	...	...	N/A	...
Other	05/06	182	66	70	-4	3	67	62	5
	06/07	368	86	79	7	2	100	62	38
	07/08*	286	84	N/A	...	10	90	N/A	...

\* college data

Table 3

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

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	05/06	2325	78	84	-6	61	82	65	17
	06/07	2225	78	85	-7	104	80	69	11
	07/08*	1989	78	N/A		105	83	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	763	90	93	-3	19	95	78	17
	06/07	747	87	93	-6	46	83	80	3
	07/08*	644	92	N/A		49	94	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	1385	71	79	-8	28	75	58	17
	06/07	1237	73	81	-8	53	75	61	14
	07/08*	1060	68	N/A		44	66	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	91	9	77	14	10	100	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	...	...	...	...	...	...	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	...	...	...	...	...	...	N/A	
Other	05/06	86	62	79	-17	4	25	62	-37
	06/07	241	72	80	-8	5	100	66	34
	07/08*	285	86	N/A		12	100	N/A	

\* college data