

Carshalton College

Inspection report

Provider reference	130455
Published date	November 2008

Audience	Post-sixteen
Published date	November 2008
Provider reference	130455

Contents

Background information.....	3
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Main findings	9
Sector subject area	13

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.

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); 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: health and social care, and early years; engineering; hair and beauty; arts, media and publishing; foundations for learning and life.

Description of the provider

1. Carshalton College is a medium sized general further education college, located on one site in Sutton, south London. It has an annual income of £16 million, of which £12 million is LSC funding. It is the only further education college in the borough, although there is a well established adult education college. Its mission is to help individuals, businesses and other organisations realise their ambitions through learning and skills development. College data for 2007/08 show there were just over 4,300 learners, of whom 1,500 were full-time learners aged 16 to 18, and 720 full-time adults. The remaining 48% were part-time learners. There has been a significant reduction in adult provision over the last three years. Fifty-three per cent of the learners are women.

2. The college has carried out substantial refurbishment since the previous inspection with all buildings being modernised. Capital projects have resulted in the development of a care academy with a nursery and additional teaching rooms, additional electrical installation and media facilities, staff and common room accommodation, information technology (IT) classrooms and additional beauty facilities.
3. The college offers most of its courses in eight sector subject areas. The largest curriculum areas are preparation for life and work; engineering; business, administration and law; and health, public services and care. The curriculum is strongly vocational, with courses ranging from pre-entry to degree level. The college does not offer a programme of GCE A levels, as it has decided not to compete with academic programmes offered in the 14 local secondary school sixth forms. It does have a small provision for 14 to 16 year olds and a large work-based learning provision for apprentices and Train to Gain learners. Apprenticeship numbers average around 400 learners with the largest cohorts being in engineering, construction and retail and commercial enterprise. Train to Gain started in 2007/08 with most learners enrolled in health, public services and care, construction and business administration.
4. Sutton is a prosperous area generally, but has pockets of deprivation, particularly in some of its northern wards. Unemployment rates are among the lowest in the city. Over 80% of businesses are small or medium sized and business services and health and education are the largest employment sectors. Approximately 40% of the college's learners reside in Sutton with a further 32% coming from the neighbouring London boroughs of Croydon and Merton. The majority of learners from Sutton are from three local schools, which have low levels of academic performance. Just over 30% of learners at the college are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the population in neighbouring boroughs.

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>Satisfactory: Contributory grade 3</i>

Sector subject areas

Health and social care, and early years	Good: Grade 2
Engineering	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Hair and beauty	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Good: Grade 2
Foundations for learning and life	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. Carshalton College is a satisfactory college with satisfactory capacity to improve. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates in 2006/07 were satisfactory for all age groups at levels 1 and 2 and were at, or just below, national averages. At level 3, they were low and below national averages; significantly so for learners aged 16 to 18. In 2007/08, success rates improved significantly overall for learners aged 16 to 18 and adults to 79% and 75%, respectively, and were in line with trends in national averages for the previous year. Level 1 success rates were above average for all age groups and level 2 and 3 success rates were satisfactory for all learners. Apprenticeship success rates were high for apprentices in 2007/08 and satisfactory for the smaller numbers of advanced apprentices. Progression rates are good and success rates are high for learners aged 14 to 16. Progression rates are good for Entry to Employment learners. Learners develop good employability skills in many curriculum areas.
6. The quality of provision is satisfactory, as are teaching and learning. The college's lesson observation process does not provide a sufficiently reliable view of the quality of lessons and too many are over-graded. The college has reduced the amount of inadequate teaching and learning, but a high proportion of lessons are only satisfactory. There is too much variation in the quality of teaching between different curriculum areas and an over-reliance on whole-class teaching that does not meet learners' individual needs. Assessment practices are satisfactory overall, but target setting to improve achievement and to extend learners is weak in many curriculum areas.
7. The extent to which the college meets the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local community is satisfactory. Learner numbers have fallen significantly in many curriculum areas, but have increased in work-based learning and Train to Gain provision. The college offers an appropriate range of vocational courses, but progression routes are insufficient in some areas. Links with local secondary schools are strong. Partnerships with employers are satisfactory overall, but are good in work-based learning. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good.
8. Guidance and support are good. They are particularly strong for learners with additional support needs and those most at risk of leaving the college. Personal support for learners is good and group tutorials are well structured and purposeful. Information, advice and guidance are comprehensive.
9. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has a clear strategy to diversify its provision and to increase the range of employability programmes to offset the decline in full-time learners. Performance monitoring is good. Retention rates have improved significantly in 2007/08, as has the monitoring of learners' progress. Financial management is strong. The college works well

with other education providers and partners. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory overall, but the self-assessment process is not sufficiently evaluative or self-critical.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. The college's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Performance monitoring and management have been successful across the college overall in the last year, but not in all curriculum areas. The self-assessment process is not sufficiently thorough. Grading through self-assessment does not accurately identify the quality of provision, particularly in achievement and standards where there is not enough realistic analysis of performance against improving national averages. The most recent report does not identify a number of important areas for improvement. The college's operating plan and individual curriculum action plans are not sufficiently challenging or precise. Governors have appropriate expertise to fulfil their duties. The college has realistic business objectives that have started to respond well to local and national priorities. The new management structure of the college is appropriate with clear roles and responsibilities to enable the college to move forward with its mission and key priorities. The college is financially stable and financial management is good. College managers have a good recent record overall of bringing about improvement through setting and meeting challenging targets, but this is not consistent across the college. The commitment of staff at all levels to improve the provision is appropriate and their support for college plans and their confidence in managers' ability to provide effective leadership is good.

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

11. The college has taken satisfactory steps to promote improvement since the last inspection. Grades for most curriculum areas and leadership and management are the same as at the previous inspection. Success rates were well below national rates in 2005/06, but have improved over the last two years to be at, or just above, national rates in 2007/08. The college has made significant progress to improve some weaknesses identified at the last inspection, such as additional learning support and work-based learning, but other areas for improvement remain and inspectors identified some new issues for the college to resolve. The college has recognised and responded to new initiatives and to the developing needs of local employers and communities appropriately.

Key strengths

- learners' good acquisition of workplace skills
- high success rates on level 1 courses
- strong partnerships
- good social inclusion
- particularly good support for learners
- strong financial management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates for adult learners from minority ethnic groups
- those success rates that remain at or below national averages
- the significant levels of satisfactory teaching
- the lack of rigour in self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

Train to Gain

Good: Grade 2

Learners aged 14 to 16

Good: Grade 2

12. Learners' achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, but good in Train to Gain and for learners aged 14 to 16. The college's self-assessment judged achievement and standards to be good. Success rates are satisfactory, having improved significantly over the last two years and in particular in 2007/08. Enrolments have fallen significantly in many curriculum areas over the last two years, but the college's strategies to improve retention have been particularly effective. This improvement has been most significant at level 3. Success rates for learners of all ages at level 1 are above average.
13. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 were at the national average at levels 2 and 3 in 2006/07, but were low at level 3. College data show that they have improved significantly in 2007/08, but this is set against a national average that is also rising. Success rates are above average at level 1 and satisfactory at levels 2 and 3. Success rates for the smaller numbers of adult learners have also improved significantly since 2006/07 when they were below national averages and they are now high at level 1 in 2007/08. At levels 2 and 3, they are satisfactory. Success rates on short and very short courses have been significantly below national averages for the last three years. Success rates for many adult learners from minority ethnic backgrounds are well below both the college's overall success rate and national averages. Key skills success rates are improving and are satisfactory. Apprenticeship success rates are high for apprentices in 2007/08 and satisfactory for advanced apprentices. They were low in 2006/07. Progression rates and success rates are high for learners aged 14 to 16. Progression rates are high for Entry to Employment learners.
14. Learners enjoy their studies and many develop good workplace skills. Their behaviour and personal skills in lessons are good. Attendance rates are satisfactory, but inspectors identified some poor punctuality and recording of attendance during the inspection.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. The quality of provision is satisfactory. The college's self-assessment judged the quality of provision to be good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory across all remits. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and there has been a reduction in inadequate teaching. Where the college identifies unsatisfactory teaching, it provides good support for tutors through its teaching and learning team. Too much teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lesson observation grades do not always reflect the strengths and areas for improvement identified. Action planning and the monitoring of improvements from observations are insufficient. There is too much variation in the quality of

- teaching across curriculum areas. The college did not identify improvements in any aspect of teaching and learning in the most recent self-assessment report.
16. Tutors plan the best lessons well. They use their subject knowledge effectively to link theory to working contexts. Tutors use information and learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning in many lessons. In some classes, tutors do not focus enough on learners' individual needs. Some teaching is not sufficiently challenging to allow more able learners to progress. There is an over-reliance on whole class teaching.
 17. Assessment is satisfactory. Provision to meet learners' additional learning needs is good. The uptake of support for these learners is high and they receive support promptly. Those learners receiving support succeed well and success rates are above the college's overall success rate. The assessment of learners' work is regular and grading is accurate. Learners receive thorough and helpful feedback. Internal verification is satisfactory. Target setting and assessment planning are insufficient in some curriculum areas.
 18. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory, and good in work-based learning. The college offers an appropriate range of vocational courses, but progression routes are insufficient in some curriculum areas. The college has strong and productive links with local schools and a range of other partners. Relationships with employers are appropriate, but good in work-based learning. Learners make a positive contribution to their local communities.
 19. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. The college takes a strong lead locally in encouraging under-represented learners to take up education and training. Learners' behaviour is good and the college has been very successful in creating an environment of mutual respect and understanding across its campus. Learners feel safe. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups attending the college is higher than that in Sutton.
 20. Enrichment arrangements are satisfactory. The college has increased the number of college-wide enrichment activities since the previous inspection, but attendance by learners was low in 2007/08. The college has responded by setting up a cross-college timetable for enrichment activities. Learners in some curriculum areas take part in a good range of vocational enrichment, but opportunities to study for additional qualifications are insufficient in other subjects.
 21. Guidance and support are good. Learners receive good personal support, particularly those who are most at risk of leaving the college early. The appointment of specialist personal advisers to monitor these learners has been particularly effective. They give good guidance to personal tutors and support them well with teaching resources and informative talks to learners. Group tutorials are well structured and are purposeful. Tutorials cover a useful range of themes, such as equality and diversity and health and safety. Arrangements for information, advice and guidance are comprehensive.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

*Contributory grades:**Equality of opportunity**Satisfactory: Grade 3*

22. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college judged them to be good through self-assessment. College performance is satisfactory and success rates have improved every year since 2005/06, significantly so in 2007/08. They are now broadly at the national average overall for learners of all ages. Numbers of full- and part-time learners have fallen in most curriculum areas over the last two years, but have increased on work-based programmes, including Train to Gain.
23. The college has implemented a new management structure at the start of the 2008/09 academic year, which has made roles and responsibilities clearer. Senior managers have set a clear agenda to improve accountability and to put a greater emphasis on the sharing of good practice. Staff development is satisfactory. Appraisals are regular and focus well on the links between staff and course performance. The college has responded appropriately to the national agenda for teaching reforms.
24. Financial management is strong. The college's financial performance has been good for a number of years and it has significant reserves. It provides satisfactory value for money. Staff turnover and costs are around national rates and staff utilisation is good. The college has made a significant investment in new specialist accommodation and resources, including sports facilities, engineering and hairdressing teaching areas and ILT.
25. The college has strong partnerships with other education and training providers and partners, particularly to widen participation. It is currently building a new centre for autism and a progression unit for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in collaboration with another college.
26. Governance is satisfactory. Governors monitor the college's key performance indicators closely and challenge senior managers appropriately. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the college and have recently started to have a greater involvement in curriculum areas.
27. The college's response to equality and diversity is satisfactory. It has appropriate policies and action plans in place to meet its statutory responsibilities with regard to gender, disability and race equality. The college has a culture of inclusiveness and mutual respect. Learners feel safe and valued. Promotion of equality of opportunity through the curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in some areas. Learners develop a good understanding of equality and diversity in many lessons and in tutorials. The promotion of equality of opportunity is poor in work-based learning. There is little checking of learners' knowledge of equality and no monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies and procedures. The analysis of the performance of different groups of learners is regular, but the college does not

use the outcomes sufficiently well to investigate differences in success rates, particularly the low success rates for adults from black and minority ethnic groups. It has appointed a director of equality and diversity recently and plans are in place to resolve this area for improvement. The college's arrangements to protect young people and vulnerable adults are appropriate.

28. The arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory overall. The college has a well established quality framework and internal and quality audits are comprehensive. The well designed management information system enables managers to use reliable data to make very accurate forecasts about retention and success rates. Performance monitoring is good. Managers monitor key performance indicators monthly. New systems to identify learners at risk of leaving early are very effective. Where these systems are well established, the monitoring of learners' progress has improved, but this is not yet consistent across the college. The observation of the teaching and learning process has not raised the standards of teaching and learning sufficiently. There is still too much satisfactory teaching. Teachers have too few opportunities to share good practice with staff from other curriculum areas.
29. The self-assessment process is inadequate. It is not sufficiently evaluative or self-critical. Many of the strengths identified through self-assessment are normal practice. The college does not evaluate some areas of its provision in sufficient detail, such as the quality of teaching and learning. Quality improvement plans are imprecise. The most recent self-assessment report does not identify some important areas for improvement.

Sector subject area

Health and social care, and early years

Good: Grade 2

Context

30. The college offers full-time courses in health, social care and early years, and playwork from entry level to level 3, including national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3. Short courses include first aid and child minding and professional development. The provision has around 200 learners, mainly aged 16 to 18, and approximately 420 part-time adult learners. Provision for learners aged 14 to 16 takes place in partnership with seven local schools. The college has a CoVE in early years.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- highly effective employer links
- good support for learners
- good curriculum leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient challenge for more able learners.

Achievement and standards

31. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on level 2 health and social care courses and on levels 1 and 2 early years programmes are high. Access to nursing and NVQ provision have success rates above national averages. Standards of learners' work are good. Written work is of an appropriate standard and learners demonstrate good progress in the application of important theories to practice; for example, the role of play in child development. Learners develop relevant work-related skills. Progression rates to higher level courses and employment are high, particularly on early years courses.

Quality of provision

32. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors use ILT well in many lessons to provide good opportunities for a range of learning activities and to make high quality presentations. In many classes, tutors do not provide sufficient challenge for more able learners. They give the same tasks to all learners and do not adapt them to account for differing levels of ability. Further activities are not available for learners who finish their work quickly. Support for learners with additional learning needs is good. Well briefed learning support assistants provide very good academic, personal and behavioural support to learners. Assessment practices are satisfactory, with

appropriate feedback to learners. Individual learning plans are thorough and target setting during reviews is clear and detailed.

33. The programmes and activities are successful in meeting the needs of learners and employers. Employer links are highly effective. The college is well represented in local health and early years partnerships and provides training to a wide range of employers and council staff. The provision of courses is responsive to employers' needs and training takes place at times that suit them and their employees. Learners in early years have good progression routes from entry level right up to foundation degree courses and also through work-based qualifications. The college has discontinued level 3 full-time courses in health and social care. This restricts progression for learners aged 16 to 18. A good range of enrichment activities includes visits, external speakers and activities such as self-defence and driving theory.
34. Support for learners is good. They receive good initial advice and guidance. The identification of learners most at risk of leaving is thorough and staff monitor these learners carefully. Tutorials for both groups and individual learners are very relevant and useful.

Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management are good. Managers have implemented effective actions to improve retention, to raise standards of teaching and learning and to encourage progression to higher education. Quality improvement processes are very thorough. The promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum is satisfactory. There have been a number of successful initiatives to increase the number of men on early years courses. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, but fails to identify some important issues such as the low retention on, and poor recruitment to, level 3 health and social care courses.

Engineering

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

36. The college offers engineering provision in electro-technical and motor vehicle maintenance from entry level to level 3. Adult learners attend courses alongside learners aged 16 to 18, but evening programmes attract predominantly older learners. Just below 40% of the learners are adults. There are 567 learners in this curriculum area, of whom 404 are full-time. A further 45 learners aged 14 to 16 are taking part in vocational courses through partnerships with local schools. There are 26 apprentices and 254 advanced apprentices enrolled on work-based learning programmes.

Strengths

- high framework success rates on most apprenticeship programmes
- good teaching in practical lessons
- good support for learners with additional needs
- productive partnerships with local schools and employers
- good accommodation and specialist resources.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on level 1 performing engineering operations and level 3 electro-technology courses
- insufficient planning to meet learners' different abilities in theory lessons
- weak target setting and monitoring of progress for some learners
- ineffective quality improvement arrangements.

Achievement and standards

37. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Most apprenticeship framework success rates are high and improving. Success rates on most full- and part-time courses are at, or around, national averages but they are low on level 1 performing engineering operations and level 3 electro-technology courses. The latter includes the advanced apprenticeship. Learners enjoy practical lessons and some produce high standards of work. Attention to health and safety is good. Attendance rates are satisfactory, but learners' poor punctuality disrupts some lessons.

Quality of provision

38. The quality of provision is satisfactory, as are teaching and learning. Teaching in practical lessons is good. Tutors have good occupational skills, which they use well to motivate learners, to illustrate key points and to develop learners' practical skills. Background theory teaching is satisfactory, but tutors do not give sufficient attention to providing challenging activities for more able learners. The use of ILT in lessons is effective and provides learners with access to learning materials from both home and the workplace. Assessment practices

are satisfactory overall. Support for learners with additional learning needs is good. Staff assess learners' abilities and individual needs promptly and have good strategies to help them achieve. Target setting and monitoring of progress are weak for some learners, particularly on full-time programmes. Target setting is clear for learners in work-based learning.

39. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. Partnerships with local schools and employers are productive and include a CoVE with Bromley College and increased flexibility projects with four local schools. Growth in work-based learning and Train to Gain provision has strengthened links with local employers. The range of courses is satisfactory. Learners have appropriate enrichment opportunities, which include sport and fitness programmes and external visits.
40. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners value the good personal support they receive from tutors. Tutorials are well structured and informative.

Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are good. Classrooms and workshops are welcoming, clean and stimulate learners' interest. Staff manage workshops for electro-technical and motor vehicle well and learners have access to modern industry-standard equipment. Promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Quality improvement arrangements are ineffective. Course reviews are insufficiently detailed and make little meaningful contribution to the self-assessment process. Improvements in success rates and teaching and learning have been insufficient. However, the most recent self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision.

Hair and beauty

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

42. The college offers courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy to 175 full-time and 187 part-time learners. Just over half of the learners are aged 16 to 18 and almost all are women. Full-time courses in beauty therapy are available at levels 1 to 3. Full- and part-time hairdressing programmes take place at levels 1 and 2. Some 70 learners are enrolled on work-based apprenticeships and 10 learners aged 14 to 16 on hairdressing at level 1.

Strengths

- good skills development for learners on NVQ programmes
- good accommodation and resources
- good support for learners.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient planning of assessment
- insufficient additional qualifications to support learners' progression
- ineffective quality improvement arrangements.

Achievement and standards

43. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners on NVQ courses develop good skills. Working on clients improves their communication skills and they use ILT well to produce good assignment work. Work-based learners develop good workplace skills. Success rates are satisfactory overall, but trends are very inconsistent. In hairdressing at levels 1 and 2, success rates improved significantly in 2007/08 to be above national averages after being very low in 2006/07. Success rates at level 1 in beauty therapy improved very significantly from below the national average in 2006/07 to well above it in 2007/08. At levels 2 and 3, they fell significantly in 2007/08 after being at or above the national average in 2006/07. Attendance rates are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

44. The quality of provision is satisfactory, as are teaching and learning. Tutors have appropriate occupational skills and specialist knowledge. In the best lessons, they plan for a variety of activities to challenge and engage learners fully. Links between practical work and background theory are good and tutors make useful references to commercial practices. Handouts and learning materials are of a high standard. In less effective lessons, learners do not focus on set tasks sufficiently and tutors fail to plan activities for more able learners.
45. Assessment planning is insufficient. Most learners do not receive a course assessment plan and are not aware of what they need to do to progress towards achieving their qualification. Some learners take too long to complete

full units of their qualification. The focus on ensuring all learners achieve consistent standards of performance is insufficient.

46. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The choice of programmes is appropriate and the college has a large and improving work-based learning provision. The range of additional qualifications on full-time courses to support learner progression and to equip learners with essential skills and attributes required for employment is insufficient.
47. Guidance and support are good. Tutors provide good individual guidance in practical lessons and tutorials. Learners respond well to advice. Strategies to identify learners most at risk of leaving early are good. A comprehensive induction enables learners to settle into their courses quickly. The tutorial programme provides good opportunities for personal and social education.

Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are good. The modern salons reflect industry standards and staff use high quality products in practical lessons. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Teamwork is effective and the sharing of good practice is a regular feature of the good communications. Other quality improvement arrangements are ineffective. Too few strategies exist to identify fluctuations in performance across the different programmes. Course reviews are poor and the internal verification of practical assessments is under-developed. The self-assessment report fails to identify some important areas for improvement, one of which remains from the previous inspection.

Arts, media and publishing

Good: Grade 2

Context

49. The college's provision in this curriculum area consists mainly of full-time courses in art and design, media, music and performing arts from entry level to level 3. Of the 276 learners, 80% are aged 16 to 18. Nearly 70% of the enrolments are on level 3 courses. One third of all learners are on level 3 media and games courses, with a further 40% on level 3 art and design, performing arts and music technology programmes. Level 1 courses account for only 5% of the total learners. In 2007/08, 42% of the learners were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Strengths

- high and much improved success rates on most courses in 2007/08
- high standards of learners' work
- good range of specialist courses and progression routes
- good support for learners identified at risk of leaving early
- good performance monitoring and management.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient planning for learning in too many lessons.

Achievement and standards

50. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates have improved significantly in 2007/08 and are high on most courses. At levels 1 and 2, and on most courses at level 3, success rates exceed national averages significantly. Many learners on level 1 and 3 courses achieve high grades. Learners progress well on two-year courses. Attendance rates and punctuality are satisfactory.

51. The standard of learners' work is high. Learners develop a good combination of traditional craft skills and technology-based knowledge. Much finished work in art and design is of a particularly high standard. Music technology learners use a wide range of musical sources and styles. Performing arts learners are confident and creative. Learners on software-based courses master complex software quickly.

Quality of provision

52. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors actively promote the production of high quality work and original research. Learners respect and value tutors' extensive industry experience and knowledge. The planning for learning is insufficient in too many lessons and does not support effective learning for all learners. Learners' note-taking is

frequently poor. Tutors use ILT well, but learners' use of ILT is less well developed. Resources are appropriate, but some classrooms are cramped.

53. The extent to which programmes meet the needs and interests of learners is good. The range of specialist courses and progression routes from levels 1 to 3 is extensive. Multiple pathways lead to interactive and innovative media and videogames programmes, which attract high enrolments. Learner numbers are increasing on most courses after a significant decline in enrolments between 2006/07 and 2007/08. Opportunities for vocational enrichment are satisfactory.
54. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners at risk of leaving their courses early receive systematic and well structured support. The formal individual monitoring and review process operated by managers is detailed and very effective. Learners value the support they receive highly.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are good. Managers use the college's performance monitoring and management system very effectively to evaluate and improve the quality of provision and success rates. Monthly meetings and reports identify clear trends in performance and learners' progress. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Staff use a wide range of data well to identify issues and to monitor the effect of remedial actions. Internal communications are good. Curriculum analysis and development are detailed and timely. The lesson observation system is ineffective. Grades given by observers do not always match the feedback and some experienced tutors do not value the relevance of the support offered to them following observations.

Foundations for learning and life

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

56. The college provides a range of full- and part-time ESOL courses from entry level to level 2. Eighty-six learners aged 16 to 18 and 116 adult learners are enrolled on these programmes, of whom 46% are men. A further 94 learners aged 16 to 18 and 125 adults attend full- and part-time courses for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which aim to develop independent living and work-preparation skills. Sixty-five per cent of the learners are men.

Strengths

- high success rates on most ESOL speaking and listening courses in 2007/08
- high success rates in literacy and numeracy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good development of practical skills on courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- very well designed programmes.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient challenge in some lessons
- weak target setting and monitoring of individual learning plans on ESOL courses
- insufficient attention to the development of literacy and study skills on ESOL courses
- poor management of quality improvement arrangements.

Achievement and standards

57. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates have improved and are high on most ESOL speaking and listening courses. Success rates on entry level literacy and numeracy courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been consistently high for the last three years. Standards of work are satisfactory. Attendance rates and punctuality are good. Learners are highly motivated and gain confidence as they acquire new skills and work with each other. Many learners on ESOL courses make slow progress to develop reading and writing skills. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good practical skills through activities such as gardening, shopping and cooking.

Quality of provision

58. The quality of provision is satisfactory, as are teaching and learning. In the best lessons, tutors actively engage learners in working with each other on a range of very relevant activities. Too many lessons are insufficiently challenging and do not meet learners' individual needs fully. Learners on ESOL courses do not have clear targets for language learning and are unable to monitor their own

progress effectively. Tutors do not focus sufficiently on the development of learners' basic literacy and study skills. They miss opportunities to help learners on ESOL programmes to develop good work habits, such as note-taking and organising work in files. Resources are satisfactory overall.

59. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners is good. The college has a number of very well designed courses. The ESOL provision incorporates citizenship issues, ICT, employability, team-working and social skills. Refugees who are unaccompanied minors attend specially designed 'fast-track' courses. Young adults improve their language skills during afternoons designated for sporting activities. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities take part in a very well designed enrichment programme.
60. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Tutors link effectively with personal carers, external agencies, support workers and parents to support learners. Learners on ESOL courses attend a breakfast club where they receive good personal support from their peers.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course teams meet regularly and communications are good. Staff communicate well together. They receive regular appraisals and gain nationally recognised teaching qualifications. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The management of quality improvement arrangements is poor. Tutors do not have sufficient formal opportunities to share good practice or to discuss the implementation of new strategies or policies fully. The self-assessment process does not focus enough on areas for improvement in teaching and learning. Tutors are not fully involved in the process. Improvement plans lack clear targets and the monitoring of the provision overall is weak.

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 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	05/06	1033	70	69	1	2227	73	65	8
	06/07	1262	74	74	0	728	71	70	1
	07/08*	923	83	N/A		509	82	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	18	56	73	-17	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
NVQs	05/06	68	76	72	4	7	43	74	-31
	06/07	98	78	75	3	11	64	75	-11
	07/08*	77	78	N/A		10	70	N/A	
Other	05/06	947	70	69	1	2220	73	65	8
	06/07	1164	74	74	0	717	71	70	1
	07/08*	846	83	N/A		499	82	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 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	05/06	956	63	66	-3	759	52	66	-14
	06/07	667	69	70	-1	474	66	69	-3
	07/08*	622	77	N/A		468	73	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	55	78	68	10	27	78	67	11
	06/07	22	50	71	-21	28	61	70	-9
	07/08*	0		N/A		10	70	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	14	100	69	31	...	...	...	...
	06/07	12	100	73	27	1	100	71	29
	07/08*	32	72	N/A		2	100	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	243	56	65	-9	304	58	68	-10
	06/07	188	68	68	0	204	66	69	-3
	07/08*	212	73	N/A		171	75	N/A	
Other	05/06	644	64	66	-2	428	46	65	-19
	06/07	445	69	70	-1	241	67	69	-2
	07/08*	381	79	N/A		285	72	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 to 18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	05/06	487	63	71	-8	923	59	64	-5
	06/07	440	63	73	-10	488	63	68	-5
	07/08*	338	73	N/A		401	69	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	49	31	87	-56	9	22	72	-50
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	17	35	67	-32	3	67	55	12
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	31	68	66	2	36	83	57	26
	06/07	2	0	59	-59	30	37	59	-22
	07/08*	9	44	N/A		44	52	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	32	63	71	-8	482	54	63	-9
	06/07	65	65	74	-9	233	63	69	-6
	07/08*	26	77	N/A		153	69	N/A	
Other	05/06	358	68	65	3	393	64	64	0
	06/07	373	64	70	-6	225	67	69	-2
	07/08*	303	74	N/A		207	74	N/A	

* college data

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by the college 2005/06 to 2007/08.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	71	56	53	45	44
		timely	72	31	34	24	27
	06/07	overall	32	53	64	34	58
		timely	27	33	43	22	37
	07/08#	overall	62				58
		timely	62				50
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	176	60	58	52	52
		timely	169	50	38	47	34
	06/07	overall	131	54	65	49	61
		timely	122	49	47	46	44
	07/08#	Overall	148				72
		timely	151				70

* 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/provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record (ILR)

Not validated by the LSC

Table 5

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the college 2007 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	n/a	
		timely	n/a	
	2007/08	overall	17	100
		timely	17	100

* 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

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college/provider prior to inspection