

Redcar and Cleveland 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.

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, social care and early years; engineering and manufacturing technologies; construction, planning and the built environment; hairdressing and beauty therapy; preparation for life and work.

Description of the provider

1. Redcar and Cleveland College is a medium-sized general further education college (GFE) located in the seaside town of Redcar. In September 2008 the college relocated to a new purpose built college close to its original site, near to the town centre. The new college accommodates all provision at the main site. Provision in engineering is partly located at the new campus and at South Bank campus two miles away. The college is a centre for vocational excellence (CoVE) for the processing and manufacturing industries.
2. The college is one of three main providers of post-16 education; there is a sixth form college located in Guisborough and a recently opened collaborative school sixth form located in the west of the borough. The college recruits most of its learners from eleven 11 to 16 secondary schools and two special schools as well as from the local adult community. The college offers courses in all sector subject areas. In 2007/08 it enrolled 1,367 learners aged 16 to 18 of whom 86% study full time and 1,223 adults of whom 76% study part time. In 2007/08 there is a balance between male and female learners but more learners aged 16 to 18 are male and more adult learners are female. Around 3% of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to 1% in the local population. The college has 346 apprentices and entry to employment (E2E) learners, around 480 Train to Gain learners and provides for around 530 pupils aged 14 to 16 attending vocational courses. It also offers some higher education (HE) provision.
3. The college serves a mainly urban area covering South-East Middlesbrough, Redcar, Guisborough, Marske and Saltburn and the rural area of East Cleveland. The majority of the workforce is employed in the service sector, including hotels, restaurants, bars, and the public sector. A significant proportion of jobs are in manufacturing and the numbers employed in construction have grown. The unemployment rate is 3.8%, higher than the North East average and much higher than the national average. Several wards are in the 10% most disadvantaged in the country. The proportion of school leavers who achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and maths in 2008 is 45%, which is below the England average of 48%. The proportion of young people aged 16 to 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET) is declining but the numbers still remain high.
4. The college's mission is: 'Raising Aspirations – Exceeding Expectations'.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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	Good: Grade 2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: Grade 2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the college is good, which agrees with the college's self-assessment. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Over the last three years success rates have significantly improved and most are now at or around the national average. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are above average at level 1 and at the average at level 2 and level 3 when General Certificate of Education (GCE) A levels are excluded as the college has now discontinued this provision. Success rates for adults are low at level 1 but satisfactory at levels 2 and 3. Overall success rates for apprenticeships are satisfactory and for Train to Gain they are high. Students make satisfactory progress and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.
6. The quality of provision is good as are teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers effectively link theory to practice. Some lessons lack pace and challenge. Assessment is good. The college is highly responsive to the needs of students, employers, local and national priorities. The curriculum is very accessible and progression routes are increasingly well used. The college approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Support and guidance are good. Initial and on-going advice and guidance ensures students are on the right programme and are able to progress. In-class support is effective and enables students to achieve but is not sufficiently evaluated.
7. Leadership and management are good. The principal provides strong leadership, drive and commitment to promote continual improvement. Strong strategic partnerships have been developed to support the achievement of college strategic objectives and mission. The governors and principal set a clear strategic direction for the college. Equality of opportunity is good. The new college building provides outstanding accommodation and resources are excellent. Improvement strategies are very effective, success rates have improved year-on-year. Management information systems are good. Approaches to the development of skills for life need further development. Arrangements for moderating the observation of teaching and learning are not sufficiently robust. Self-assessment is not always accurate in evaluating key aspects of college provision. Financial management is good. The college provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

8. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve. The principal provides strong direction to raise standards. Quality improvement strategies are very effective. Success rates have improved year-on-year. The curriculum has been reviewed to address areas of underperformance and meet local needs. Performance monitoring is improving standards. Senior management has been strengthened and curriculum management is mostly good. Management

information is reliable and effectively informs decision making. The moderation of grades from the observation of teaching and learning are not sufficiently robust. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Judgements are supported by a wide range of evidence particularly for achievement and standards. The report is evaluative but not always self-critical and some grades are overgenerous. Inspectors did not agree with all of the grades in the self-assessment report.

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

9. The college has made good progress since the last inspection. Strengths identified then have been maintained and areas for improvement addressed. Strategic and curriculum planning have improved significantly. Recruitment targets for learners aged 16 to 18 have been exceeded and although the number of adults is declining the expansion of Train to Gain provision is meeting the needs of employers. Underperforming courses are identified and appropriate action is taken. The quality of provision in visual and performing arts is no longer unsatisfactory. The new accommodation provides high quality learning and social spaces for students and staff. Although the quality of teaching has improved, too little is outstanding. Arrangements for course review have improved but the analysis of trend data to inform action planning is variable.

Key strengths

- very effective strategies to improve
- wide and highly responsive range of provision
- good range of progression opportunities that raises aspirations
- particularly effective support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good information advice and guidance that ensures that students are on the right course
- strong leadership by the principal
- very effective strategic partnerships which benefit learners, employers and the community
- governors' wide range of skills and experience
- outstanding quality of vocational workshops, learning and social areas in the new building.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- continue to improve learner success rates
- ensure that the observation of teaching and learning is more rigorous
- improve the accuracy of self-assessment
- evaluate the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy support.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Train to Gain

Good: grade 2

10. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. This does not agree with the college's self-assessment. Between 2005/06 and 2007/08 most success rates improved more quickly than the national rate of improvement and most are now at or around the national average. The overall success rate in 2007/08 is 69% placing the college at the median for similar colleges.
11. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 at level 1 are just above average and at level 2 they are at the average. Progress has been slow at improving performance on level 3 courses. The college has discontinued GCE A levels and when this provision is excluded success rates at level 3 are average. Success rates for adults have improved but from a very low base. At level 1 they are low and at levels 2 and 3 they are in line with national rates. Most students on level 3 programmes make slow progress compared with their prior attainment on entry. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Success rates for females are slightly better than males. The improving trend is not consistent across all sector subject areas, for example success rates in information communication technology (ICT) are low. Marked improvements have been made to key skills success rates which are satisfactory. Success rates on short and very short courses are low. Attendance is satisfactory but not improving.
12. Overall success rates for advanced apprenticeships are satisfactory, timely rates have declined and are below average. Overall and timely success rates for apprenticeships have steadily improved and are satisfactory. The progression rate for E2E learners is satisfactory, achievement has declined but marked improvements have been made in the current year. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) success rates on Train to Gain are high and improving. Until recently very few Train to Gain learners took Skills for Life qualifications. Success rates for 14 to 16 year old school pupils are satisfactory. Students gain confidence and many develop good vocational skills. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Students enjoy their studies and many progress to higher levels of study.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

13. Teaching and learning are good. This agrees with the college's view. The scheme for observing teaching and learning has been strengthened. It is well established and understood by all staff. However, quality assurance aspects, including the moderation of teaching grades, lack rigour. Inspectors found there was less outstanding teaching and more satisfactory than the college judged there to be.

14. In the more successful lessons teachers plan well and successfully develop students' practical skills. Frequent checks are made on learning and teachers use their own experiences to help students' link theory to practice. Resources for information learning technology (ILT) are very good and increasingly well used. Exemplary accommodation and resources effectively support teaching and learning. Features of satisfactory lessons include the slow pace of learning, undirected questioning, too few checks on learning, teachers talking for too long without student involvement and lack of challenge for more able students.
15. Assessment of students' work is good. Work is marked thoroughly and students are given useful feedback on how to improve. Internal verification is rigorous. Assessment of work-based learning is very good. The setting of targets and monitoring students' progress is satisfactory. Although there is good practice in some areas, in others, targets are too vague to help students make good progress. An electronic system to record students' targets and their progress has been introduced recently but it is too soon to judge the impact this might have.
16. The management of key skills has improved markedly; notable improvements have been made to success rates. The integration of key skills into vocational teaching is underdeveloped. The college does not analyse the quality of key skills teaching sufficiently.
17. The identification and provision of additional learning support is satisfactory. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who receive support are closely involved in setting and reviewing their targets. Students with literacy and numeracy needs, receive good in-class support. The impact of this support is not evaluated fully by the college.
18. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students is good, which agrees with the college's self-assessment. It offers a very wide and responsive range of provision across all sector subject areas. The curriculum is very accessible with multiple entry points, modes of delivery and increasingly well used progression routes. An innovative Headstart programme helps learners prepare for HE and gives credits towards degree programmes.
19. The college's provision has a good focus on local and regional priorities. Partnership working with employers, community organisations and other providers is good. The college responds flexibly and innovatively with a growing number of employers.
20. The college approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college works hard to raise students' academic aspirations. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively integrated into mainstream provision. The college works effectively with disaffected school pupils. An innovative story telling initiative has been successful at re-engaging hard to reach adults. Currently there is insufficient provision to meet the needs of the NEET group but college plans are in place to introduce this.

21. The college has well developed links with schools. Currently 530 pupils aged 14 to 16 attend vocational courses. Progression from these courses to post-16 provision is low. Strategic and operational partnership working to develop 14 to 19 provision is good. The college has developed an innovative 'Ride the Wave' enterprise programme to help learners develop entrepreneurial skills. The range of enrichment has broadened and participation has increased but not all learners are aware of the offer. Not all students have access to work experience.
22. Support for students is good, which agrees with the college's self-assessment. Information, advice and guidance are good and ensure students are on the right programme. Retention has improved and the number of transfers to other courses has decreased considerably. Careers guidance is effective and students progress successfully to employment, higher and further education. Mentors work closely with schools and students to ease transition to college. Induction helps students to settle in effectively. Initial and diagnostic assessment effectively identifies the support students will need. The support is put in place promptly.
23. Students receive good support to address personal and academic issues. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good one-to-one personal and physical support. A good range of adaptive technology is used well to support those with disabilities and specific needs. Students and staff have good access to counselling services.
24. All full-time students are allocated a personal tutor. Most one-to-one progress reviews are used well to challenge students. Reviews of progress for work-based learners are satisfactory. Every Child Matters and students' wider development needs are well promoted. Although students only receive one group tutorial every four weeks, one-to-one sessions held on the other weeks and the wider enrichment and careers programme also promote these themes. Quality assurance of group tutorials is not sufficiently thorough.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

25. Leadership and management are good, which agrees with the college's self-assessment. The principal provides strong leadership, drive and commitment to promote continual improvement. The college has a 'can do' culture that supports the raising of staff and students' aspirations. Governors have a very good range of skills, experience and local knowledge. Together with the principal they set a clear strategic direction for the college. Curriculum and business support plans are clearly linked to the college's strategic themes and mission. The implementation of plans is carefully monitored by managers and governors.
26. Senior managers have developed strong strategic partnerships. The curriculum is regularly reviewed with key stakeholders to ensure that it responds to local

needs. The numbers of students aged 16 to 18 and adults on Train to Gain provision has increased. Governors made the decision to cease offering GCE A level courses and to focus on delivering vocational options that have increased progression to HE. Changes to the management structure have enhanced performance monitoring and increased accountability. Curriculum management is mainly good. Whole college approaches to the development of Skills for Life need further development. The management of work-based learning has improved significantly and is good.

27. Improvement strategies are very effective. Management information systems are good. Data are used effectively to monitor performance at regular business reviews. Arrangements for self-assessment and the rigour of course reviews have improved and are satisfactory. The analysis of trend data and performance against targets to inform course action plans is variable. Arrangements for moderating the outcomes from the observation of teaching and learning and the judgements and grades awarded through self-assessment are not sufficiently robust. Inspectors did not agree with all of the grades in the self-assessment report.
28. The new college building opened in September 2008 and provides high quality vocational workshops, learning and social areas. It provides a safe and welcoming environment for students and staff. Sustainable development has been a strong feature of the new development. Learning resources, particularly for ILT are very good. Staff are well qualified and a well planned range of training events ensure they continue to develop their skills. Governors and senior managers work together well to monitor the college's financial position. Effective action has been taken to ensure that resources are used efficiently. The college offers good value for money.
29. The college's approach to equality of opportunity is good. Diversity is at the heart of the college's strategic aims and mission. Appropriate action has been taken to respond to equality, race and disability legislation. The college has produced a single equalities scheme in advance of statutory requirements. Governors are carefully selected to ensure they represent the communities the college serves. The recruitment and performance of different groups of students is carefully monitored and effective action is taken to address any gaps. The proportion of students with low levels of literacy and numeracy at the college has increased. Students develop the skills of tolerance and respect for each other; their behaviour in and around the college is mature. The promotion of equality of opportunity through the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Appropriate action has been taken to meet the Children Act 2004. Procedures for safeguarding students meet current government requirements.

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and early years

Good: Grade 2

Context

30. Full-time courses are offered in early years from entry level to level 5 and from level 1 to level 6 in health and social care. Part-time provision includes: NVQ at levels 2, 3 and 4 in children's care, learning and development and health and social care. Counselling courses are offered from levels 2 to 6. There are 287 full-time students of whom 181 are aged 16 to 18. There are 692 students studying part time most of whom are adults and 25 school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- much good teaching
- good support for students
- good leadership and management of the curriculum area.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on level 3 health and social care courses
- lack of integration of key skills and Every Child Matters themes in lessons.

Achievement and standards

31. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on childcare and health and social care levels 1 and 2 and childcare learning and development level 3 courses are high. Success rates for NVQ level 3 in health and social care and childcare, learning and development are high. Success rates for level 3 health and social care and counselling are low. Standards of students' work are good. Many achieve high grades and make good progress. Portfolios are well organised and include a diverse range of evidence. Students develop good problem solving, team working and practical work related skills. Counselling students acquire sophisticated therapeutic skills.

Quality of provision

32. Teaching and learning are good. Theory and practice are successfully integrated using work experience to illustrate theoretical issues. For example, childcare learning and development students use distortion glasses and mittens to experience the impact of disability on activities of daily living. Students use ILT creatively to illustrate their work. In the better lessons students' needs are used effectively to plan for learning. Standards are high and aspirational targets are set to challenge students. Students are enthusiastic and highly motivated. In vocational lessons teachers do not use opportunities to reinforce Every Child Matters themes and key skills. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress

are good. Formative feedback to students indicates where improvements can be made.

33. The range of programmes meet both the needs of students and employers effectively. Good quality work experience is undertaken by all students. Good enrichment opportunities help to develop work-related skills. These include many charity fundraising events and voluntary work in nurseries in Romania.
34. Support and guidance for students are good. Tutorial support is good with effective use of individual learning plans. Additional learning needs are identified early and very good support is provided that enables students to achieve. Initial advice and guidance are good, taster sessions and summer schools are provided to new students. Guidance for career progression is thorough.

Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management are good. Leadership provides good direction and focus. Course teams are cohesive with clear lines of accountability and a strong sense of purpose. The self-assessment report is detailed and evaluative but is insufficiently self-critical. Quality assurance methods are thorough. Management information data are used effectively to inform course reviews, course team meetings and support student achievement. Sharing of good practice is effective and materials are shared through the virtual learning environment (VLE). Links with employers are strong and productive. Teaching staff deliver good training in the workplace. Work placements are well organised, with every placement risk assessed. Equality of opportunity and diversity is well promoted within the curriculum area.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

36. The college offers courses in electrical and mechanical engineering mostly at level 3 to 457 learners. Of these, 222 are following mechanical programmes and 235 are following electrical programmes. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18. Thirty-four students attend full-time courses. Some 73 pupils aged 14 to 16 attend the college on engineering programmes. Most students are based at the South Bank campus.

Strengths

- very high success rate on the certificate in engineering
- high progression rates into HE and employment
- good collaboration with partners to offer a wide and flexible curriculum
- good partnership working to meet employer and learner needs.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on electrical courses
- insufficient challenge in many teaching sessions
- insufficient industrial updating for staff.

Achievement and standards

37. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The success rate on the certificate in engineering is very high at 95% in 2007/08. Progression rates into employment and into HE are high. Around 70% of students completing national certificates progress onto higher national certificates. All five students completing the national diploma this year have been offered university places. Almost all learners completing advanced apprenticeships continued into employment. The success rate on the main engineering programme; the national certificate in operations and maintenance engineering in 2007/08 is satisfactory. However, all eleven learners on a bespoke version of this programme for COGENT achieved. Success rates on electrical courses are low. The success rate on the certificate in electro technology at level 2 in 2007/08 was only 30%. The success rate on the same programme at level 3 was only 45%. The success rate on the national diploma in electrical engineering was only 55%. The standard of students' work is satisfactory but school pupils on young apprenticeships produce good standards of practical work.

Quality of provision

38. The quality of provision is satisfactory as is teaching and learning. Most teachers plan their lessons to include a suitable range of activities. A few lesson plans are too generic. Theory lessons often do not sufficiently challenge all students. Teachers do not sufficiently relate theory to current engineering practices. Checks on individual learning are ineffective. When undirected

questions are used, incorrect answers offered by students go unchallenged. The pace of learning was often too slow. Many students were left unstretched by the tasks. In a few sessions differentiated materials were available. Assessment and feedback to students are satisfactory. Teaching accommodation has improved and is satisfactory. All classrooms have recently been equipped with ILT equipment. The use of ILT has improved but staff expertise in its use is variable. Some teaching rooms were too cramped for large groups.

39. The college offers a wide and flexible curriculum, mostly at level 3. Courses are offered in a wide variety of modes to meet the needs of students and employers. Particular units have been included to meet the needs of employers. The college works closely with TTE Technical Training Group who offer complementary level 2 courses. The college has good links with schools who send pupils on engineering programmes. There are good opportunities for some students to engage in a study visit to America and participate in a cross-European project. Full-time students do not yet have sufficient opportunity to access work placements. There are very few evening only courses.
40. Initial advice and guidance and support for learners are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college works well with partners, particularly TTE to offer a wide and flexible curriculum. Communication with TTE and employers is good. The college works well with employers from the chemical industry in the Tees Valley, particularly on the Wilton international site. Plans are well advanced with the University of Teesside for the Wilton Innovation Connector – an educational facility planned to open in 2011. Team working between staff is good. Internal communications, staff development and the approach to equality of opportunity are satisfactory. However, there has been insufficient recent industrial updating of staff. A few staff have recently worked in industry but insufficient other staff have been involved in recent industrial updating. The college is now beginning to investigate industrial secondments to industry. The self-assessment process involved all staff but the use of incorrect national average led to flawed judgements in achievement and standards. Inspectors did not agree with the grades in the self-assessment report.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Good: Grade 2

Context

42. Construction courses are offered in technician studies, trowel trades, wood occupations, plastering, painting and decorating and plumbing. Work-based Train to Gain, apprenticeships and vocational courses for 14 to 16 year-old school pupils run in many crafts. There are approximately 500 students, most are 16 to 18 year-olds on full-time programmes at levels 1 and 2. Apprenticeship training at levels 2 and 3 is provided, under subcontract, with construction skills.

Strengths

- high success rates on most level 1 and level 3 programmes
- good practical teaching and learning
- highly responsive and extensive curriculum provision
- very effective and extensive tutor support across all programmes
- strong and effective leadership and management of the curriculum area
- very good resources for teaching, assessment and learning.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on level 2 programmes
- insufficient arrangements to meet students' employability needs.

Achievement and standards

43. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on levels 1 and 3 programmes are high. Overall and timely success rates on Train to Gain and construction skills apprenticeships are high. Success rates on college based apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are satisfactory. Success rates on long level 2 programmes are low which was identified in the self-assessment report. Success and retention rates across all levels has improved year-on-year for the last three years. Skills development and the standards of students' work are good. Success rates on key skills and for pupils aged 14 to 16 are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

44. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in practical sessions. Students, in the more effective sessions, benefit from enthusiastic well organised teachers who work hard to make learning active and interesting. The less effective sessions pay insufficient attention to the integration of key skills and equality and diversity issues. The use of ILT and interactive teaching methods to support learning is developing well across the provision. Assessment and internal verification arrangements are good.

45. Programmes are very well matched to the needs and interests of students and employers. There is an extensive and responsive range of full-cost specialist courses, Train to Gain and apprenticeship programmes. Alongside these the college offers a broad range of full and part-time craft and technician courses. Enrichment activities include visits to trade shows and competitions but too few students participate in cross-college enrichment. Arrangements to provide structured work experience and focused job search training for full-time students are insufficiently developed. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report.
46. Guidance and support are good. Additional support for literacy and numeracy are very effective in helping students to achieve and progress. Learners receive highly effective support from their teachers and personal tutors. Student enthusiasm and motivation levels are high. Initial and on-going advice and guidance is effective, few students leave early or transfer between programmes. Group tutorial sessions are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are good. Managers have successfully implemented a range of actions to improve the provision including: a new range of one year full-time craft courses, an emphasis on more active teaching, closer scrutiny and regular monitoring of student progress. Retention rates and teaching have improved since last year. Very effective support is provided for new teachers. Resources are very good. Tools and equipment are very good and a good emphasis is given to health and safety through all aspects of the provision. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Arrangements for the promotion and development of students' understanding of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. All learners undertake an induction programme that includes equal opportunities awareness training and there is some additional promotion of equality during work-based learner reviews.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good: Grade 2

Context

48. The college provides hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes at levels 1 to 3 for 203 students, most of whom are aged 16 to 18. The department provides a range of short courses for 61 students, apprenticeships for 14 learners and level 1 provision for 130 pupils aged 14 to 16 years.

Strengths

- improved and now high success rates on levels 1 and 2 courses
- good teaching and learning
- very flexible curriculum that meet the needs of students
- good in-class learning support
- particularly effective focus on improvement
- excellent accommodation.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on NVQ level 3 and short courses
- insufficient placement opportunities
- insufficient focus on personal development during tutorials
- underdeveloped use of performance targets to inform course reviews.

Achievement and standards

49. Achievement and standards are satisfactory and improving. Success rates at levels 1 and 2 are now high and outstanding on level 1 beauty therapy. In contrast, level 3 and short course success rates have declined and are below the national average. Pass rates for key skills at level 1 are satisfactory but are low at level 2. Success rates for apprenticeships are extremely low. Success rates for pupils aged 14 to 16 are satisfactory but progression rates are low. Students develop appropriate occupational skills and work well independently. Portfolio and assignment work is well organised with good use of reference materials.

Quality of provision

50. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is very effectively planned. Learning is sufficiently challenging and well paced with differentiated and interesting activities that students enjoy. In practical sessions, teachers allocate clients to optimise students' assessment and skill development opportunities. The use of ILT is developing. Assessment practices are good with teachers providing useful improvement guidance. Progress reviews are purposeful and keep students well informed. Initial assessment arrangements are good. Students with additional literacy, numeracy or other needs receive high levels of timely in-class support that enables them to achieve. Students benefit from detailed literacy and

numeracy individual learning plans that they maintain as a very useful reflective diary.

51. The very flexible and appropriate curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners. Courses and timetables are planned taking full account of students' personal commitments and support needs. Established students ably mentor new students. The transition between training and commercial salons provides suitable commercial experience. However, student contact with higher level occupational skills is restricted, as employer placement is not a mandatory aspect of provision.
52. Information advice and guidance are satisfactory. Recently improved recruitment processes provide students with appropriate information and guidance. The quality of individual learning plans are variable, as is the monitoring of progress against personal targets within tutorials.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. Managers have implemented a number of very effective strategies to improve students' outcomes and experience. Improved additional support arrangements and closer monitoring of provision have been successful. Teaching and learning are much improved since the last inspection. The new building provides excellent facilities, the range of professional products is extensive and students benefit from a wide range of clients. Management information has significantly improved with staff aware of attendance, retention, achievement and success rates. Equality of opportunity is well promoted. Course reviews are broadly satisfactory but few courses have clearly defined performance targets that help teams define their judgements. The self-assessment report uses data robustly to support the achievement and standards judgements but evidence to support other aspects is less reliable. Self-assessment grades matched those found during inspection but the report did not recognise some areas for improvement.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

54. The college offers a range of foundation programmes. There are 1,494 students on key or functional skills courses, 150 students receiving additional support, 22 students on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or on entry-level programmes, 30 learners on the E2E programme and 119 part-time adult students on literacy and numeracy courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) entry level programme
- good success rates on level 1 adult literacy courses
- very effective individual learning plans that promote student progression
- good use of a range of activities and resources to engage students in learning
- particularly effective actions to improve key skills.

Areas for improvement

- low attendance in key and functional skills lessons
- insufficient planning of learning between vocational areas and key skills provision
- insufficient variety of provision to meet all students' needs
- insufficiently developed approach to Skills for Life provision across the college.

Achievement and standards

55. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are high on the BTEC entry programme. Students on this programme make good progress; many have significant barriers to learning and behavioural issues. Success rates are high on level 1 adult literacy courses. Key skills success rates are satisfactory. The college has made significant improvements in this area, increasing from an overall rate of 35% in 2006/07 to 57% in 2007/08. Success rates on adult numeracy courses are satisfactory as is the progression rate for E2E. Attendance in key and functional skills is declining and low. At 80% it is well below the college average and has been falling over the last three years.

Quality of provision

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors and support workers use learning plans very effectively on Skills for Life programmes, courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for learners with additional support needs. The plans are highly detailed and individualised. Staff and students write good reflective diary entries which help learners make progress. Teachers use a good range of activities and resources, including ILT to engage students. They plan sessions well and match activities and resources to meet the needs of individuals. Planning of key skills teaching is insufficiently developed. Key skills

tutors teach literacy and numeracy skills well but these are not sufficiently linked to the students' main programme.

57. The provision satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of students. Key skills help many students improve their skills in literacy and numeracy. The college foundation provision is insufficiently varied. There are no intensive or short courses for adults, no provision in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and insufficient provision in the workplace.
58. Information advice and guidance are satisfactory. Additional learning support enables most students to achieve their qualifications. Support in classes delivered by learning support workers is good. Key skills teachers are insufficiently involved in students' vocational reviews.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has taken particularly effective actions to improve key skills. A manager now has overall responsibility for key skills and has completely re-organised their delivery. Managers systematically monitor students' progress using a computer-based system and take appropriate actions. Curriculum management is satisfactory as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity. Cross-college Skills for Life provision is insufficiently developed. A number of managers have responsibility for its development but there is no overall lead or joint action planning between departments. Sharing of good practice is insufficiently systematic. The self-assessment report is not sufficiently accurate. The process is inclusive but failed to accurately assess the impact of key skills achievements.

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	344	70	69	1	677	41	65	-24
	06/07	451	76	74	2	266	61	70	-9
	07/08*	367	80	N/A		146	62	N/A	
GNVQs and Precursors	05/06	...	...	73	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
NVQs	05/06	86	81	72	9	8	38	74	-36
	06/07	72	71	75	-4	17	82	75	7
	07/08*	60	90	N/A		28	75	N/A	
Other	05/06	258	67	69	-2	669	41	65	-24
	06/07	379	77	74	3	249	59	70	-11
	07/08*	295	78	N/A		118	58	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	726	58	66	-8	980	52	66	-14
	06/07	650	67	70	-3	481	59	69	-10
	07/08*	588	73	N/A		465	69	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	70	44	68	-24	66	68	67	1
	06/07	90	57	71	-14	45	47	70	-23
	07/08*	19	68	N/A		47	72	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	...	...	69	...	...	...	68	...
	06/07	...	...	73	...	...	...	71	...
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
NVQs	05/06	209	77	65	12	305	76	68	8
	06/07	275	72	68	4	189	66	69	-3
	07/08*	266	76	N/A		199	75	N/A	
Other	05/06	447	52	66	-14	609	38	65	-27
	06/07	285	66	70	-4	247	56	69	-13
	07/08*	306	70	N/A		219	63	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	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	05/06	636	64	71	-7	901	54	64	-10
	06/07	577	63	73	-10	598	62	68	-6
	07/08*	696	68	N/A		478	67	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	94	84	87	-3	23	65	72	-7
	06/07	51	82	87	-5	15	73	76	-3
	07/08*	66	80	N/A		19	79	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	167	52	67	-15	37	49	55	-6
	06/07	160	56	69	-13	20	55	59	-4
	07/08*	110	49	N/A		16	63	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	35	63	66	-3	9	44	57	-13
	06/07	14	43	59	-16	1	0	59	-59
	07/08*	-	-	N/A		-	-	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	17	65	71	-6	142	63	63	0
	06/07	23	61	74	-13	172	76	69	7
	07/08*	35	80	N/A		157	82	N/A	
Other	05/06	323	65	65	0	690	52	64	-12
	06/07	329	65	70	-5	390	56	69	-13
	07/08*	482	70	N/A		234	56	N/A	

* college data

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by the college 2006 to 2008

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	19	84	53	79	44
		timely	17	41	34	29	27
	06/07	overall	20	75	64	55	58
		timely	19	63	43	53	37
	07/08#	overall	15	67	68	60	63
		timely	16	44	48	38	44
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	33	61	58	48	52
		timely	15	33	38	20	34
	06/07	overall	61	62	65	56	61
		timely	64	50	47	39	44
	07/08#	Overall	68	69	67	62	64
		timely	68	63	53	54	50

* 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)

When available and validated by the LSC

Table 5a

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the college 2007 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	19	74
		timely	24	71
	2007/08	overall	107	83
		timely	106	78
	2008/09 (8 months)	overall	251	84
		timely	247	66

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* 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

Table 5b

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain skills for life programmes managed by the college 2007 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	college/provider skills for life rate**
Train to Gain (skills for life)	2006/07	overall	0	0
		timely	0	0
	2007/08	overall	1	0
		timely	1	0
	2008/09 (8 months)	overall	0	0
		timely	0	0

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* 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

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

Table 6

Outcomes on E2E programmes managed by the college 2006 to 2009

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate* (%)	Progression rate** (%)
2005/06	36	-	52.7
2006/07	62	47	50
2007/08	99	26	55
2008/09 (8 months)	87	70	38

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period.

Note: E2E 'achieved objective' and 'progression' rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the college/provider prior to inspection