

Hertford Regional College

Inspection report

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Contents

Background information.....	3
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Key strengths and areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings	8
Sector subject area reports	12

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 childcare; engineering; construction; hairdressing and beauty therapy; visual and performing arts; and preparation for life and work.

Description of the provider

1. Hertford Regional College is a medium-sized further education college serving the county of Hertfordshire and neighbouring authorities. It has main sites in Broxbourne and Ware and has learning centres in Bishops Stortford and Waltham Cross. The college also provides courses in a number of smaller community learning venues throughout the area.
2. Learners are primarily drawn from the Hertfordshire local authority area although significant numbers of learners attend the college from Enfield and Essex authority areas. Hertfordshire is a large and diverse county that is

relatively prosperous although within the college catchment area there are pockets of deprivation.

3. The college offers courses in all sector subject areas although learner numbers in some areas are small. The majority of learners are on courses in the health, social care and childcare, and in the preparation for life and work sector subject areas. However, learner numbers in retail and commercial enterprise and in visual and performing arts are significant. Courses are offered from entry level to level 4 although not all areas provide courses at all levels.
4. At the time of inspection 2,272 learners aged 16 to 18 were on full-time courses and a further 210 were on part-time courses. In addition, 411 adult learners were on full-time courses and 2,452 were studying part-time. A further 345 learners were apprentices on work-based learning programmes. The college recruited approximately 20% of learners from minority ethnic groups and 59% of learners were female.
5. The college's mission is to 'enrich our communities through skills and learning for all'. At the time of inspection the college was mid-way through an extensive rebuilding programme and a new principal had just been appointed.

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, social care and childcare	Good: Grade 2
Engineering	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Construction	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade 2
Visual and performing arts	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. The overall effectiveness of this college is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall with success rates both for learners aged 16 to 18 and for adults being around the national average. However, there remains considerable variation between the success rates of different courses and success rates for minority ethnic groups are low. Success rates for learners on National Vocational Qualifications (NVOs) are high.
7. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and typically learners make adequate progress based on their starting points. Practical teaching is often more effective than the teaching of theory. Learners on vocational courses develop good occupational skills that are appropriate to their course of study. Although satisfactory overall, many theory lessons do not take sufficient account of individual learning needs.
8. The range of courses provided is good at meeting the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local community. Links with schools, employers and community groups are particularly effective. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. A wide range of courses is offered, including extensive provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The enrichment programme is good although participation and impact are not effectively monitored.
9. Guidance and support are good. Learners have access to a wide range of support services. Additional learning support is good. The tutorial programme is well planned. Learners' progress is well monitored and actions are planned to aid learners' progress. However, target setting is often imprecise and is not always helpful. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good personal and welfare support.
10. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college is now more focused on meeting local and national priorities. Quality assurance systems are thorough although they are not effective in all areas of the college. Actions taken to improve provision have been only partially successful. There is much variation in the quality of provision across the college. There is good provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy, health, social care and childcare and in work-based learning. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. The college's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Success rates continue to improve and the rate of improvement increased during 2007/08. Governors and college managers are starting to set challenging targets to improve provision and staff are using management information well to monitor learner progress.

However, improvement actions are not always successful and much variability in the quality of provision remains.

12. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and identifies many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified at inspection. However, the grades awarded are over-generous in some sector subject areas and for some cross-college aspects. Quality assurance systems are not implemented consistently across the college. Improvement planning is satisfactory.

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

13. The college has made satisfactory progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Pass rates have improved and success rates are now in line with the national average. Key skills success rates are above the national average at levels 1 and 2. The identification of, and provision for, part-time learners' literacy and numeracy needs are now more timely. Access to the college sites is carefully managed for learners with disabilities. The proportion of staff with teaching qualifications has improved and provision that was previously inadequate is now satisfactory or, in the case of work-based learning, good.

Key strengths

- high success rates on NVQ courses
- good development of learners' occupational skills in many areas
- good additional learning support
- particularly effective partnerships with schools, employers and community groups
- good personal and welfare support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good work-based learning provision
- high quality provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates on some courses
- low success rates for minority ethnic learners
- the needs of individual learners in theory lessons
- imprecise target-setting in individual learning plans
- ineffective monitoring and evaluation of aspects of provision
- inconsistent implementation of quality assurance arrangements.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

14. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. In 2007/08 the overall long course success rate was close to the national average rate of similar colleges. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 and for adults on level 1 and level 2 courses are broadly average. On level 3 courses, success rates are below average for learners aged 16 to 18 and broadly average for adults. Low success rates at level 3 are primarily due to the very poor performance of General Certificate of Education (GCE) A and AS level courses which the college has now ceased to offer. The college accurately self-assessed achievement and standards to be satisfactory.
15. Detailed analysis of achievement data show that success rates at all levels on NVQ courses are high for both learners aged 16 to 18 and for adults. On GCSE courses success rates are above average for both learners aged 16 to 18 and for adults. Short course success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 declined during 2007/08 and are now below average. On all other courses, at all levels, success rates are broadly average overall.
16. Success rates in sector subject areas do vary although most are close to corresponding national averages. On key skills courses success rates continue to improve and are above national levels. There is no significant difference between the success rate for males and females when compared to national averages; however, the success rates for minority ethnic groups are below average and significantly so for Black African learners.
17. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory overall. Learners enjoy college life and they feel safe. Most develop their vocational skills well. Learners in health, social care and childcare and in hairdressing and beauty therapy produce work of a high standard. Attendance is well monitored and attendance rates are high.
18. Learners' achievement on work-based programmes is good. The overall completion rate for apprentices on work-based learning programmes has improved significantly and is now high. Many apprentices are now completing their programmes within the timescales set. Framework completion rates for advanced apprentices are satisfactory. Learners on work-based programmes complete work to a high standard.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

19. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall and good for work-based learners. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The college self-assessed this aspect to be good. Teachers develop learners' subject and research skills effectively. They motivate the majority of learners well. In most lessons, teachers use questioning techniques effectively to assess learners' understanding. Good or better lessons are characterised by thorough planning and preparation, high expectations and very effective use of information learning technology. In these lessons teachers take full account of individuals' learning needs and ensure all learners make good progress and are appropriately challenged.
20. In less effective lessons, although satisfactory overall, teaching does not meet the full range of individual learner needs. In these lessons, teachers do not engage learners' interest and introductions, aims, and objectives do not provide clear explanations of the purpose of learning activities. A minority of lessons drift to a close without a crisp recap of learning. In a few vocational theory lessons, teaching was mundane. As the self-assessment report recognises, written learning targets to improve learners' work are insufficiently precise. Work-based learners develop occupational skills to a high standard.
21. Comprehensive arrangements are in place to observe the quality of teaching and learning. Outcomes from observations are used by managers in appraisals to target development activity in order to improve the quality of teaching. Internal observers are trained in lesson observation practice and receive written guidance. Arrangements are in place to moderate the grades awarded by internal observers through paired observations with managers and external observers and by moderation meetings. However, inspectors found a few instances where internal observation records did not support the grade awarded.
22. Additional learning support is good. Thorough procedures are in place to identify learners' additional learning support needs. The uptake of support is extremely high. The provision of support is prompt. Success rates for learners receiving additional learning support in 2007/08 were well above the college average. However, insufficient analysis takes place of the success rates of those learners from different ethnic groups and of male and female learners receiving additional learning support.
23. Thorough internal verification ensures accurate assessment of learners' work. Managers and staff hold regular meetings to ensure the consistency of assessment and verification and take action on the outcomes of external verifiers' reports. Most assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced.

24. The college offers a good range of courses in most curriculum areas that meet the needs of learners, employers and community groups. The college self-assessed this aspect to be outstanding. Links with schools are productive and enable a significant number of pupils to experience vocational education. Links with a wide range of employers and community groups are good and the college works responsively and flexibly to meet their needs. Labour market information is used effectively to plan developments and marketing and publicity materials promote the college well. Learners benefit from an extensive enrichment programme although participation rates and the impact of enrichment on raising standards are not effectively monitored. Work-experience opportunities for some full-time learners are insufficient.
25. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. It is very responsive to the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and it enables learners to achieve and to progress. Courses are offered from entry level to higher education level and progression is encouraged. The college has responded well to government initiatives and has successfully recruited under-represented groups into education or training. Many learners on Entry to Employment programmes progress to a positive destination. Learners make a positive contribution to the college community through the student union and contribute well to the local community.
26. Guidance and support are good. This agrees with the college's own assessment. Good and timely advice and guidance are provided for learners to help them make informed choices. Learners benefit from the support provided by teachers and support staff who help them to learn and make progress. Careers education and guidance are well planned and learners on both college sites make good use of counselling and other support services that are available. The college has a wide range of adaptive technology and specialist staff who support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well.
27. The tutorial programme is well planned and includes topics that help promote healthy lifestyles and develop skills such as budgeting, communication and team working that contribute to learners' future economic well-being. However, the quality of tutorials does vary across the college and although tutorials are used to monitor learners' progress, target-setting in many individual learning plans is often imprecise and does not always help learners make progress or improve their work. The college does not have a formal system to monitor, improve or develop tutorial provision.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: grade 3

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. This agrees with the college's own assessment. Learners' achievement improved more significantly in 2007/08 and is now satisfactory. The college's recently updated strategic objectives are

focused appropriately on meeting national priorities and they provide direction for the college. However, insufficient priority is given to improving the quality of provision and to raising standards. The drive by senior management to improve provision and outcomes for learners has been only partially successful.

29. Curriculum management is satisfactory overall. Managers are setting more challenging targets to aid improvement and are using information appropriately to monitor performance. Most teaching staff are appropriately qualified and staff development is focused on improving teaching and learning. The management of work-based learning is good.
30. Quality assurance arrangements are not implemented consistently across the college. Self-assessment is broadly accurate although some managers lack confidence in making judgements and some are over-generous in their grading. Managers recognise the importance of addressing areas for improvement but links between self-assessment and curriculum development plans are not always clear.
31. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The college meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The college's single equalities scheme incorporates the relevant legislation appropriately. Regular impact assessments on college policies take place identifying potential issues of discrimination with recommendations for improvement. The monitoring of different groups of learners is effective in highlighting differences in performance and actions to close the gap between males and females have been successful. However, success rates for learners from minority ethnic groups are below the national average.
32. The promotion of equality and diversity across the curriculum is good. The college offers a range of activities throughout the year, encouraging different groups of learners to interact with each other. Themed diversity weeks are held which are popular with learners and broaden their awareness. The promotion of equality of opportunity for learners on work-based programmes is satisfactory.
33. Governance is satisfactory and is focused strongly on actions to ensure completion of the college's extensive building programme. Accommodation and resources are currently satisfactory. Governors are well informed and have a good mix of skills. Appropriate training is planned for governors although attendance is voluntary. The college complies with the requirements for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults with all staff undergoing an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Staff are appropriately trained and know their responsibilities. Financial management is good and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Sector subject areas

Health, social care and childcare

Good: Grade 2

Context

34. The college offers courses in health, social care and childcare for full- and part-time learners at levels 1 to 4. At the time of inspection 192 learners aged 16 to 18 were on full-time programmes with the majority being on level 3 courses. A further 9 full-time and 84 part-time adults attended college-based courses and 18 pupils aged 14 to 16 attended from local schools. The college offers NVQ courses in the workplace for 476 learners.

Strengths

- high success rates on childcare courses
- good standard of learners' work
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses meeting employer and learner needs
- very effective learner support arrangements.

Areas for improvement

- insufficiently relevant key skills provision
- poor management of data.

Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on childcare programmes are high with most being above corresponding national averages. Success rates on NVQ courses in health and social care are satisfactory although current learners are making good progress and many are completing their awards early. There are no significant differences in success rates for minority ethnic learners or between genders. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of their assignments, receive clear and helpful feedback from tutors and achieve high grades. NVQ portfolios are well organised and show good evidence of learners' competence.

Quality of provision

36. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Lesson plans are detailed and comprehensive, clearly identifying different activities to meet the range of learners' needs. Information learning technology is used well to support teaching and to create variety and pace within lessons. Assessment practice is good and learners receive helpful feedback on how to improve their work. Learners were observed completing practical health and care related tasks using appropriate techniques, following good practice and complying with health and safety requirements. Practical activities were well linked to theory

work. However, in some key skills lessons, activities are not vocationally relevant and neither motivate nor engage learners as tasks do not relate to their main course of study.

37. Provision to meet the needs and interests of learners is good. The range of programmes and qualifications to meet employer and learner needs is wide-ranging. Qualifications are offered from levels 1 to 4 and include many vocational strands. The range of enrichment activities is varied and supports vocational learning well.
38. Guidance and support for learners are good. Support plans for learners with additional learning needs are clear and helpfully identify useful strategies to inform teaching methods. Learning support tutors are effectively deployed to aid learning. Tutorials and learner progress reviews are frequent and helpful. Initial assessment, induction and information, advice and guidance arrangements are appropriate and are valued by learners.

Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are good. Successful actions have addressed weaknesses identified at the last inspection and improvement planning is detailed. Communication is good. Staff development is clearly linked to appraisal and the observation of teaching and learning. The self-assessment process is inclusive and accurately reflects the quality of provision. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Data management is poor; the achievement of learners on roll-on roll-off programmes is not recorded accurately.

Engineering

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

40. The college offers courses in motor vehicle and mechanical engineering at levels 1, 2 and 3, including courses in computer-aided design (CAD). At the time of inspection, 114 learners were on full-time programmes and most were aged 16 to 18. A further 34 adult learners were on part-time programmes and 92 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attended courses. The college also offers a range of self-financing evening courses where 37 adult learners were enrolled.

Strengths

- high success rates on CAD courses
- high key skill success rates
- good practical teaching
- good quality learning resources to support teaching.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates for learners aged 14 to 16
- insufficient attention to individual learners' needs in theory lessons
- narrow range of courses for motor vehicle learners
- slow progress in improving provision.

Achievement and standards

41. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. In 2007/08, success rates improved significantly compared to previous years and overall success rates on long courses are close to the national average. Success rates on CAD courses are high and are well above average. Key skills success rates are high and learners achieve well on communication, application of number and on information technology courses. However, success rates for learners aged 14 to 16 attending from local schools are below average and these pupils do not achieve as well as other engineering learners. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Motor vehicle learners were observed competently removing and testing engine starter motors and engineering learners proficiently performed a number of complex engineering operations using tools and equipment safely.

Quality of provision

42. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with good teaching in practical lessons. Theory teaching, although satisfactory, does not always challenge learners sufficiently and activities are not always well matched to individual learner needs. Teachers have good technical expertise and practical demonstrations are effective. However, in theory lessons, learners are not sufficiently engaged in activity and too many lessons are too teacher-centred. Assessment is frequent, fair and well

conducted. Resources for teaching and learning are good. Workshops are well equipped with up-to-date tools and equipment.

43. The range of courses and activities satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of learners and employers. The range of courses for electrical and mechanical engineering is broad. However, learners on motor vehicle programmes do not have access to full-time entry level courses or to provision at level 3. Full-time learners are unable to gain industry-recognised NVQ qualifications in motor vehicle engineering.
44. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners' progress is adequately monitored and teachers provide appropriate feedback on marked work. Tutorial provision is satisfactory and is used to review learners' progress and plan what learners need to do to improve. However, the targets set are not always specific enough to be useful in aiding progress.

Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Actions being taken to improve provision are starting to have a positive impact although progress in improving the provision since the last inspection has been slow. Whilst success rates have improved significantly and resources and accommodation are much improved, the range of provision and the opportunities for progression, especially for motor vehicle learners, remain areas for improvement. The self-assessment report accurately identifies many strengths and areas for improvement but is over-generous in its overall evaluation. Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily.

Construction

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

46. The college offers courses in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing, electrical installation and technician studies. Learners are able to study from level 1 to level 4 and can attend full- or part-time. At the time of inspection 1,160 learners were enrolled with the majority being learners aged 16 to 18 on full-time programmes. The college provides courses for 163 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools and 237 apprentices on work-based learning programmes.

Strengths

- high success rates on plumbing courses
- high success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- good resources to support learning
- wide range of provision with good progression opportunities
- particularly effective partnership arrangements
- good recent actions to improve provision.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on construction award and certificate in electro technical technology level 2 courses
- insufficient focus on the needs of individual learners in theory lessons
- insufficient work-experience on full-time programmes
- poor recording of learners' individual tutorials.

Achievement and standards

47. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Overall success rates for long courses improved in 2007/08 and were close to the national average. Success rates on plumbing courses are high and have been so consistently over the last three years. Success rates for apprentices on work-based learning programmes are high and the standard of work is good. Key skills success rates are improving and are now above average. Success rates on the construction award and the certificate in electro technical technology level 2 courses are low and have been below average for the last three years. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory overall. Learners on technician courses were observed confidently using complex surveying equipment and on electrical installation courses learners competently used tools and equipment to build, test and rectify faults on circuit boards.

Quality of provision

48. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although practical teaching is more effective than that in theory classes. In many theory lessons teaching does not sufficiently focus on the needs of

individual learners and some are not sufficiently challenged. Good resources in workshops and classrooms support learning and enable learners to use the latest tools and equipment.

49. The wide range of courses and activities provided is good at meeting the needs of learners and employers. Progression rates to post-16 construction courses are high for pupils aged 14 to 16 attending from local schools. Many learners progress from level 1 to level 2 courses. Partnership arrangements with employers and with a private provider of plumbing courses are particularly effective. However, not all full-time learners benefit from work-experience opportunities.
50. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners' progress is effectively monitored and teachers provide supportive feedback especially with regard to completed practical work. Reviews for work-based learners are completed frequently. However, tutorials for learners on full-time courses are not always effective in providing support and guidance. Teachers do not always record outcomes or actions in sufficient detail to be of use to learners in aiding progress.

Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good recent actions to improve provision have resulted in considerable improvements in performance. Staffing difficulties have been resolved and communication across the department is effective. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Course reviews are thorough and inform self-assessment. The self-assessment report is accurate and identifies the main strengths and areas for improvement. The management of work-based learning is good.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good: Grade 2

Context

52. The college offers course at levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty therapy and a range of short courses including Swedish massage, nail treatments, waxing, holistic programmes and manicure and pedicure. At the time of inspection, 383 learners were on beauty therapy courses and 315 were on hairdressing courses. The majority of learners attend full-time with 204 attending part-time. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18. The college provides work-based learning programmes for 89 hairdressing apprentices and offers courses for 63 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools.

Strengths

- very high success rates on most courses
- good standard of learners' work
- good teaching that effectively promotes learning
- highly effective partnership work with schools
- good individual support aiding learners' progress
- outstanding leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on some courses for learners aged 14 to 16
- imprecise target-setting in individual learning plans.

Achievement and standards

53. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are very high on most courses, having significantly improved in 2007/08. On beauty therapy courses success rates are outstanding and are well above the national average. Success rates are high on level 1 and level 2 hairdressing courses. Success rates on short courses are high. However, success rates for some learners aged 14 to 16 are low and are well below the college average. On work-based learning programmes, success rates continue to improve and are above the corresponding national average. Key skills success rates are above average. Learners are well motivated and enjoy their courses. The majority make good progress and the standard of work completed is good.

Quality of provision

54. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good, enabling learners to develop good vocational skills. Learners are able to use equipment and apply techniques confidently and competently. Learners were observed performing beauty therapy treatments and styling clients hair to good industry standards. Most teachers use question and answer activities well to engage learners and check their progress. Learners work confidently in practical classes

and assessment is timely and accurate. However, in a minority of lessons, there are too few clients to generate sufficient opportunities for assessment.

55. The range of courses and activities is good at meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers. Progression routes have been enhanced by the introduction of level 2 and 3 diploma programmes. Enrichment opportunities are extensive. Partnerships with local schools are highly effective and encourage progression. Many employers have been trained to assess learners in the workplace.
56. Guidance and support are good. Learners value the good individual support provided by teachers that aids their progress. Additional support is timely, well managed and particularly effective for learners on the level 1 course. Tutorials are effective and are used well to monitor progress. However, targets set in individual learning plans are imprecise and do not always provide sufficient detail to let learners know what they need to do in order to progress.

Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are outstanding. Performance is closely monitored by a highly effective management team. Actions taken to improve provision have been successfully implemented. Communication is excellent. Staff work well together as a team and have high expectations. Roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and good practice is shared. The self-assessment report accurately identifies most strengths and areas for improvement. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Salons are well equipped although some accommodation requires refurbishment.

Visual and performing arts

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

58. The college offers full- and part-time courses in art and design and performing arts from levels 1 to 4. At the time of inspection, 600 of the 1,072 learners were aged 16 to 18 and studied mainly on full-time programmes in art and design at level 3. Courses include introductory diplomas and first diplomas in art and design and music, and national diplomas in fine art, graphic design, and fashion with textiles, three-dimensional design, performing arts and music practice.

Strengths

- high success rates on many art and design courses and the national diploma in music practice
- good range of specialist art and design courses
- good progression to higher education
- highly effective academic and pastoral support.

Areas for improvement

- low success rate on the national diploma in performing arts
- underdeveloped external and employer links
- slow progress to improve performing arts provision
- poor accommodation and resources for music learners.

Achievement and standards

59. Learners' achievement is satisfactory. Success rates on many art and design courses and on the national diploma in music practice are high and have been so consistently. However, success rates on the national diploma in performing arts are low and have been so for the last two years. The standard of learners' work is generally good. In art and design, learners confidently produce creative work that is well informed by thorough research. In performing arts, learners are able effectively to develop narrative and character through improvisation. Attendance rates are good and learners clearly enjoy their work.

Quality of provision

60. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of teaching does vary and in the best lessons teachers encourage learners to experiment with ideas, processes and techniques. In these lessons learners make good progress. However, not all lessons are as effective and in some, although satisfactory overall, teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of strategies to challenge, motivate or engage all learners.
61. The response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. Art and design learners have access to a good range of general and highly specialised courses. However, performing arts learners have fewer choices and

numbers are declining. There is good progression to higher education courses. Links with employers and external organisations are underdeveloped.

62. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners value the highly effective academic and personal support they receive. Systems to monitor learners' progress are effective and detailed feedback is provided. Learning support assistants are particularly effective in supporting the needs of learners. Tutorials provide valuable opportunities for learners to discuss their work. Career advice and guidance is effective and learners progressing to higher education are well supported.

Leadership and management

63. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent actions have been taken to improve provision although these have yet to impact significantly. The majority of areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed although some remain. Accommodation and resources for music learners are poor. Insufficient rehearsal space and poor soundproofing has a detrimental impact on learning. Managers have been slow to improve performing arts provision and do not have a sufficiently well developed strategy for increasing cross-disciplinary projects and activities. Equality and diversity are well promoted. The self-assessment report is accurate.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

64. The college offers a range of programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities leading to formal accreditation. At the time of inspection, 113 learners were on full-time courses and 54 were on part-time courses. In addition the college offers courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and in adult literacy and numeracy. There were 258 learners on ESOL courses, 198 on literacy courses and 110 on numeracy courses. Key skills qualifications in communication and application of number are offered to learners in addition to their main programmes of study. There were 723 learners on application of number courses and 1,311 on communication courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on numeracy, key skills application of number levels 1 and 2 and key skills communication level 1 courses
- good development of learners' personal and social skills
- very effective personal support for learners on ESOL courses and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient focus on meeting individual needs in some lessons
- ineffective target-setting for individual learners.

Achievement and standards

65. Learners' achievement is satisfactory. Success rates on numeracy, key skills application of number levels 1 and 2 and on key skills communication level 1 courses are high and are well above the national average. Learners on most programmes develop good personal and social skills. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities gain confidence and develop their speaking and listening skills appropriately. On ESOL courses learners are confident in using newly developed language skills. Success rates in ESOL qualifications are satisfactory but on literacy courses are low. Learners generally make satisfactory progress in lessons and complete work to a satisfactory standard. The standard of learners' key skills work is variable amongst different departments.

Quality of provision

66. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. In the most effective lessons, including practical subjects for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and in speaking and listening lessons for ESOL learners, teachers use a wide variety of real life materials, objects and pictorial resources that make learning easier. However, not all lessons are as

successful and some lacked pace and imagination with insufficient focus on meeting individual learner needs.

67. The range of programmes and activities satisfactorily meets learners' needs and qualification requirements. ESOL provision has been expanded to include a full-time option and courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provide a range of opportunities to enable the development of independent living and enterprise skills. Progression rates are satisfactory.
68. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Personal support for learners on ESOL courses and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effective. However, target-setting for individual learners is ineffective. Individual learning plans do not always take sufficient account of the learners' medium- and longer-term course objectives and targets are not always sufficiently precise.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Most staff are well qualified or are working towards appropriate qualifications. Departmental meetings enable staff to share practice and support learners. Staff appraisals are conducted and outcomes are linked to development activity. Equality and diversity matters are well monitored. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate although some strengths are overstated. The college participates in several initiatives including piloting functional skills and linking with schools on improving choices for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Improvement planning is appropriate.

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	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 1	05/06	938	71	69	2	2365	63	65	-2
	06/07	603	64	74	-10	1894	69	70	-1
	07/08*	548	79	N/A		1558	77	N/A	
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	9	67	73	-6	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	...	...	N/A		...	...	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	156	63	72	-9	44	41	74	-33
	06/07	162	73	75	-2	40	45	75	-30
	07/08*	117	86	N/A		1	100	N/A	
Other	05/06	773	73	69	4	2321	63	65	-2
	06/07	441	61	74	-13	1854	69	70	-1
	07/08*	427	77	N/A		1547	77	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	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 2	05/06	1,626	68	66	2	1,325	66	66	0
	06/07	1,231	71	70	1	1,656	72	69	3
	07/08*	1,187	78	N/A		1,320	77	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	367	54	68	-14	128	72	67	5
	06/07	241	75	71	4	130	78	70	8
	07/08*	146	88	N/A		113	86	N/A	
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	36	58	69	-11	11	45	68	-23
	06/07	23	83	73	10	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	18	72	N/A		...	...	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	418	74	65	9	590	71	68	3
	06/07	370	72	68	4	557	70	69	1
	07/08*	343	85	N/A		442	77	N/A	
Other	05/06	805	72	66	6	596	59	65	-6
	06/07	597	68	70	-2	969	73	69	4
	07/08*	682	72	N/A		765	75	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
All Long - Level 3	05/06	1044	65	71	-6	1003	60	64	-4
	06/07	1042	67	73	-6	1090	62	68	-6
	07/08*	967	72	N/A		840	77	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	82	78	87	-9	47	68	72	-4
	06/07	98	81	87	-6	30	70	76	-6
	07/08*	53	62	N/A		14	86	N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	231	56	67	-11	84	45	55	-10
	06/07	202	53	69	-16	58	47	59	-12
	07/08*	186	42	N/A		4	50	N/A	
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	130	60	66	-6	9	44	57	-13
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	...	...	N/A		...	...	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	57	74	71	3	499	61	63	-2
	06/07	59	86	74	12	540	66	69	-3
	07/08*	67	97	N/A		443	79	N/A	
Other	05/06	544	68	65	3	364	61	64	-3
	06/07	683	67	70	-3	462	58	69	-11
	07/08*	662	78	N/A		379	69	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 NVO rate **	National NVO rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	58	34	53	31	44
		timely	49	29	34	24	27
	06/07	overall	48	40	64	56	58
		Timely	54	22	43	22	37
	07/08	overall	139	-	-	69	63
		timely	139	-	-	37	44
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	166	55	58	48	52
		timely	138	33	38	29	34
	06/07	overall	187	66	65	63	61
		timely	188	65	47	62	44
	07/08	Overall	112	-	-	74	64
		timely	115	-	-	71	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 and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record (ILR)