

# Birkenhead Sixth Form College

Inspection report

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

#### Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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

### Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: science and mathematics; humanities and social sciences; English and modern foreign languages and business, administration and law.

## Description of the provider

1. Birkenhead Sixth Form College was established in 1988. Most of the college's work is on a single site about one mile from the centre of Birkenhead. The college provides courses for adults at 14 centres in the community. The college offers courses in 14 sector subject areas; the largest programmes are science and mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The majority of learners are aged 16 to 19 and represent 90% of the college funding. In 2008/09 the college enrolled 1,225 full-time learners aged 16 to 19 and 2,000 part-time adult learners. Around 80% of learners are enrolled on level 3 courses; however, significant numbers of learners are on courses mixed across levels. Around 60% of adult learners are enrolled on entry and level 1 provision. The college has established a Year 0 course in conjunction with the University of Liverpool. Around 94% of 16 to 18 year-old learners are white and 55.5% of learners are female. Over 50% of full-time 16 to 18 year-old learners receive educational maintenance awards (EMAs). The majority of adult learners are women.
2. Wirral is the eighth largest metropolitan council in the country, with a population of 310,200, with around 143,000 households. There is a contrast between East and West Wirral; unemployment is much higher in the eastern half, with more poor quality housing and higher levels of deprivation and unemployment. Eleven wards mainly on the eastern side have low skills rates. Wirral has suffered from a steady decline of traditional industries, based around the docks, in shipbuilding and other manufacturing industries. Over a third of Wirral's working population have no qualifications.
3. The GCSE five A\* to C pass rate is currently 65% but there is a marked contrast between the four districts, with Birkenhead achieving less well. Some of the schools in Birkenhead fall within the Government's National Challenge programme. Learners' attainment on entry is below average for a sixth form college. Around 9% of young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET) with a large proportion of those living in the eastern wards.
4. The college's mission is 'to provide high quality education for all' and is underpinned by a set of core values intended to raise aspirations and standards.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

### Sector subject areas

Science and mathematics	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Humanities and social sciences	Satisfactory: Grade 3
English and modern foreign languages	Good: Grade 2
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of provision is satisfactory. The principal, governors and senior managers set a clear strategic direction and are taking effective action to improve the key priorities of success rates and teaching and learning. The college has made a number of improvements to its curriculum and systems in recent years. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates are improving. Learners on General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS and A-level courses now achieve their expected grades, relative to their prior attainment, which is low.
6. The quality of provision is satisfactory; in English and modern foreign languages (MFL) and business administration is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use information learning technology (ILT) creatively. Assessment is generally well planned; most teachers provide detailed feedback to help learners improve. Initial assessment is thorough for 16 to 18 year-old learners but adult learners do not undergo initial assessment. Learners' targets are often insufficiently challenging. The good range of provision, including an increasing number of vocational programmes and adult community provision, meets the needs and interests of learners well. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. Support for learners aged 16 to 19 is good; that for learners with Asperger's Syndrome is particularly responsive, while support for adult learners is less well developed. Strong links with partner schools ensure effective guidance and a smooth transition into college. Induction is effective. The college has identified areas for improvement in the tutorial provision. The college uses a good variety of methods to listen to and act on the views of learners.
7. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors use their broad range of skills and experience to benefit the college. The college achievement strategy, now in its second year, is showing clear evidence of success. Improved quality assurance arrangements are beginning to improve provision. Performance management is good, staff development well managed and appraisal effective. The management of equality of opportunity is good. The college works with the large majority of White British learners to raise their awareness of cultural differences and equality. The campus is too small to adequately accommodate the number of learners during the current timetabled hours. There is insufficient learner social accommodation. The self-assessment process has recently been improved and the report is broadly accurate. However, some of the identified strengths are overstated and some areas for improvement are not stated strongly enough. Improvements, particularly in success rates, are often regarded as strengths.

## Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

8. The college's capacity to improve is good. Since the last inspection overall success rates have improved. The rate of improvement has increased under the current senior management team with the most significant improvement occurring at level 3 in 2007/08. The revised curriculum meets the needs of the learners better. Observation of teaching and learning is more rigorous. The college now has a clear focus on improving success rates and improved strategies and systems to raise standards further. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and action plans are comprehensive and monitored effectively. The college's financial position is strong.

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

9. The college has made reasonable progress in addressing many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The college has maintained the strengths identified at that inspection and demonstrates further strengths such as dealing with underperformance. The college has made improvements to the estate to create valuable extra teaching accommodation on a very restricted site. Separate management arrangements for adult provision, an area for improvement at the last inspection, still exist. Monitoring of this provision is less rigorous and the arrangement continues to hamper the sharing of good practice and joint working.

## Key strengths

- good recent actions taken to bring about improvements
- good performance management
- good focus on improving teaching and learning
- the provision in ICT
- strong links with partner high schools
- broad and flexible curriculum
- highly responsive support for learners with Asperger's Syndrome.

## Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- further improve success rates, high grades and value added for learners
- target setting for learners
- raising learners' aspirations
- tutorial coordination and monitoring
- arrangements for monitoring adult provision
- the over crowded teaching space and the lack of social space for learners.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates improved in 2007/08 and are now at or around the national average for sixth form colleges with high widening participation. However, success rates have varied over the last three years and there is no consistent trend of improvement. Success rates for 16 to 18 year-old learners on level 1 courses are good and are significantly above the national average for similar colleges, while those for adults are satisfactory. Success rates for learners on level 2 courses are good. Success rates on GCSE courses are around the national average for 16 to 18 year-old learners. In GCSE resit examinations pass rates at grades C and above for mathematics are high but for English remain low.
11. For learners on GCE AS-level courses success rates are now almost at national average for similar colleges. Success rates for learners on GCE A-level courses have also improved and are around the high national average for similar colleges. However, the achievement of high grades is low. The college has identified and focused attention on underperforming areas. The action taken is bringing about improvement.
12. There has been a steady trend of improvement in the performance of learners relative to their prior attainment. Learners on GCE AS and A-level courses now achieve the grades they are expected of them. Most learners enter the college with low GCSE grades and leave with low GCE A-level grades. Value added for learners on ICT courses is good.
13. There are no significant differences in the success rate of male and female learners aged 16 to 18 but for adult learners women achieve significantly better than men. There are no significant differences in success rates for the small numbers of learners from minority ethnic groups. Success rates for adults on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses are good.
14. Progression rates between levels are satisfactory and progression to higher education (HE) is good. Attendance rates are high and college information indicates that retention improved in 2008/09. Learners enjoy their studies and most produce work of an appropriate standard. Learners behave well and make a positive contribution to the life of the college and the wider community.

### Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. Inspectors agree with the college that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan most lessons well and include a variety of activities to maintain learners' interest and motivation. In less successful lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for more able learners. In many lessons teachers

use ILT creatively to produce purposeful, productive and enjoyable learning. Learning resources are generally good.

16. Assessment is generally well planned. Assignment briefings and marking criteria are clear. Teachers return learners' work promptly. Most provide detailed feedback to help learners improve. In art and design and English, learners value the detailed critical feedback they receive. In a minority of subjects, teachers comments are too brief and do not provide learners with sufficient guidance on areas to improve.
17. Managers are using the college's well focused teaching and learning strategy to improve some underperforming areas. They use the outcomes of the college's teaching and learning observation scheme effectively to identify and meet staff development needs. The college has correctly identified that some observation records are insufficiently detailed and do not support the grades awarded. However, the rate of improvement varies between curriculum areas and some actions for improvement take too long and do not impact on the learners' experience quickly enough. Not all staff in adult community provision have been observed.
18. Initial assessment is thorough. All learners aged 16 to 18 are assessed at enrolment. Learners with identified learning needs receive support to help them succeed. Key skills in communication and IT and alternative mathematic qualifications are used well to improve learners' skills and abilities and outcomes are good. Adult learners who attend community provision do not undergo initial assessment.
19. The college has accurately identified target setting for learners as an area for improvement. Some targets are insufficiently precise, many are unchallenging and others not achieved within the agreed timescales.
20. As stated in the self-assessment report the good range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. The broad and flexible curriculum is very responsive to learner needs and offers a wide range of GCE AS and A-level courses and an increasing number of vocational programmes. At levels 1 and 2, the curriculum is used effectively to promote wider participation with good progression routes in most areas. Progression between the levels is satisfactory. In 2008, 75% of learners progressed to HE, including seven learners with Asperger's Syndrome. The range of adult community provision is satisfactory. The college contributes well to the local 14 to 19 curriculum through joint activities with its partner schools and strategic involvement in local developments. The range of sporting, cultural and artistic enrichment activities is good. Participation is high for GCE AS learners but some learners are unable to participate due to timetabling constraints. There are good opportunities for learners to enhance their learning through subject-specific visits, work experience and volunteer activities. Opportunities for learners to express their views about their experience at the college are good.

21. Support for learners is good. Support for the increasing number of learners with Asperger's Syndrome is particularly responsive. Subject tutors are highly supportive of learners' individual needs. A weekly programme of subject support sessions is in place this year. Staff use the strong links with partner schools productively to ensure effective guidance and a smooth transition into college. Transition arrangements for learners with complex needs are particularly good. Induction is effective. Advice and guidance for learners on vocational provision is satisfactory and developing well. A recent careers progression fair in the college included a good range of local employers and training providers. Careers education and guidance for HE entry is comprehensive. Pastoral support is generally good; however, the college is aware that some aspects of tutorial provision require further development. Two tutors work effectively with learners identified as underperforming due to social or emotional issues. Further development of the new online recording system will include all aspects of learner progress and tutorial targets. Coordination and monitoring of the delivery of the tutorial scheme of work is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure a consistent quality of learner experience. Targets set in tutorials are of variable quality. Support is less well developed for adult learners.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

*Contributory grade:*

*Equality of opportunity*

*Good: grade 2*

22. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, senior managers and governors provide a clear strategic direction for the college and have identified improving success rates and teaching and learning as key strategic priorities.
23. Since the last inspection the college has made slow progress in improving success rates. There are too many variations in the rate of improvement and in levels of achievement across the college. Teaching and learning remain satisfactory. Inspectors judged leadership and management as good in one curriculum area and satisfactory in three. The college has recently rectified the weak curriculum management identified in a minority of areas. None of the areas graded at this inspection have improved on the grade awarded when last inspected.
24. Since the appointment of the current principal, the new senior management team has made significant progress in realigning the college provision. Strategies devised and implemented by this team are raising success rates. Following a significant improvement in 2007/08, level 3 success rates are now close to the national average.
25. Performance management is good. Senior managers rigorously monitor course performance, the performance of teachers and the progress made in implementing improvement plans. They are effectively managing a number of long-standing performance issues. Close attention is paid to monitoring

learners' progress in most areas but the monitoring software is not used effectively in some. Staff development is well managed, clearly linked to strategic priorities and achieves an appropriate balance between individual and organisational needs. Appraisal is effective.

26. Governors use their broad range of skills and experience to benefit the college. They have provided a strong strategic steer in maintaining the college's mission. Training for governors is effective and new links with curriculum areas are improving governors' understanding of the college systems. Clerking is efficient and effective. Governors scrutinise reports relating to academic matters carefully and generally ask searching questions. However, governors have not fully appreciated the importance of monitoring the rate of improvement of success rates against the national rate as a key priority.
27. Better quality assurance arrangements are beginning to improve provision. An appropriate quality strategy, policies, procedures and documentation are well established and under constant review. Data are used more effectively to manage the provision. The college uses a good variety of methods to listen to and act on the views of learners but does not compare learner responses with internal or external benchmarks. The revised self-assessment process is more rigorous and the report broadly accurate. However, some strengths are overstated and some areas for improvement are not stated strongly enough. Improvements are often regarded as strengths, particularly in success rates and not enough attention is paid to the college's position compared with the national average.
28. Staff are appropriately qualified and suitably experienced. The campus is too small to adequately accommodate the number of learners during the current timetabled hours. Space utilisation is very high. Rooms are well maintained and generally well equipped and the most recently built accommodation is good. There is insufficient learner social accommodation.
29. Financial management is good and the college provides good value for money.
30. The management of equality of opportunity is good. Appropriate policies and plans are in place. Although the performance of different groups is analysed, the number of learners in minority groups is so small that the data are not statistically significant. The college works very well with learners to raise their awareness of cultural differences and equality. Widening participation and social and educational inclusion are good. Staff receive suitable professional development. The college complies with the requirements of the relevant legislation regarding equality and diversity. Arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are comprehensive and comply with the relevant legislation.

## Sector subject area

Science and mathematics

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

31. Science and mathematics courses include GCE AS and A levels in biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics and psychology, GCE AS levels in applied science and further mathematics and GCSE courses in mathematics, psychology and science. The college has recently introduced vocational Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) first certificate and national award courses. There are 1,029 enrolments of learners aged 16 to 18 and 66 adult enrolments.

### Strengths

- good teaching and learning in mathematics and science
- good range of subject specific enrichment
- strong subject support for learners.

### Areas for improvement

- low success rates in most GCE AS levels
- low success rates in GCE A-level chemistry and psychology
- slow progress to improve learner outcomes.

### Achievement and standards

32. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. While pass rates on most courses have improved since the last inspection, the rate of progress has been slow. Success rates in GCE A-level biology and mathematics are in line with the national average. Retention rates for mathematics are high. GCE AS-level success rates in chemistry and physics have improved and are now at the national average which is low. GCE AS-level mathematics success, retention and achievement rates have improved significantly but remain below national average. Success rates in GCE A-level chemistry and psychology and GCE AS applied science and psychology are significantly below the national average. High grade pass rates in GCSE mathematics and science are good. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

33. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons carefully and manage sessions effectively. In most lessons learners respond well to questioning but a minority are not sufficiently involved. Good use is made of past examination questions during the revision lessons.

34. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Teachers monitor learners' progress effectively in lessons and assess work satisfactorily. Feedback on marked work is satisfactory with some examples of good practice. Learners' progress against target grades is monitored regularly.
35. The range of provision is good and includes vocational programmes; further courses are planned for the next academic year. The range of subject-specific enrichment is good and includes academic challenges, external visits and visiting speakers. The college has good links with HE institutions and learners benefit from these by increased progression opportunities and curriculum enhancement.
36. Support for learners is satisfactory. There are good curriculum links with partner schools. The college provides open evenings and taster sessions but pre-enrolment guidance for some subjects is unsatisfactory. Subject specific support is available on a flexible basis and is good and learners value this highly.

#### Leadership and management

37. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection has been relatively slow in most subjects. Some previous issues with staffing cover and teaching competence have been resolved. Quality assurance in mathematics and psychology is satisfactory but self-assessment in science lacks rigour. Management actions to improve the quality of provision in psychology are beginning to have an impact.
38. Teachers are well qualified; several have higher degrees and some experience as examiners. Resources are satisfactory. Laboratories are spacious and well equipped but accommodation for psychology classes, although attractive, is overcrowded. Equality and diversity are adequately promoted to learners.

## Humanities and social sciences

Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Context

39. The curriculum area offers GCE AS and A-level programmes including archaeology, geography, government and politics, history, religious studies and sociology and GCSE sociology. Most learners study four GCE AS-level subjects in Year 1 and three GCE A-levels in their second year. There are 449 full-time learners most of whom are 16 to 18 years old.

## Strengths

- high success rates in geography and GCE A-level government and politics
- good learning resources effectively used to enhance learning
- good support for learners
- effective action to improve learners' outcomes.

## Areas for improvement

- low success rates on GCE AS-level history, sociology and religious studies
- low proportion of learners achieving high grades on most courses
- insufficient challenge for individual learners.

## Achievement and standards

40. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. At GCE A-level, success rates are high on geography and government and politics. At GCE AS-level, success rates have improved to above the national average on archaeology, geography and government and politics but remain significantly below the national average on history, religious studies and sociology. The proportion of learners achieving high grades on most GCE AS and A-level courses are low.
41. Learners on most courses attained grades broadly inline with those predicted by their GCSE profile on entry, except those studying on religious studies and sociology courses and on AS-level history, who failed to reach their full potential.
42. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory and most learners are able to apply their knowledge confidently.

## Quality of provision

43. The quality of provision and teaching and learning are satisfactory. In good lessons teachers and learners use ILT to good effect and learners engage in a variety of purposeful and interesting activities. Learners and staff use high quality e-learning and paper-based resources which support and enhance learning. Learners benefit from effective teacher support both in and outside the classroom.

44. In many lessons the individual learning needs of learners are not fully met. There is insufficient differentiation in lessons, teachers do not challenge learners sufficiently or encourage them to achieve their full potential. Learners' target grades are generally low.
45. Assessment of learners' work is satisfactory and mostly helps learners to improve their work. Written feedback is, on occasions, insufficiently detailed and fails to help learners to make progress.
46. The response to the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The range of courses provides progression routes to a variety of HE programmes. Each subject team organises a wide range of curriculum-based enrichment activities.
47. Initial advice and guidance are good and identifies appropriate support needs for learners. Those identified with additional needs are well supported with specialist and personalised resources and additional help.

#### Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New managers have introduced quality assurance procedures and there are early indications that these are beginning to improve provision. An achievement strategy to manage underperformance has led to high and improving retention on the majority of courses for 2008/09 and significantly improved modular exams results in sociology. There is now a clear focus on improving teaching and learning, though a few internal observation grades are over-generous.
49. Subject self-assessment reports are largely accurate. Equality and diversity are well promoted.

## English and modern foreign languages

Good: Grade 2

## Context

50. The provision for 16 to 18 year-old learners includes 330 enrolments on GCE AS and A-level courses in English and 130 enrolments on GCSE English. A-level French and Spanish courses have 57 enrolments and GCSE Spanish has 10 learners. The adult and community provision includes long and short part-time evening courses in French, German, Portuguese and Spanish and GCSE English. Around 170 adult learners enrol on courses throughout the year.

## Strengths

- high success rates on GCE English A-levels
- good pass rates on GCE English AS courses
- good progress on most level 3 courses
- well focused and enthusiastic teaching in GCE A-level English language, French and Spanish.

## Areas for improvement

- poor A\* to C pass rates in English GCSE
- insufficient challenge to develop learners' independent learning in some English lessons
- ineffective measures to improve poor performance in GCSE English.

## Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates for learners on A-level English, English literature and Spanish are high; learners on GCE A-level English and modern foreign languages achieve higher grades than expected from their prior attainment. The success rate in GCE AS English literature improved significantly in 2007/08. Pass rates are mostly above the national average. The majority of learners demonstrate good standards of English coursework. Achievement of grades A\* to C for learners on the GCSE English resit course is poor. Attendance is good but retention rates on some GCE AS English courses and on evening provision are low.

## Quality of provision

52. Teaching and learning are good. The best English lessons are well planned to give learners an enjoyable learning experience. In these lessons teachers show good subject knowledge and engage learners in lively discussion, eliciting well phrased answers. Activities and learning materials for revision lessons produce work that reflects the challenges that learners will meet in the examinations. Learners respond well to demanding tasks. They take advantage of the excellent opportunities for follow-up work on the college intranet. In some revision sessions too much preliminary discussion slowed the pace and final writing exercises were rushed or omitted. Teaching in French and Spanish lessons is lively and productive. Learners make very good progress, particularly

in speaking and listening. In some English lessons learners did not show the level of skills and knowledge expected so close to the examinations; they were too dependent on the teacher for stimulus and ideas. The assessment of some written work is over-generous. Subject support is readily available and effective.

53. The range of provision is satisfactory but there is insufficient provision for less able learners at level 2. Regular visits to the theatre and cultural excursions enrich learners' experience.
54. Learners with identified needs are supported well.

#### Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course teams have regular meetings with much sharing of good practice. New course leaders for modern foreign languages and English GCSE are implementing ambitious measures for improving retention and success rates. The college has been slow in recognising the issues of equality of opportunity in English GCSE and in exploring alternative courses for learners at level 2. Strategies to improve the poor outcomes on some courses have not been in place long enough for their effectiveness to be tested.

## Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

## Context

56. The college provides business courses to about 200 full-time learners, most of whom are aged 16 to 18. These include BTEC First Certificate and Diploma, National Award and Diploma and GCE AS and A-level in applied business. A further 100 full-time learners study law at AS and A-level GCE. Almost 90 learners study part-time on bookkeeping and accounting courses. Most of these are aged 19 and over.

## Strengths

- significantly improved pass rates with most above the national average
- good teaching on business courses
- wide range of business courses
- strong curriculum management in business with an effective focus on improving learners' performance.

## Areas for improvement

- low retention rates on GCE AS courses
- insufficient progress by learners in GCE A-level law.

## Achievement and standards

57. Achievement and standards are good. Pass rates on all courses improved significantly in 2008. Most are above the national average. All learners on BTEC First Diploma and GCE A-levels in business and applied business achieved the qualification in 2008. Learners on GCE AS and A-level applied business and GCE AS law achieve as well as expected based on their incoming attainment. Those working towards A-level law do not achieve as well as expected. Too many learners following GCE AS courses in applied business and law leave before completing their course. Learners on business courses work together very well, assisting each other by offering formal constructive criticism on their work. They have a clear understanding of how they should work and enjoy making progress.

## Quality of provision

58. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning on business courses are good. In good and outstanding lessons teachers clearly link learners' previous and planned work. They provide high quality learning materials and explain business concepts clearly. They use a variety of appropriate activities to engage learners and consolidate and develop their understanding. They check that planned learning has taken place. Teachers make realistic provision for able learners to achieve high grades on assignment work. Teachers and learners use ILT effectively. In a minority of lessons the pace is slow and learners' opportunities to participate actively are restricted. Teachers make insufficient use of case studies related to real businesses. Assessment and the monitoring

of learners' progress are good. Teachers monitor learners' performance at regular intervals and set them clear targets to improve as well as ensuring that they receive good guidance on how to improve. Learners make good use of the additional study support offered.

59. The range of provision is good. The wide range of courses gives clear progression routes for learners in business. More than half of the learners who completed full-time level 2 courses in 2007 progressed to a higher level business course. Almost 70% of those who completed GCE A-level business courses in 2007 progressed to business-related HE. A range of bookkeeping and accounting courses is offered for part-time learners.
60. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory.

#### Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are good. The focus on improving learners' performance has ensured that the effectiveness of study support lessons is analysed thoroughly. Lessons observed and graded as satisfactory result in an improvement plan that managers monitor carefully. Regular staff meetings share good practice. Equality and diversity are well promoted through the curriculum. The self-assessment process is comprehensive and largely accurate.

## 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 providers 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
1 Long	05/06	202	89	68	21	303	59	51	8
	06/07	143	83	69	14	368	55	55	0
	07/08*	98	86	N/A		349	57	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	33	79						
	06/07	25	88						
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
Other	05/06	169	91	68	23				
	06/07	118	82	68	14				
	07/08*	98	86	N/A				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 providers 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
2 Long	05/06	736	78	81	-3	239	74	68	6
	06/07	794	81	83	-2	277	69	66	3
	07/08*	768	86	N/A		251	70	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	623	77	83	-6	99	80	65	15
	06/07	651	82	85	-3	137	66	68	-2
	07/08*	621	86	N/A		86	73	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06								
	06/07								
	07/08*	27	85	N/A		7	9	N/A	
NVQs	05/06								
	06/07								
	07/08*			N/A		19	100	N/A	
Other	05/06	24	79	74	5	338	73		
	06/07	73	85	77	8	252	69		
	07/08*	120	88	N/A		137	64	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 providers of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	05/06	3390	75	78	-3	209	60	73	-13
	06/07	3278	76	80	-4	96	50	73	-23
	07/08*	3141	79	N/A		127	69	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	05/06	1,001	87	91	-4	73	57		
	06/07	1,199	86	92	-6	23	65		
	07/08*		93	N/A				N/A	
AS Levels	05/06	2,197	70	72	-2	81	57		
	06/07	2057	69	75	-6	44	61		
	07/08*		74	N/A				N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	164	74	73	1				
	06/07								
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	
Other	05/06	30	53	71	-18	60	35		
	06/07	25	67	72	-5	30	23		
	07/08*			N/A				N/A	

\* college data