

# Hugh Baird College

Inspection report

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Name of lead inspector: Patrick Geraghty HMI

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Type of provider: General Further Education College

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## Information about the provider

1. Hugh Baird College is a further education college situated in Bootle in the south of the borough of Sefton, bordering the northern boundary of the City of Liverpool. The college provides mainly vocational programmes and offers provision in 14 subject areas. It offers apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes across a number of subject areas. About 8% of learners are enrolled on GCE AS and A-level programmes. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy provision. The college operates in a competitive environment: within a 20 mile radius, there are five general further education or tertiary colleges, three sixth form colleges and over 30 schools with sixth form provision.
2. The college recruits significant numbers of learners from some of the most socially disadvantaged areas in England. Within the immediate local area, there are significantly higher rates of working-age adults in receipt of key benefits; in several cases, up to 3 times the national average figure and almost double the overall rate for Liverpool.
3. The percentage of local pupils obtaining at least five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is significantly lower than the national average. Adults living within the wards that surround the college have significantly lower levels of formal qualification than is the case both regionally and nationally. Locally, only 39% of adults have a qualification higher than level 1. The local rate for those that have obtained level 4 or level 5 qualifications is 8% which is significantly lower than both the regional and national averages. The college's mission is to 'improve life, job and business prospects, through excellent education, training and support'.
4. All provision funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was covered by the inspection and four subject areas were inspected in depth.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Construction Skills (Construction)
  - Blue Orchid (Skillworks)
  - North West Training Corporation (Skillworks)
  - St Helens College (Skillworks)
  - Sefton Local Authority (ESF Project)
6. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the college:
  - David Campbell (learner responsive provision)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16  Further education (16 to 18)  Foundation learning, including  Entry to Employment	263 part-time learners  2,078 full-time learners 199 part-time learners 372 full-time learners 49 part-time learners 0 learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	974 full-time learners 1,678 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	623 learners 99 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 1
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	1
	Grade
Subject areas	Grade
Health, public services and care	2
Construction	2
Arts, publishing and media	2
Preparation for work and life	1

## Overall effectiveness

7. The college's overall effectiveness is good. Success rates show a steady year-on-year improvement and some are significantly above national benchmarks for similar colleges. Learners make excellent progress in literacy and numeracy and on GCE A-level courses. The college has also shown heightened responsiveness to local learning needs through changes to the curriculum and the development of outstanding partnership links and provision.
8. The quality of teaching and learning is good and in some areas outstanding. The innovative and expanding use of information and learning technologies (ILT) is a key driving force for improvement within the college. Provision in three of the four subjects inspected was graded as good with the fourth as outstanding. Learners feel very safe in the college, reflecting the good promotion of safeguarding. Care, support and guidance are outstanding. There is strong and effective management to promote a culture of change and

continuous improvement. Governors and senior managers are aware of the areas for improvement as well as the developing strengths of the college. College finances are sound.

## Main findings

- The college has achieved consistent improvement in success rates over a three-year period. There are high success rates on advanced courses for 16 to 18 year-olds and on foundation courses for 19+ learners. Achievement rates are high. Retention rates are improving and have accelerated by 3% within the last year, reflecting the impact of well-targeted improvement strategies.
- Apprenticeship success rates have improved rapidly over the last year and are now at the national benchmark, although success rates completed within the planned time are significantly above. Short course success rates have been below national averages, although recent data indicate significant improvement in key areas. The college acknowledges the need to improve the consistency and sustainability of high success rates across all courses.
- Learners make good progress on the majority of courses. Excellent progress is made by learners on literacy and numeracy programmes and by those on GCE A-level courses. Outstanding provision in literacy and numeracy enables and embeds the college's contribution to the transformation of lives through education and training. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress and develop skills that help them to live and work independently.
- Learners enjoy college life, feel very safe and make a good contribution to the local communities. Learners' economic well-being is enhanced through the excellence of literacy and numeracy provision as is their safety through well tailored and relevant tutorial programmes. The college chaplain provides excellent support in an ever-increasing range of activities and links.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use learning objectives successfully in lessons to inform learners of what they need to do to make progress. However, they do not always use questioning effectively to deepen and develop learners' understanding. Additional learning needs are not fully incorporated into some sessions, with the consequence that some learners are unclear about what they need to do to improve. The use of ILT to enhance learning and develop independent learning is very good.
- The current range of courses meets the needs and interests of learners well. Since the last inspection, the college has established very strong partnerships with schools, universities and community groups and outstanding partnerships with employers. These partnerships enhance learner motivation, ambitions and success and transform life opportunities and the acquisition of key skills.
- The college provides outstanding care, guidance and support for learners. Individual student needs are supported very effectively. The college has established excellent links with external agencies to support learners who are more vulnerable.

- The college is well led and managed. Strong leadership for change promotes and embeds a culture of endeavour and continuous improvement. Effective and well targeted improvement strategies are supported by excellent data analysis that impacts on improving learner aspirations and outcomes.
- The college actively promotes and celebrates equality and diversity, which are outstanding. Arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of learners are very thorough.
- The college assesses itself accurately and reviews at course level are very effective in bringing about improvements. Governance is good. Learners are not sufficiently involved within college decision-making structures. College finances are strong. The college's capacity to make further improvement is outstanding.

### What does Hugh Baird College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of high success rates across the college and on all courses. In particular, improve success rates on short course programmes, building on recent improvements.
- Improve the questioning techniques teachers use in some lessons so that they extend the understanding of learners more effectively. To this end continue to develop and embed teaching and learning systems to disseminate good practice.
- Ensure that the additional learning needs of all learners are accounted for in the delivery of their vocational or academic programmes, sharing the best practice developed in special learning difficulties and disabilities, literacy and numeracy provision.
- Empower students to be more involved within college decision-making structures. Ensure the further involvement of students and their representatives so that their views are considered fully in all aspects of the college's work.

### Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

#### What learners like:

- the friendly and safe atmosphere of the college
- that they know where to go for help
- that they are treated equally, with respect, and like adults
- good facilities, in social areas, cafes and the library
- readily available help and support from teachers and other staff
- teachers and other staff care about them when they are absent or are having difficulty with their work
- very informative courses that are relevant to their needs
- guidance given before, during and after the course
- very good help with personal issues and effective careers advice

- the opportunities available to try new things.

What learners would like to see improved:

- study support on foundation courses and on very short courses
- uncertainty about progression routes through the access programme
- long gaps between lessons
- not enough toilets in some buildings
- deadlines which are too tight for some work.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the quick response of the college to requests for provision and flexibility in how it is delivered
- very good communication between college staff and the employers
- increased employees' skills and confidence as a result of college courses
- excellence of literacy and numeracy provision.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no areas for improvement were identified in the responses received from employers.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

9. The college's capacity to make and sustain improvements is outstanding. Excellent progress has been made to tackle the areas of improvement identified at the last inspection. Very strong leadership from governors, the principal and senior managers has successfully established a culture of continuous improvement and high aspirations for excellence. Quality assurance systems are clearly defined and very well focused on ensuring that challenging improvement targets are achieved. Meticulous analysis and evaluation of data are used particularly well in supporting managers to identify actions needed for continuous improvement. Excellent engagement with employers has ensured that the college provides courses that are responsive to their needs. Outcomes for learners have improved consistently since the last inspection and are now good. The quality of the provision to improve learners' levels of literacy, numeracy and key skills is outstanding and this is significant in transforming the life chances of learners. Strong strategic planning and extensive partnership working at all levels have ensured that the college is able to respond effectively to rapidly changing local and national priorities. Financial management is strong.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

10. Learners achieve well, make good progress and enjoy their time at college. Success rates have risen over a three-year period across all levels and cohorts. For example, for learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 long courses between 2005/06 and 2008/09, success rates improved from 70% to 80%. Over a similar period for 19+ learners on level 1 courses, there has been an increase from 74% to 88%. For both these cohorts at these levels success rates are now well above national benchmarks. Examination pass rates demonstrate significant year-on-year improvement and for both the 16 to 18 and 19+ cohorts are above those for similar colleges. While the achievement for trainees on apprenticeship programmes is satisfactory, overall this reflects a significant improvement over a two-year period. Achievement for apprenticeship success rates completed within the planned time is currently well above the national benchmark. Train to Gain success rates are good and improving.
11. Low literacy and numeracy levels for many commencing their courses remain a significant barrier to learning. Value added data demonstrate that, for the majority of the college's provision, most students make good progress given their prior attainment. There are no significant differences in the achievement of any group of learners. Excellent progress is achieved by learners on GCE A-level programmes. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress and develop skills that help them to live and work independently.

12. For a significant percentage of the cohort at pre-entry and entry levels in numeracy and literacy, outstanding success rates are achieved. Key skills success rates have improved to well above national benchmarks. Retention rates demonstrate steady improvement over three years and have accelerated in 2008/09, following the gradual impact of targeted strategies. Current data indicate a 3% increase in retention between January 2009 and January 2010.
13. Learners feel that the college provides them with a safe learning environment. The college has good links with external agencies and individuals and this promotes a positive image of the college and its learners in the local community. For example, learners have designed the Bootle logo which is highly visible in all parts of the community, promoting local pride. Learners act as ambassadors within local schools to show pupils what they can achieve by coming to college. Many learners undertake voluntary work to aid their communities. For example, a group of learners with learning disabilities has initiated a successful recycling project, which has raised local awareness of sustainability.
14. The college's canteen and restaurant offer healthy options and drinking water is available throughout the college following requests from learners. Healthy living is promoted through the tutorial system. Learners benefit from contact with the college's chaplain and advisory services.

## The quality of provision

Grade 2

15. Teaching and learning are good. The best lessons are very well planned and managed. In these, teachers help learners to develop a wide range of learning techniques effectively. Initial assessment is used well to plan and develop learning. Effective methods are employed to check learning and understanding and give learners a clear indication of what they need to do to improve. Literacy, numeracy and language development are fully incorporated into lessons.
16. In the best lessons learners work effectively both as individuals and as team members. They collaborate particularly well to draw out and develop their knowledge. A wide range of resources and techniques supports and develops learning. ILT is confidently used to support individual learning.
17. Learners are well aware of the progress they are making and know which areas they need to concentrate on to improve further. They benefit from helpful formative feedback from their teachers. Learners grow in confidence and in subject expertise, often surprising themselves by their own ability. Teachers benefit from extensive and relevant continuous professional development.
18. In less successful sessions, questioning techniques do not sufficiently draw out learners' responses, and understanding and learning are not sufficiently checked. Teachers tend to lead learners too much, giving insufficient scope for exploration of topics. The range of teaching and learning strategies does not meet the needs of all learners and is not focused on individual outcomes.

Additional learning needs are not fully incorporated into some sessions and the tutor does not always pick up the identified basic skills needs of some students. Consequently, these learners remain unclear about what they need to do to improve.

19. Additional learning support is tailored to meet the needs of the individual. Support is offered in class, on a one-to-one basis or through the 'skills focus' workshops. Learners have a very positive view of support and spoke of how it helped them understand assignments, check their learning and plan their work. Those receiving additional support do as well as or better than their peers.
20. The college has a good range of courses with a strong focus on developing responsive provision that meets the needs and interests of learners. An expanded range of community-based provision offers courses to adults in around 30 community settings. The college has been particularly effective, since the last inspection, in extending its provision for employers.
21. There is very good internal progression. For example, of the 732 learners on foundation courses in 2007/08, 63% progressed to intermediate level. There is good progression to college for learners on the 14 to 16 provision offered as part of a strong schools liaison programme. Increasing numbers are continuing on to university against a background of very low local participation in higher education.
22. The college carefully considers employers' views and has established a Workforce Development Unit to create a centralised approach to the management of employer responsiveness. This high quality flexible approach and provision have been very well received by employers, with 82% saying that the training offered has had a positive impact on their business.
23. There are good enrichment activities, including residentials, trips and visits, and a trip to Poland offered to childcare students. The curriculum is enriched with opportunities for additional courses and enhanced qualifications. The college has recently undertaken an audit of enrichment with the intention of sharing best practice and identifying gaps where more opportunities could be offered.
24. Excellent partnerships have been developed with employers, local authorities, schools, universities, and voluntary and community organisations. Since the last inspection the college has refocused its partnership working, with the result that schools and employers speak very highly of the new relationship. There is an extensive liaison programme with schools across Merseyside, including close and productive relationships with 22 feeder schools. The college takes a leading role in diploma development, leading eight out of the eleven strands and participating in another three.
25. The college makes an outstanding contribution to local and regional developments, particularly in relation to social inclusion. A range of projects have been developed to sustain partnership and community cohesion. These include the Bootle Village partnership as well as work with the fire service,

Sefton Primary Care Trust and Connexions. Employers speak positively of strong partnership arrangements and of the value placed on the integrity, professionalism and reliability of the college as a partner.

26. Most learners receive excellent individual care and support to promote their learning and development. Support for employer engagement, adults on literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages' (ESOL) programmes and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Information, advice and guidance are extensive and embedded in the learners' programme. The college has been awarded the Matrix Excellence award for the strength of its pastoral support.
27. There is very good access to the Connexions service and a dedicated careers officer and three careers advisors. During induction, or 'welcome week', those learners potentially at risk of underachieving or non completion are identified and their progress is tracked and monitored throughout their programme. There have been effective improvements to the tutorial system since the last inspection and both group and individual tutorials are now of very good quality. The positive tutoring model is now well established and there is a detailed scheme of work covering a range of modules which enhances progression, develops understanding and promotes inclusion. Learners speak highly of this process.
28. The health and well-being programme is particularly successful in providing advice on a range of issues, including diet and nutrition, offering smoking cessation tutorials, screening for chlamydia, personal safety and avoiding alcohol abuse. There are good and increasingly successful initiatives to meet the college's wider needs through chaplaincy. Learners value the support they receive which is flexible and responsive. Personal issues are dealt with appropriately and sensitively. Referrals are made to other agencies when required. Employers have highlighted the quality of advice and guidance offered by the college and are impressed by the impartiality of guidance and the focus on securing the right course for the learner.

## Leadership and management

Grade 2

29. The principal and governors provide strong leadership and demonstrate high expectations and ambition for the college. A clear strategic direction underpins core values that focus on meeting the needs of the community and individual learners. Strong partnership and collaboration with key agencies and employers have ensured that the provision is responsive to local and national priorities. Senior managers have been very successful in establishing a culture and ethos that support all staff to take responsibility for improving standards. The college's reputation has improved significantly in the community.
30. Managers at all levels successfully promote high standards and manage change effectively. Curriculum management is good and in literacy and numeracy and within the Workforce Development Unit, it is outstanding. Staff across the organisation are set challenging targets and are supported to improve through

very good opportunities for professional development. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and their contribution to the college's drive for excellence. Outcomes for learners have improved consistently since the last inspection. In a minority of courses where progress has been slower, strong management intervention and support have enabled improvement.

31. Governors have very good local knowledge, experience and strong commitment to the success of the college. They are well informed about the external factors that impact upon the future direction and the quality of the services provided for current learners. They monitor the performance of the college well and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They self-assess their performance regularly and implement plans to increase their impact. Governors are aware of the need to review the membership of the board to ensure it reflects the communities the college serves.
32. Equality and diversity permeate the college. Senior and other managers provide strong leadership that is effective in ensuring that the college meets its aim to be an inclusive organisation. Very thorough analysis and evaluation of data effectively identify barriers to learning and comprehensive actions are taken to help learners participate and make progress. For example, very good use is made of a wide range of assistive and learning technologies to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Curriculum planning is highly responsive to the need to improve the skills of employed learners and to provide support and training for unemployed adults. Outstanding provision for literacy and numeracy makes a significant contribution to reducing social inequality and improving learners' life chances. The college works with a range of partners to support those young people who might otherwise not participate in education and training. Strong support from teachers, pastoral tutors and support staff, including the chaplain, is extremely effective in helping learners to develop respect and tolerance for one another. Diversity is well embedded in the curriculum. This prepares learners very well to live in, or progress into, diverse communities. Learners are aware of the college's policies on diversity and equality.
33. Governors, managers and staff place a high priority on safeguarding. Policies and procedures to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults are in place. Thorough procedures for the safe recruitment of staff, including for agency staff and sub-contractors, are effectively implemented. There is appropriate training for staff and governors who fully understand college procedures and their responsibilities. Governors receive reports to monitor the effectiveness of the college's policies. The college has good links with the local Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults boards and other key external agencies, to extend the services available in college that support learners at risk. Strong pastoral support and welfare services are effective in supporting learners at risk. The appointment of the chaplain has been significant in enhancing services for vulnerable young people and for supporting transition to college for learners who need support in local schools. The college takes care to ensure that the learners and visitors benefit from a secure environment in which learners feel safe. Learners adopt safe working practices through the curriculum.

34. Robust arrangements for quality assurance and self-assessment are effective in improving the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners. Managers use data well to identify and monitor underperforming courses. A range of interventions, such as close monitoring of individual learners, regular performance management and good arrangements for sharing best practice, are successful in improving success rates.
35. Managers use student focus groups well to seek and respond to learners' views. Learners are able to comment on the quality of the curriculum by contributing to annual performance reviews. Learner representation on management committees, such as for equality and diversity and health and safety, has increased recently. Learners with learning difficulties have a forum through which they are able to contribute to the development of the curriculum, for example, in the production of a handbook for new learners. However, full-time learners are not given sufficient opportunity to take part in democratic engagement processes. Support for student governors to carry out their roles is excellent. Proactive engagement with employers to meet their needs is very good.
36. Financial management is strong. Managers have prioritised investment to support learning appropriately. The new accommodation for the sixth form, health and social care, engineering, construction and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, has been significant in improving the quality of the provision in these areas. Investment in ILT is supporting improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Joint working with another college is increasing the efficiency of procurement arrangements. In the context of outcomes for learners, which have improved consistently, the college offers good value for money.

## Subject areas

Health, Public Services and Care

Grade 2

### Context

37. A wide range of programmes are offered from entry level to level 4. There are 627 full-time learners, most of whom are aged 16 to 18. Programmes on offer include public services, child development and well-being, and health and social care. The majority of learners are on level 3 programmes. A further 169, mostly 19+ learners, follow part-time programmes. Train to Gain programmes have 22 learners, the majority on the level 3 NVQ course in health and social care. A new short course for the unemployed has 10 learners.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Good and improved success rates in 2008/09 were achieved across the majority of programmes. Overall success rates completed within the planned time for Train to Gain are good at 80%. Many learners at all levels achieve higher grades, which results in positive added value for the area. Progression to further study and relevant employment is high with 65% of level 3 learners progressing to higher education.
- Learners confidently develop a good range of skills for life and work. Teamwork and communication skills in particular are well developed. Many learners describe themselves as a different person as a result of attending the college with one aptly encompassing the change as 'coming in like a lamb, going out like a lion'. Learners recognise the importance of celebrating individual differences and safeguarding themselves and others.
- Lessons are well planned and managed. A range of vocationally relevant activities engages learners well. There are very good resources to support learning effectively, although the use of ILT by learners was limited in the lessons observed. Assessment is rigorous, providing constructive advice for improvement. There are missed opportunities to provide additional challenge for the most able in some lessons. Academic support workers have limited specific written guidance to ensure that learners fully achieve their best in sessions.
- A good range of full-time programmes provides a choice of pathways to meet learners' aspirations. Short programmes for the long-term unemployed and work-based programmes are available for adults. A wide range of work placements, residentials and visits at home and abroad provides breadth to the learner experience.
- There are strong and productive links with a range of employers that enhance the learners' experience. The college offers training opportunities to support employers. Links with schools include taster sessions, career days, and the planning for the new Diploma in public services.

- Very effective advice and guidance at all stages of the learners' programme enable learners to stay and achieve their potential. Learners value the on-programme support and careers guidance they receive. Teachers set high expectations for all learners.
- Leadership and management are good, with effective management of change. Teachers are positive about the changes that have taken place. Communications are good. Teachers make good use of data to monitor individual progress and to evaluate the provision as a whole. Self-assessment is evaluative, detailed and accurate. Safeguarding and equality and diversity are given high priority.

What does Hugh Baird College need to do to improve further?

- Further develop strategies to elicit deeper learning. Develop a wider range of in-class assessment methods which encourage learners, including the more able, to develop critical thinking skills.
- Further develop learner confidence and competence in the use of ILT to enhance learning.
- Maximise the role of the academic support worker in lessons. Ensure that all teachers provide specific written guidance to the academic support worker so as to ensure that learners are supported and challenged to achieve the most during the lesson.

## Construction

## Grade 2

### Context

38. The college offers NVO qualifications and vocational diplomas at levels 1, 2 and 3 in decorative occupations, trowel occupations, wall and floor tiling, and wood occupations. BTEC national diplomas and national certificates are also offered. Of the 633 learners, 473 are full-time, 201 are adults and 26 are aged 14 to 16. There are 19 learners on work-based programmes and Train to Gain.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high on the level 2 construction award, the level 3 national certificate and the national diploma in construction. For a small number of learners, success rates on NVO level 2 in wood occupations have remained below the national average. Current in-year retention rates have improved significantly and are high.
- The standard of learners' written and practical work is good. In BTEC courses, learners write well-structured reports with good technical content, supported by accurate calculations and computer-aided drawings. Construction crafts learners produce portfolios that contain a diverse range of evidence. In workshops, learners develop good vocational skills and produce work to industrial standards.
- Learners use safe working practices and say they feel safe in the college environment. Health and safety are strongly emphasised during induction programmes and in the workshops. Learners undertake risk activity training before working on practical projects.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan their lessons well, particularly the practical sessions. They set specific and achievable learning outcomes that they share with learners. As a result, learners are aware of the progress they make. In practical lessons, learners make good use of construction-specific computer software to access supporting resources. In some theory lessons, teachers do not use sufficiently focused questions to check learners' understanding and progress. They direct their teaching to the whole class and do not adequately support the range of learners' abilities.
- The range and contents of the provision are good and provide learners with qualifications that meet their immediate and medium-term career goals. Courses are offered in traditional construction crafts as well as BTEC courses. There are also specialist courses in wall and floor tiling.
- Assessment of learners' work and internal verification to check standards are good. Assessment is fair and meets the awarding bodies' requirements. Most teachers provide constructive and helpful feedback and identify ways in which learners can make progress.

- Support and guidance for learners in lessons are good. Teachers and additional support workers ensure that learners progress well and achieve the stated objectives of the lessons.
- Leadership and management are good. Teachers are set challenging targets for success, retention and pass rates. Teachers and managers use data on learners' and employers' needs to plan and review the provision. Communication is improving and team meetings are productive. Managers seek the views of learners and employers to improve the quality of the provision. Self-assessment is evaluative and correctly identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement. Resources are good.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity sessions are delivered as part of the two-week construction induction programmes. Learners reported that no incidents of bullying or discrimination occur; they are aware of the college's policies on equality and diversity. Despite managers' strategies to recruit from underrepresented groups, the participation of female learners is low.

What does Hugh Baird College need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates for the level 2 wood occupation course by ensuring that existing retention strategies are applied more consistently.
- Ensure that teachers plan their lessons to support the full range of learners' abilities.
- Ensure that teachers engage all learners in the lessons by using probing and focused questions.

## Arts, publishing and media

## Grade 2

### Context

39. The area has 534 students in total, studying art, media, music technology and performing arts. Courses include GCE A level, BTEC first diploma and BTEC national diploma. A minority of courses are at level 2, with most at level 3.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good, with high success rates on most level 3 courses. A number of level 3 courses have very good attainment, with the national diploma in art and design and national diploma in media recording 100% attainment for the last two years.
- The proportion of high grades is very good in most subjects. The national diplomas in performing arts, media, art and design and 3D design have achievement of higher grades which is substantially above the national average. In the national diploma in performing arts, 100% of learners achieve high grades. Pass rates in the national diploma in music technology are 5% below the national average and, on some first diploma courses, there are low rates of achievement.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Art and media learners show their work in inspiring displays around the college. Learners gain technical skills and make good progress. Attendance is good. Learners are well motivated. Retention is good, with several courses having 100% retention.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and conducted at a good pace. Learners participate enthusiastically in practical sessions. Their understanding is regularly checked and teachers' feedback gives specific advice for improvement. ILT is used well to enhance learning. Weaker lessons are pitched at too high a level, with too much use of technical language and limited teaching strategies.
- Enrichment is good with many opportunities to visit galleries, theatres and universities. Learners also have the opportunity to gain extra qualifications, such as computer-aided design, to complement their studies.
- There is a wide range of provision at all levels to suit the needs of learners. Most courses offered are vocational. Community links are growing, and imaginative activities include working with the council to rebrand Bootle with a new logo and designing interiors for new apartments.
- Progression between levels is good. Progression for learners to external higher level courses is improving. Specialist information and guidance from tutors inform learners' choices very effectively. Higher education students work beside learners on some national diploma courses. Past students at university visit the learners to share their experiences.

- Support for learners is good. Additional learning support needs are quickly identified and support put into place. Academic support workers work well with teachers to offer a collaborative environment for learners. Learners receiving additional learning support have improved grades and achieved better success.
- Leadership and management are good with effective management of change. Tutors are well supported and there is good communication between all staff. Staff at all levels feel valued and contribute to a positive ethos for improvement, with good teamwork and a learner-centred approach. Opportunities for professional development are very good. Self-assessment is generally accurate but there is insufficient comment on teaching and learning. Strategies to address areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment are robust.
- Accommodation in specialist rooms is satisfactory. Performing arts learners use a variety of local venues for their productions. Resources are good, with extensive music technology equipment, industry standard design software, a laser cutter and other specialist equipment.

What does Hugh Baird College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that good practice is shared across the area to ensure that all learners understand and consolidate their learning.
- Ensure that teaching and learning on first diploma courses are sufficiently focused so that learners are motivated and engaged in their work.

## Preparation for life and work; literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Grade 1

### Context

40. There are currently 204 adult learners on literacy courses, of whom 128 are male. On ESOL programmes, there are 102 adults of whom 69 are female. In numeracy there are 103 learners. The college offers part-time courses in the daytime at entry levels 1 to 3 and at foundation and intermediate levels.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates on level 1 adult literacy, numeracy and all ESOL courses have been well above national averages for three successive years. Learners make outstanding progress. Retention rates are excellent on most courses. Attendance is good.
- There is excellent development of students' personal and social skills. Learners speak highly of courses and of how these have transformed their lives and increased their confidence. Literacy students who were unable to read or write can now read newspapers and write short paragraphs for the first time.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and activities that challenge and enhance learning. Good relationships, peer work and small teaching groups support and make learning a pleasurable experience. Homework tasks extend and consolidate learning. Regular formal and informal observation of teaching and learning has contributed to raising the grade profile.
- Very good initial and on-going diagnostic assessment enables the accurate identification of learners' needs. In most lessons, individual targets are used effectively to plan lessons and to help students learn independently.
- Resources and accommodation are excellent. Rooms are spacious, with lively displays, and well equipped with appropriate teaching resources. Interactive white boards and computers are available in classrooms. The imaginative use of ILT in Skills for Life programmes stimulates and enhances teaching and learning. In one literacy lesson, the presentations of news and weather reports by learners were recorded on digital cameras. However, in a few lessons, there are missed opportunities for learners to use ILT.
- The range of programmes and activities offered to meet the needs and interests of learners is good. The college has good and productive links with schools, community centres and employers. For example, parents attending literacy classes in a school and staff from the Inland Revenue offices in Bootle have benefited from the courses offered by the college. The college is also effective in recruiting hard-to-reach groups in local communities.
- Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Students receive excellent pastoral support and value the help they get. Good additional learning support in lessons

is provided by the additional support team. For instance, students with dyslexia receive very effective help by specialist staff.

- Leadership and management are outstanding. Co-ordination of the programmes, communication and support for staff is very good. Strong morale and good staff development programmes have helped to raise the standards of teaching and learning. Good practice is shared widely within the area. Self-assessment is broadly accurate, with all staff actively contributing to the process and identification of key findings. Quality assurance arrangements are rigorous.
- Equality and diversity are outstanding. An inspiring culture of inclusivity, respect and meeting learners' needs underpins all the work of the department. Diversity is well embedded in the curriculum in terms of styles of learning, materials used and topics taught. The safeguarding of learners is given a high priority. Learners feel safe in the college and in the workplace.

What does Hugh Baird College need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for students to use ILT to enhance their learning and develop confidence in its use.

## Information about the inspection

41. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice-principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local LSC or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
42. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires that learners and employers had recently completed at the request of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Hugh Baird College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	3151	2078	974	99
Full-time learners	2500	199	1678	623
Part-time learners				
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	1			
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2			
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2			
How well do learners progress?	2			
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2			
How safe do learners feel?	2			
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2			
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2			
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2			
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2			
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1			
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1			
Leadership and management	2	2	2	1
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2			
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2			
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	1			
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2			
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2			
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2			

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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