

College of West Anglia

Inspection report

Provider reference 130763
Published date February 2008

Audience Post-sixteen
Published date February 2008
Provider reference 130763

Contents

Background information	3
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Key strengths and areas for improvement	7
Main findings	8
Sector subject reports	13

Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

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

The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

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

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: health, public services and care; engineering and manufacturing technologies; information and communication technology (ICT); hairdressing and beauty therapy; and preparation for life and work.

Description of the provider

1. The College of West Anglia (CoWA) is a large general further education (GFE) college which serves much of Norfolk and parts of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. In April 2006, Isle College merged with the CoWA to form the present, enlarged College of West Anglia. A new principal was appointed to the college in August 2007. The college's vision is to be 'the first choice for learning and skills in the region'.
2. CoWA has four main sites, located at King's Lynn, Milton, on the outskirts of Cambridge and two in Wisbech. It has learning centres in Downham Market and Wisbech and specialist residential centres for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in King's Lynn and in Easton, Norfolk. It also offers provision in workplaces across Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire.
3. CoWA serves a sparsely populated and largely rural area. The majority of learners are from the primary catchment areas of West Norfolk and Fenland. The remainder are from Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. In 2006/07, the college had 13,561 learners. Of these, 55% were adult learners, the majority of whom are enrolled on part-time courses. Forty eight percent were men, and 4.1% were from minority ethnic groups.
4. The college offers courses in all sector subject areas (SSA). In 2006/07, the highest number of learners were in preparation for life and work; health, public services and social care; leisure, travel and tourism; and retail and commercial. The college provides education and training for work-based learners, and is a Centre of Vocational Excellence in four areas: retail and retail management; sport, fitness and outdoor pursuits; manufacturing; and computing and networking.
5. The principal town of King's Lynn has a population of 40,000. West Norfolk and the Fenlands have an overall population of around 150,000. Minority ethnic groups make up 1.34 % of the population. The unemployment rate in King's Lynn and West Norfolk of 4.7% is below the national rate of 5.4%. Norfolk pupils transfer to post-16 education in a smaller proportion than the regional or national average, with 69.3% moving to full-time post-16 education, compared with the national average of 71.3%.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: Grade 2
Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Outstanding: Grade 1
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

6. The College of West Anglia is an outstanding college which is working very effectively to meet the educational needs of its region. Achievement and standards are outstanding. The effectiveness of its provision is outstanding. Success rates are consistently high and improving, and learners make outstanding progress during their time at the college. The college has successfully managed a marked and rapid improvement of standards at the Isle campus.
7. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are characterised by a positive environment of mutual support and respect, which enables learners to achieve and develop good, independent learning skills. The development of practical skills is highly effective. The lesson observation system is rigorous and accurate. The college has put in place a wide range of strategies which are leading to further improvements in teaching and learning. The formal recording of lesson planning is an area for improvement.
8. Responsiveness to the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local community is outstanding. The curriculum choice is wide and varied. Strong engagement with employers enhances learners' experiences and successfully addresses local and regional needs. Close collaboration with local schools leads to extensive and highly successful provision for learners aged 14 to 16. The college's response to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. The colleges' residential centres run exemplary programmes for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
9. Learners receive outstanding information, advice and guidance. The college provides excellent support for learners to help them progress to further education, training or employment. Well structured and targeted support raises the standards and achievement of individual learners. Support for the development of learners' key skills is excellent.
10. Leadership and management are outstanding. The college has a clear vision, excellent leadership, thorough strategic planning, well defined operational goals, and a very strong track record of effective actions for improvement. Quality improvement is highly effective. Governance and financial management are outstanding. The promotion of equal opportunities and diversity is good.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

11. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. The college is strongly committed to raising the aspirations, standards and well-being of its learners. The merger has been very successful, resulting in improved provision across all college sites. The college's record in bringing about improvement is excellent; challenging targets for enrolment and success rates have been set and met. The self-assessment report is comprehensive, well evidenced and accurate.

Quality assurance is rigorously implemented in most curriculum areas and enables the college to correctly identify and address areas of underperformance. The college has ambitious and well thought out plans to rebuild its accommodation which take into account the need to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged while these plans are accomplished.

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

12. The college has made very good progress since the last inspection. It has maintained and developed strengths further, and has remedied almost all of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. In addition, the enlarged college has begun to address very quickly and successfully many of the weaknesses identified through inspection at the pre-merger Isle site, including significant issues concerning low success rates in many curriculum areas and in key skills.

Key strengths

- consistently high and improving success rates
- good teaching and learning
- highly effective collaboration with schools and local communities
- outstanding employer engagement
- excellent provision for 14 to 16-year-olds
- exemplary provision for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- outstanding support to meet learners' needs
- excellent strategic leadership
- highly successful record of meeting targets and managing change
- outstanding governance and financial management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- the further improvement of satisfactory teaching
- ensuring that learners are not disadvantaged by continuing weaknesses in accommodation
- the use of value added measures to review overall college performance
- procedures to monitor the effectiveness of the college's actions to respond to equality and diversity issues.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning

Good: grade 2

13. Achievement and standards are outstanding, which is in line with the college's self-assessment grade. The college has maintained consistently high or very high overall success rates in recent years, significantly above national average for similar colleges. Most sector subject areas have high success rates which show a consistently improving trend. Several areas not inspected on this occasion, such as art and design, have very high achievement. The enlarged college has successfully managed a marked and rapid improvement of standards at the Isle campus, where success rates now meet or exceed the national average.
14. Learners make very good progress given their starting points, and they demonstrate good skills development. At foundation level, success rates have consistently been well above the national average for learners of all ages for the last three years. Similar trends and levels of success are clear at intermediate and advanced levels. Success rates for NVQs are well above the national average at all levels and for all ages. The achievement of core and wider key skills is excellent and well above the national average.
15. The achievement of work-based learners, including through Train to Gain courses, is good. Overall success rates for apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are above national averages and show an improving trend. The progression from Entry to Employment (E2E) courses into employment is satisfactory with above average qualification success rates.
16. The achievement of different groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those from minority ethnic heritage groups, is similar. Female learners achieve slightly better than males at level 2, but this difference is more marked for female learners aged over 19 on level 3 courses.
17. A high proportion of learners, often with low prior attainment, succeed. School pupils attending the college's extensive 14 to 16 provision demonstrate excellent achievement in a range of vocational subjects, and many progress very successfully to full-time college courses. A high proportion of GCE learners and mature learners on access programmes progress successfully to higher education.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

18. The quality of provision is outstanding, which is in line with the college's own self-assessment grade. Teaching is mostly well planned and places strong emphasis on learning. Learners make good progress and achieve well. They are

- engaged in their lessons and enjoy their college work. Learners attend well, and feel a strong sense of personal pride in their achievement.
19. Teachers assess and monitor learners' progress well against agreed targets. The college has thorough processes in place for initial assessment of learners' needs and teachers respond quickly to support any needs identified. Good systems for target setting ensure that learners are set clear goals, and there is effective monitoring and regular review of individual learners' progress against a range of individual targets. Learners receive helpful and constructive feedback which informs and motivates them to succeed.
 20. Teachers encourage and help learners to develop good independent learning skills. Learners have a very clear view of their course requirements and their opportunities for progression. Teachers develop a positive environment of mutual support and respect for peers.
 21. The teaching of practical skills is very effective, and learners gain skills and qualifications which are highly valued by them and their employers. Staff are well qualified and experienced in their vocational area. Learners appreciate the good progress they make on their programmes.
 22. The college has good learning resources in many areas, such as sport, art and design, engineering and hairdressing. Specialist equipment, including good quality tools, prepare learners well to meet industry standards. Many learners benefit from the use of the college's virtual learning environment. Although most classrooms are well decorated, a small minority of classrooms are in poor condition.
 23. The college has good internal arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning, supported by regular external moderation. Well focused training sessions and individual support are provided for teachers, and this is having a clear and positive impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning.
 24. The college recognises that further action is needed to increase the proportion of lessons assessed as good or better, and to further improve some aspects of teaching. Formal planning for a minority of sessions is insufficient, and does not always give a clear statement of learning objectives, the formative assessment strategies to be used in the session, or the anticipated outcomes for learners. Question and answer techniques are sometimes used ineffectively, and miss opportunities to draw on learners' own experiences to stimulate further learning.
 25. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. A broad range of programmes, effectively targeted, responds closely to local and national priorities and meets the needs of the wider community very successfully. The colleges' residential centres run exemplary programmes for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A good range of community programmes effectively meets the often challenging needs of vulnerable people living in areas of high deprivation.

26. The college's responsiveness to the needs of employers is excellent. It promotes and manages very effective employer engagement and work-based learning, successfully meeting the individual needs of many employers. Employers speak highly of the responsive, flexible and accommodating service that the college provides, particularly in hairdressing and engineering.
27. The college and its partner schools work very collaboratively to provide an extensive, and highly successful, provision for a large number of pupils aged 14 to 16. Around 800 pupils attend college for up to one day per week and attend vocational and practically-based classes. Learners achieve very well and the excellent advice and transitional support arrangements ensure that many progress successfully to full-time provision at the college.
28. Curriculum areas have very clear progression routes from level 1 through to higher education, and many learners progress very successfully. Learners benefit from extensive opportunities to gain additional qualifications, and their wider development is enhanced through good enrichment activities such as health awareness sessions, fundraising activities and community events in schools. These are valued by learners and improve their self-confidence and employment skills.
29. Advice, guidance and support for learners are outstanding. Learners value the excellent pre-course advice and guidance provided, which enables them to make well informed choices. Highly effective and comprehensive induction arrangements ensure that learners are introduced very thoroughly to their programme and to college services.
30. Careful and thorough identification of learners' development needs leads to well structured and targeted support that is clearly linked to raising standards and achievement. Support for the development of learners' key skills is excellent. Good support is provided promptly and effectively to meet learners' language, literacy and numeracy needs.
31. The support provided through tutorials is excellent. Learners particularly value regular one-to-one reviews with their personal tutors. Regular contact is maintained with the parents and carers of learners. The review process in work-based learning is thorough and effective.
32. Standards of behaviour are excellent and learners feel safe and supported. Careers education and guidance are well planned and particularly effective in supporting mature learners. Support is very responsive to matters of equality and cultural diversity.

Leadership and management**Outstanding: Grade 1*****Contributory grades:****Work-based learning**Good: grade 2**Equality of opportunity**Good: grade 2*

33. Leadership and management are outstanding. A period of strong leadership has seen standards rise significantly. Excellent progress has been sustained since the merger towards creating a clear, single identity for the enlarged college. Enrolments have increased, the range of provision has improved still further and learners' achievement has continued to rise, and in the case of the former Isle College significantly and rapidly so. Communication with staff is good and morale is high.
34. The college's success is underpinned by a clear vision, thorough strategic planning, clear goals, rapid intervention, and a strong track record of effective actions for improvement. The college has successfully addressed almost all of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and met its key performance targets in relation to participation and success rates.
35. The college has an excellent record of working in partnership, particularly with schools and employers, through highly successful initiatives to meet local needs and encourage participation. Work-based learning provision is well managed. However, the college recognises the need to further improve the coordination of work-based training in a minority of areas. Governance is outstanding. Governors are passionate about the college, and they have played a critical role in the merger and in the ambitious rebuilding programme.
36. The college has provided a well considered programme of training to support managers in their new roles following curriculum reorganisation. Good arrangements for staff appraisal are closely linked to the college's excellent staff training programme.
37. Quality improvement procedures are comprehensive and have enabled the college to identify and address areas where significant improvement is necessary. Procedures for self-assessment are extremely rigorous and the latest self-assessment report for 2006/07 provides a highly accurate reflection of the college's strengths and areas for improvement.
38. Equality of opportunity is good. The promotion of equal opportunities and diversity within the curriculum is good, and the college meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Progress towards meeting the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA) is satisfactory. The college clearly recognises that some of its present accommodation is inaccessible to learners with restricted mobility and makes appropriate alternative arrangements. The college has good, well documented procedures for child protection, and all staff have received appropriate training relating to young people and vulnerable adults. Procedures for monitoring the

effectiveness of the college's actions and targets in response to equality and diversity issues require further development.

39. The college has made a significant investment in refurbishing its accommodation since the last inspection and is aware that poor accommodation still exists in some curriculum areas. Plans are in hand to redress these shortcomings. Resources to support learning are generally good, and information and learning technology (ILT) resources are very good. Combining the two former management information systems was managed extremely well and managers at all levels receive and use up-to-date and accurate information very effectively. However, insufficient use is made by the college of value added data collected at course level. Financial management is very strong and value for money is good.

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

Context

40. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses at entry level to level 4. 144 full-time learners, mostly aged 16 to 18, are following courses in public services at levels 1 to 3. In health and social care, 264 learners aged 16 to 18 follow full-time courses and 313 adult learners attend part-time courses from entry level to level 4. In childcare, there are 175 full-time learners, mostly aged 16 to 18, and 95 adult learners who attend courses at levels 1 to 3. Fifty-four pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend courses in public services, childcare and in health and social care.

Key strengths

- outstanding success rates on courses in public services
- high quality specialist resources that promote learning
- a good enrichment programme, particularly on public services
- extensive and productive links with a wide range of employers
- effective actions to promote good communication and teamwork.

Areas for improvement

- declining and low pass rates on level 3 full-time courses in childcare and health and social care
- insufficiently detailed action planning to improve low performing courses.

Achievement and standards

41. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates are above the national average. Success rates on courses in public services have been consistently very high and most have improved significantly in 2006/07. In particular, pass rates on the national diploma and certificate in public services improved to 100%.
42. Achievement is consistently good on the CACHE certificate in childcare and education. In 2006/07, success rates improved to well above average on courses at levels 1 and 2 in health and social care and childcare. However, pass rates on full-time courses in childcare and health and social care at level 3 declined to well below the national average.

Quality of provision

43. Provision in public services is exemplary and very good facilities include a dedicated information technology (IT) suite and high quality sports facilities which promote high quality learning. In childcare, learners benefit from good placements in the college nurseries. Resources are good, and most classrooms

are bright and comfortable, with good displays of learners' work. Five simulation babies are highly effective learning aids.

44. Most lessons are good, and learners are engaged and well focused on their work. In a small minority of lessons, learning and classroom behaviour is not managed effectively. Teachers do not always use questioning effectively to check understanding and progress, and some learners make little contribution.
45. Learners enjoy and value a wide range of enrichment activities, such as residential visits and sports activities. Good external links in public services lead to the effective involvement of guest speakers from all the main uniformed services and to the use of specialised facilities such as assault courses. Learners in care programmes benefit from involvement in voluntary activities in the community, including charity events and fundraising.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are good. A well managed work placement programme for health and social care and childcare learners benefit from very good links with employers. High demand for NVQ qualifications has been met effectively through workplace delivery at times to suit employers and employees. Public services have very good links with all the main uniformed services. Recent actions are having a positive impact on improving communications, teamwork and in ensuring the increased sharing of good practice across all subjects. Action planning for improvement to low performing courses is insufficiently detailed with too few specific, measurable action points or targets for success.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies**Good: Grade 2****Context**

47. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time engineering courses from level 1 to level 4. These include courses in electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, welding and fabrication, motor vehicle engineering and motor sport. 76 learners are on level 1 courses, 163 learners at level 2 and 58 learners at level 3. Most learners are aged 16 to 18. Additionally there are 29 apprentices and 61 advanced apprentices. 106 pupils aged 14 to 16 attend courses from local schools.

Strengths

- high success rates at level 1 and level 2 in performing engineering operations courses and on national diploma in engineering
- good teaching and learning
- high quality resources in welding and fabrication.

Areas for improvement

- low success rate at level 1 award in vehicle maintenance
- low framework success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- poor classroom accommodation at one site.

Achievement and standards

48. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are very high for levels 1 and 2 courses in performing engineering operations and on the national diploma in engineering course. However, the success rate for the level 1 award in vehicle maintenance was significantly below the national average in 2006/07, mainly because of a low retention rate. Effective actions to improve retention are proving successful and all learners in the current year have been retained.
49. Framework success rates for advanced apprentices dipped between 2005/06 and 2006/07. Apprenticeship success rates show slight improvement, but remain below the national average. Current learners on apprenticeship programmes are making good progress towards timely completion.
50. The standard of learners' practical and theory work is good, and learners develop good occupational skills which are valued by employers.

Quality of provision

51. Teaching and learning are good. Learners work industriously in well structured workshop activities. Teachers monitor learners' progress effectively and give constructive guidance and support. Good attention is paid to health and safety. In most theory classes, questioning is used effectively to check and extend learning. The learning of theory is consolidated by good practical demonstrations. Effective use is made of ILT to support learning.

52. The wide range of provision provides good progression opportunities for learners. Progression of pupils aged 14 to 16 onto full-time courses is high. Employer engagement is good, and employers contribute very effectively to the curriculum through an employer's forum.
53. All learners are thoroughly assessed to identify development needs and effective support is provided promptly. Assessment of learners' work is fair and accurate, and teachers provide helpful and constructive feedback. Weekly tutorials help learners to improve. However, the recording of these meetings is too inconsistent to be useful in supporting learners. Learners enjoy good enrichment activities, and effective planned work experience is organised for full-time engineering learners.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are good. Managers have a clear focus on raising standards. Staff communication between sites is good. Quality improvement arrangements are good. Managers have implemented thorough measures to address the issues underlying poor success rates on work-based learning courses. Early indications are that these are proving successful.
55. Resources are good, with high quality resources for welding and fabrication, including plasma cutters and a programmable press. Some classrooms at the King's Lynn site provide a poor learning environment and need refurbishment.

Information and communication technology**Good: Grade 2****Context**

56. Full-time and part-time courses in ICT are offered from entry level to level 4. Learners work towards a range of awards, including BTEC introductory diplomas, first diplomas, national diplomas and awards as well as CLAIT, E-Qualifications and ITQ. Courses are available at King's Lynn, Wisbech, and Downham Market, as well as a number of community venues and in the workplace. Of 597 learners, 215 are aged 16 to 18, 318 are adults, 232 study full-time and 365 study part-time. Female learners slightly out number males and the percentage of learners from minority ethnic groups is very small.

Strengths

- high success rates on many courses
- much good teaching leading to the development of good personal learning skills
- good management leading to improvement
- good IT resources for teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient opportunities for learners to experience ICT in the workplace
- some poor accommodation.

Achievement and standards

57. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high on many courses. The success rate for GCE A-level ICT has been 100% for two years and is very high on the national diploma. Learners on these courses often achieve higher grades than predicted by their prior attainment. Key skills in ICT success rates are high. However, the retention rate on the national award fell to below the national average in 2006/07. Learners' work is well researched, clearly presented and shows good technical knowledge. Learners take pride in their work, are punctual and have good levels of attendance.

Quality of provision

58. The quality of provision is good. Teachers plan lessons well and learners make good progress. Most lessons have a wide variety of activities and resources which engage learners and promote communication and skills in team work. Learners contribute confidently in discussions and show high levels of mutual respect. In a minority of lessons, some learners are insufficiently challenged, and learners do not have sufficient opportunities to relate their knowledge and skills to the use of ICT in the workplace.
59. Teachers plan assignments well, mark work accurately and give helpful feedback. A high proportion of learners progress successfully, and some learners progress from foundation level to higher education courses at the

college. Local employers particularly value the flexibility and skills development of the new ITQ qualification.

60. Learners' additional needs are assessed promptly and the effective support provided helps them succeed.
61. Learners' attendance, punctuality and performance are closely monitored and prompt action is taken where necessary.

Leadership and management

62. Good management has helped improve results and the quality of teaching. Staff share good practice effectively, and they contribute positively to the regular review of courses. Good links with employers have led to the development of new awards. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Resources to support the use of IT in teaching and learning are generally good, but some classroom accommodation has poor lighting and is in need of refurbishment.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy**Outstanding: Grade 1****Context**

63. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapies from levels 1 to 3. There are 525 full-time and 319 part-time learners, of whom 508 are aged 16 to 18 and 237 are adults. A very small number of learners are male. Ninety eight pupils aged 14 to 16 from local partner schools participate in a level 1 hairdressing and beauty therapy course. Eighty two learners enrolled on a hairdressing apprenticeship.

Strengths

- outstanding success rates on many courses with an improving trend
- much good teaching and learning in practical lessons
- extensive range of courses with good progression rates
- comprehensive and effective support to promote learning
- highly effective management.

Areas for improvement:

- insufficient strategies to challenge and inspire learners in a few lessons
- insufficient progression opportunities for level 2 hairdressing learners.

Achievement and standards

64. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates on most courses are very high, including on apprenticeship frameworks and key skills qualifications. Most rates are improving. However, retention on the NVQ 1 beauty therapy course is below the national average. The standard of learners' practical skills is very good. Learners develop a very good work ethic adhering to strict codes of conduct in areas such as attendance, punctuality, and personal presentation.

Quality of provision

65. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in practical lessons. Teachers integrate the use of ILT successfully, and most use highly effective strategies to meet individual learning needs. Teachers generally set challenging targets that help learners to make good progress. In a few lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for more able learners and questioning techniques are underdeveloped.
66. Assessment is well planned in lessons and effectively tracked and monitored during tutorials. The internal verification process is thorough and comprehensive.
67. The extensive range of provision helps many learners to progress successfully; learners are able to match their programme to individual needs through a good range of additional courses. Progression opportunities for level 2 hairdressing learners are too limited.

68. Good enrichment activities give learners valuable insights into the industry and broaden their knowledge. Full-time learners undertake productive work experience.
69. Comprehensive support helps learners to make good progress. Learners with identified development needs receive good support through vocationally qualified learning support tutors, who provide contextualised learning activities which learners find interesting and relevant. Tutorials are well planned and valued by learners.

Leadership and management

70. Curriculum management is good. Managers set and monitor challenging targets at course level, and focus effectively upon bringing about improvements. Communications are very effective, and staff feel valued and work well as a team. Good practice is very effectively shared between staff on both sites. Success rates have risen sharply at the Isle campus in the first complete year since the merger. An effective mentoring system is in place to support new teachers. Links with employers in work-based learning are exemplary. Standardisation meetings are supported by employers and particularly well attended by well qualified work-based assessors. Despite frequent attempts to promote the curriculum to male learners, they remain under-represented.

Preparation for life and work**Good: Grade 2****Context**

71. Currently 2,571 learners are enrolled, the majority of whom are 16 to 18 years old. The college offers a range of full-time entry level courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), and 175 learners are currently enrolled. Part-time courses at entry level, level 1 and level 2 are offered in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and currently 481 learners are enrolled, the majority of whom are adults. Communications and application of number in key skills at levels 1 and 2 are offered to learners across vocational areas; just under 1,900 are currently enrolled on these qualifications. Seventeen learners are enrolled on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18 years old.

Strengths

- outstanding success rates in key skills qualifications
- good progress by learners in lessons
- very effective teaching and learning of key skills
- good external partnerships.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient recording of personal targets for learners
- insufficient access to and use of ICT.

Achievement and standards

72. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates in key skills qualifications in communication and application of number at levels 1 and 2, are outstanding and have been consistently high over the last three years. Success rates are high in national tests for numeracy level 1 and literacy level 2. Overall success rates for external qualifications across the area are satisfactory with improving success rates for language learners at entry level. Outcomes for E2E learners are satisfactory.

73. Learners make good progress in lessons and the standard of their work is good. In practical lessons, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities demonstrate satisfactory and improving craft skills and ability to work independently.

Quality of provision

74. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan their lessons well, pay good attention to learners' preferred learning styles and promote a positive, supportive and enjoyable learning environment.

75. Good teaching and learning of key skills builds learners' confidence and helps their wider improvement. In E2E programmes, thorough diagnostic testing in application of number informs lesson planning well. In vocational areas, learners enjoy relevant and interesting key skills assignments. Classroom management of learners with challenging behaviour is good.
76. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. However, formal recording of personal targets for foundation learners is not always sufficiently clear. Learning resources are satisfactory although access to, and use of, ICT across courses is insufficient.
77. The range of programmes and activities is satisfactory. The colleges' residential centres run exemplary programmes for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Strategies to embed key skills into vocational programmes are very successful. Programmes are often run in venues spread over a wide geographical area at times which suit learners' needs well. Learners receive good personal support and satisfactory academic support.

Leadership and management

78. Leadership and management are good, and have effectively improved standards. Communication between and within teams is improving. Staff have good training opportunities and are supported well in new roles. Very effective external partnership work impacts positively on local communities and organisations, including the probation service.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to 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
1 Long	04/05	1798	75	65	10	2184	72	62	10
	05/06	1664	79	69	10	1736	69	65	4
	06/07	1697	86	**		1411	75	**	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	14	64	68	-4	0	...	...
	05/06	0	...	...		0	...	...
	06/07	0	...	...		0	...	...
NVQs	04/05	194	76	68	8	332	82	66	16
	05/06	188	80	72	8	383	89	74	15
	06/07	156	87	**		218	80	**	
Other	04/05	2265	81	72	9	8291	89	72	17
	05/06	2160	84	74	10	3389	79	74	5
	06/07	1747	87	**		2647	83	**	

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to 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
2 Long	04/05	1541	70	61	9	1790	66	60	6
	05/06	1660	74	66	8	1930	72	66	6
	06/07	1874	80	**		2081	75	**	
GCSEs	04/05	192	59	64	-5	130	68	63	5
	05/06	225	66	68	-2	102	75	67	8
	06/07	110	84	**		80	85	**	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	26	96	76	20	101	62	76	-14
	05/06	6	83	74	9	3	67	74	-7
	06/07	26	73	**		2	0	**	
NVQs	04/05	345	67	61	6	870	78	60	18
	05/06	367	76	68	8	1244	81	67	14
	06/07	394	76	**		1306	78	**	
Other	04/05	1073	72	66	6	2903	75	59	16
	05/06	1129	75	71	4	2307	78	65	13
	06/07	1411	81	**		1650	80	**	

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04/05	1521	71	68	3	1181	62	58	4
	05/06	1812	78	70	8	1073	69	63	6
	06/07	2156	78	**		854	76	**	
A/A2 Levels	04/05	159	90	86	4	32	84	69	15
	05/06	162	91	87	4	26	85	72	13
	06/07	320	88	**		20	80	**	
AS Levels	04/05	507	64	66	2	41	61	52	9
	05/06	671	74	67	7	44	57	55	2
	06/07	569	70	**		24	88	**	
GNVQs and precursors	04/05	64	61	59	2	4	25	54	-29
	05/06	4	0	64	...	4	100	...	
	06/07	0	...			0	...		
NVQs	04/05	85	73	63	10	428	64	56	8
	05/06	91	88	71	17	462	76	63	13
	06/07	68	87	**		325	78	**	
Other	04/05	717	72	60	12	1525	79	59	20
	05/06	887	78	65	13	1162	79	64	15
	06/07	1241	78	**		792	82	**	

* Note: Data are unvalidated, merged college data, derived from ILRs and produced using proprietary software

** not available

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2004/05 to 2006/07.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners *	College NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate **	College framework rate **	National framework rate **
Advanced Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	61	69	48	52	34
		timely	61	46	31	30	21
	05/06	overall	121	70	54	60	44
		timely	124	52	34	40	27
	06/07	overall	78	69	64	64	56
		timely	82	61	41	52	35
Apprenticeships	04/05	overall	125	70	50	54	38
		timely	121	58	29	47	22
	05/06	overall	130	76	58	72	53
		timely	120	68	38	63	33
	06/07	overall	125	76	65	73	60
		timely	117	73	44	66	40

* 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'

Table 5

Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the college 2004/05 to 2006/07.

Year	Number of starts in year	Achieved Objectives *	Progression **	Still in learning
04/05	46	25	44	0
05/06	59	39	66	0
06/07	61	27	54	2

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

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