

The following grades were allocated:

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| • Strategy for 14 – 19 education and training in the area | Unsatisfactory |
| • Achievement | Satisfactory |
| • Access to, and participation in, education and training | Satisfactory |
| • Quality of 14 – 19 education and training | Satisfactory |
| • Guidance and support | Satisfactory |
| • Leadership and management | Satisfactory |

Grade

Overall

How effective and efficient is the provision of education and training across the area in meeting the needs of learners, employers and the community?

Satisfactory

STRENGTHS

- A clear commitment on the part of the main stakeholders to increase levels of participation and achievement in education and training
- the successful introduction of a common timetable for some GCE AS subjects
- effective intervention strategies on the part of the local LSC resulting in improvement in the performance of some providers
- high levels of participation in post -16 learning
- successful strategies on the part of the Connexions service to reduce the number of unknown destinations and of young people not in education, employment or training
- significantly improved achievements at the FE college, now well above national benchmarks
- Good and very good standards of teaching in school sixth forms and the College

WEAKNESSES

- the absence of an explicit 14 -19 strategy for education and training
- the lack of consideration about the appropriate balance of academic and vocational provision
- insufficient action by the LEA, school managers, elected members and governors to address unsatisfactory GCSE performance in schools
- some very small class sizes in school sixth forms
- insufficient co-ordination and promotion of work-related learning in schools
- the absence of sufficiently comprehensive information about the full range of post-16 learning opportunities.
- too much teaching at Key Stage 4 which is only satisfactory

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategy for 14 – 19 education and training:

- A. The key partners should progress the development of an explicit 14 – 19 education and training strategy linked to an area curriculum plan and measurable success criteria
- B. Key stakeholders should consider configuration models in the event that collaboration does not succeed in rationalising overcapacity on the part of providers.
- C. The balance between academic and vocational provision should be more comprehensively analysed to meet both the needs of employers and the interests of learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership and Management:

- D. The LEA should identify and disseminate best practice at Key Stage 4 and ensure that teaching methods and the curriculum appropriately meet the needs of all learners, in order to secure higher standards.
- E. Elected members and governors should challenge the performance of schools more closely in order to bring about improvement, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- F. Value-for-money indicators should be developed to enable judgements to be made about the cost-effectiveness of provision within and between the different providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The curriculum and access to, and participation in, education and training:

- G. The LEA and local LSC should continue to develop greater coherence in post-16 curriculum planning in order to minimise the incidence of small class sizes, widen choice and secure relevant progression opportunities.
- H. The college and the schools should work together with a view to expanding opportunities to combine academic and vocational study.
- I. Activities to support work-related learning at Key Stage 4 should be further developed, including better use of employers and other training providers to give information to students on different progression routes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Guidance and Support:

- J. The key stakeholders should work together to develop a more comprehensive directory of learning opportunities for young people at 16 and beyond.
- K. Providers of education and training should work together to ensure better sharing of information about individual learners both within and between different institutions.
- L. Schools should ensure that, where applicable, the PRU is provided with relevant schemes of work for pupils in core subjects in order to inform its teaching and support programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of 14 – 19 education and training:

- M. Schools should ensure that GCSE achievements improve to match at least the standards of the LEA's statistical neighbours.
- N. The LEA should ensure that the achievements of vulnerable groups improve significantly from their current level.
- O. Measures of GCE AS and A-Level achievement, which compare students' grades with previous GCSE results, should be used more systematically with action taken to address under-performance.