



# Truro College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

Better  
education  
and care

## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-16

Published  
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Provider reference  
130629

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## Basic information about the college

Name of college: Truro College

Type of college: Tertiary

Principal: Jonathan Burnett OBE

Address of college: College Road  
Truro  
Cornwall  
TR1 3XX

Telephone number: 01872 267000

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Chair of governors: Mrs Ellen Winser

Unique reference number: 130629

Name of lead inspector: Russell Jordan HMI

Dates of inspection: 7 November 2006

## Background of the organisation

1. Truro College aims to provide excellence in meeting the education and training needs of the residents of the city of Truro and the surrounding area. Although the population of Truro is small (17,000), the city is a major retail and business centre and the administrative headquarters for the county of Cornwall.
2. The college has grown rapidly since it opened in 1993. In September 1993 the college enrolled 742 full-time learners. By the end of the 2005/06 academic year, this had grown to around 3,700 full-time learners and more than 10,000 part-time learners. In addition, the college has established significant higher education provision and now has 450 part-time and 700 full-time learners studying for degrees and diplomas.
3. The college offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses to full-time and part-time learners including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Seventy five per cent of learners (based on full-time equivalents) are aged 16-18. Most of these learners study on courses at Level 3 and around 60% of these are studying AS and A level courses. The offer includes more than 50 AS and A Level subjects and a good range of vocational courses at first diploma and national diploma Level. There is provision in thirteen of the fifteen subject sector areas (SSAs) defined by the Learning and Skills Council. The college has a small work-based learning contract with the Devon and Cornwall LSC with around 170 learners.
4. The college was one of the first in the country to be awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for its work in Care. It is designated as a Beacon college by the Department for Education and Skills.

## Scope of the inspection

5. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:
  - overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
  - achievements and standards
  - quality of provision
  - leadership and management

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding : grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding : grade 1
Achievements and standards	Outstanding : grade 1
Quality of provision	Outstanding : grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding : grade 1

*Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.*

## Overall judgement

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding: grade 1

6. The college provides outstanding education and training and fulfils its mission in the community very well. Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers throughout the college successfully ensure that learners make very good progress and reach their potential. High standards have been maintained and often improved during a period of very significant growth. Learners are set challenging targets and receive excellent support from their teachers and tutors to help them achieve their targets. Learners enjoy their work. There is an excellent mix of full-time and part-time vocational and academic qualifications. Tutors provide excellent support for their learners. Careers advice and guidance are very strong. Self-assessment is rigorous and reliable and plays an essential role in driving continuous improvement. The college's growth has been well supported with excellent new buildings and facilities.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: grade 1

7. The college demonstrates outstanding capacity to improve. Leaders and managers have a track record of delivering high quality education and training by maintaining a clear focus on the quality of the learners' experience. They gather students' views and use them well to inform decision making. Excellent standards of performance have been maintained and further improved during a period when the college has also achieved very significant and sustained growth in learner numbers. In the few areas where weaknesses have been identified, such as success rates on some courses for adults and in some work based learning provision, the college has made very successful interventions to secure real improvements. Self-assessment is rigorous, reliable and accurate. The college monitors its own performance relentlessly and uses data extremely well to secure continuing improvement.

Achievements and standards

Outstanding: grade 1

8. Students make excellent progress during their time at college. Success rates are very high on the overwhelming majority of the college's courses and programmes. Many learners enter higher education or gain employment when they complete their studies. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. Overall success, retention and achievement rates on long courses for 16-18 year old learners are outstanding compared to similar colleges. Achievement of high grades at GCE A level is exceptional and national value-added data record the college's performance as excellent, placing it in the top 20% of providers. This performance is underpinned by extremely effective target setting and individual review for learners. Key skills

success rates are well in excess of the national averages. The college has worked diligently and very successfully to secure improved success rates in a number of under-performing courses. Achievement and standards for adults are good and the college has taken very effective action to raise success rates for adults on long qualifications since the last inspection.

9. The college currently offers a small number of apprenticeships and plans further growth in this area. Overall success rates for apprenticeship frameworks are currently around national averages. The college has developed a very effective range of well considered and focused quality improvement initiatives and is very well set to continue the significant improvement in success rates.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: grade 1

10. Teaching and learning are outstanding for the majority of learners and nearly all the remainder is good. Teachers use an encouraging and supportive style to engage learners. In turn, learners are very positive about the standard of teaching and regard it as the main reason why they enjoy their work and make such excellent progress on their programmes. The college gathers regular feedback from learners about their experiences in lessons and uses it to improve teaching and learning still further. The quality of marked work is detailed with constructive feedback to help learners improve. Learners regard the standard of accommodation and resources to support learning as very high and inspectors agree. They feel that teachers make their lessons varied and interesting and comment especially on the effective use of information learning technology both in lessons and via the college's intranet system.
11. Truro is an inclusive college. There is a broad range of courses which offer good opportunities to students from a very wide ability range. There are clear progression routes at all levels including, increasingly, opportunities for higher education at the college. There is an excellent mix of vocational and more academic qualifications reflecting the college's commitment to the community. Close links with local schools support a well developed programme for 14-16 learners. Careful timetabling enables a very wide choice of programmes for each learner. Modes of delivery are flexible for adult learners. A highly relevant range of courses is offered to learners in employment through the Business Centre and the CoVE. The college is very effective at engaging local employers and in identifying and meeting their training needs. It is extremely responsive to the needs of local businesses and provides flexible and creatively designed training packages. Partnership working is very effective.
12. Learners feel safe and very well supported. Both adult and younger students agree that the college provides a welcoming and supportive environment. They know where to go for any specialist support and those who are receiving this support speak very highly of it. Tutors provide excellent support for their learners. Careers advice and guidance are strong.

## Leadership and management

Outstanding: grade 1

13. Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a culture of striving for excellence and continuous improvement which is evident across the whole organisation. There is an unremitting focus on the quality of teaching and learning and the extent to which learners are enjoying their work and making good progress. Financial management and the effective development and use of resources and accommodation to support learning are equally important strengths in the college. The college provides very good value for money.
14. Self-assessment is comprehensive and reliable. It is used effectively as a quality improvement tool, and leads to significant improvements in areas identified as underperforming. Quality assurance focuses closely on the experience of the learners and learner satisfaction surveys are carefully and comprehensively analysed. The college uses these data very well to guide decision making to effect improvement. Quality improvement processes effectively capture a broad spectrum of learners' views including tutorial support, teaching and learning and cross-college aspects and services. The follow-up to this process is equally comprehensive and rigorous. Detailed responses to learners' views are required from teachers and tutors, closely matched to issues raised in the learner surveys, resulting in clear and effective action plans.
15. The very effective lesson observation process is both developmental for teachers and provides a reliable overview of teaching and learning in the college. It plays a key role in determining staff development priorities in order to effect continuous improvement of the learning experience.

## Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	03/04	452	76.5	60.3	16.2	1012	57.9	59.1	-1.2
	04/05	378	65.6	64.2	1.5	581	53.5	61.6	-8.1
	05/06	350	66			452	63		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	-	-						
	04/05	-	-			-	-		
	05/06	-	-			-	-		
NVQs	03/04	14	85.7	61	24.7				
	04/05	39	74.4	67.2	7.2	12	75	66.9	8.1
	05/06	37	76			20	75		
Other	03/04	438	76.3	60	16.3	1004	58.2	59	-0.8
	04/05	339	64.6	63.6	1.0	569	53.1	61.4	-8.3
	05/06	313	65			432	62		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	03/04	1372	67.6	56.3	11.4	912	62.2	53.6	8.6
	04/05	1690	68.8	60.9	7.9	717	51.6	59.5	-7.9
	05/06	1358	69			1143	66		
GCSEs	03/04	213	63.8	61.3	2.6	74	56.8	58.8	-2.0
	04/05	306	66	64.1	1.9	69	55.1	62.3	-7.2
	05/06	164	79			69	57		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	57	68.4	63	5.4				
	04/05	27	77.8	66.8	11	-	-		
	05/06	-	-			-	-		
NVQs	03/04	80	46.3	51.9	-5.6	221	65.6	53.5	12.1
	04/05	121	57	57	0	368	43.2	59.6	-16.4
	05/06	116	59			316	66		
Other	03/04	1022	70.1	54.1	16	614	61.6	52.7	8.9
	04/05	1236	70.5	60.1	10.4	280	61.8	58.8	3
	05/06	1078	69			758	66		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	03/04	6306	79	64.1	14.9	920	49	53.5	-4.5
	04/05	6637	78.2	67.5	10.7	814	55.5	57.3	-1.8
	05/06	7329	79			850	60		
A/A2 Levels	03/04	2181	83	83.8	-0.8	105	41.9	65.5	-23.6
	04/05	1943	88.7	85.6	3	70	47.1	69.1	-21.9
	05/06	2258	85			48	65		
AS Levels	03/04	3223	79.1	62.9	16.2	115	40	49.6	-9.6
	04/05	3757	76.7	65.5	11.3	143	55.2	52.2	3
	05/06	4108	79			63	56		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	199	66.3	52.4	14				
	04/05	146	60.3	60.2	0.1				
	05/06	108	62			-	-		
NVQs	03/04	28	78.6	53.7	24.9	195	68.2	47	21.2
	04/05	20	75	62.4	12.6	170	48.8	53.9	-5
	05/06	41	71			195	51		
Other	03/04	675	61.2	56.3	4.9	496	45	55.7	-10.7
	04/05	771	62.1	60	2.2	425	59.3	58.3	1
	05/06	814	70			544	63		

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2004 year to 2006 year

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners *	College NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate **	College framework rate **	National framework rate **
Advanced Apprenticeships	03/04	overall	15	60	48	53	31
		timely	15	47	30	40	19
	04/05	overall	16	75	48	44	34
		timely	14	50	31	21	21
	05/06+	overall	30	57	53	57	44
		timely	41	37	33	37	26
Apprenticeships	03/04	overall	39	59	47	49	32
		timely	43	21	24	16	16
	04/05	overall	69	71	50	45	38
		timely	60	33	29	22	21
	05/06+	overall	103	54	58	48	53
		timely	112	38	38	31	32

\* 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'

+ LSC un-validated data