

Worthing College

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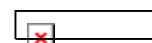
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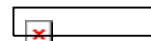
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Basic information about the college

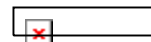


Name of college:	Worthing College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	John Robinson
Address of college:	Bolsover Road Worthing West Sussex BN13 1NS
Telephone number:	01903 243389
Fax number:	01903 243390
Chair of governors:	Ruth Farwell
Unique reference number:	130845
Name of reporting inspector:	Anne Keelan Towner HMI
Dates of inspection:	30 September - 4 October 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

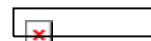


Worthing College is located in a coastal borough that is 56 miles from London and has an estimated population of 100,310. The college recently changed its name from Worthing Sixth Form College to Worthing College. In recent years, Worthing has benefited from the health of the Brighton and Hove economy, enabling business growth to continue. The public sector and the financial and business sector are the largest industries in Worthing. However, Worthing and Adur have more high-tech manufacturing than the United Kingdom average and there is a high proportion of 'knowledge workers'. There is very low unemployment in Worthing, with a current unemployment rate of 1.4%.

Worthing has four 12 to 16 schools, one 11 to 16 school, two schools for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and two further education (FE) colleges, one of which is Worthing College. In 2001, 88% of 16 to 18 year olds were in full-time education with 89% of the provision being at level 3. Of Year 11 students, 53% gained General Certificates of Education (GCSEs) with 5 or more A* to C grades. Only 16% of adults were participating in learning, with 1.4% attending level 3 provision. Of the working-age population, 44.5% have already achieved a level 3 qualification. Currently, 210 employers are involved in supplying modern apprenticeships and 11% of the local workforce is on accredited work-based learning. Basic Skills Agency data shows that 23% of the working-age population have poor literacy and 22.5% have poor numeracy skills. There are two pockets of educational deprivation along the coastal strip between Brighton and Littlehampton.

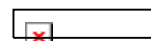
The college has 1,166 full-time students, most of them aged 16 to 19 and studying at level 3. It has a commitment to widening participation; in particular it intends to increase the number of adult students. The senior management team comprised the principal, director of sixth form, director of central services and the director of community and enterprise. Provision is divided into four programmes, each with a programme manager; arts and languages; social sciences; science and mathematics; and business, recreation and information technology (IT).

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged provision in science, mathematics, business studies, social science and modern foreign languages to be good. Provision in English, visual and performing art and leisure and tourism is satisfactory and information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory. The main strengths and areas for improvement are listed below.

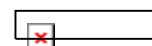
Key strengths



- many well-planned and well-managed lessons

- good guidance and support for students
- good range of enrichment activities
- high number of well-qualified staff.

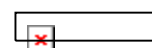
What should be improved



- ineffective teaching in some lessons
- poor progress of students on GCSE and some level 2 courses
- inadequate staff appraisal system
- slow implementation of the equal opportunities policy.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

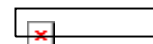


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4), Very Poor (5)

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science	Good. Well-planned and enthusiastic teaching with well-organised and integrated practical work. There are high pass rates on most

	courses. There is effective curriculum management and self-assessment. There are some deficiencies in accommodation and retention rates are poor on some courses.
Mathematics	Good. Pass and retention rates on most advanced level courses are good. Mathematics teaching is effective, but sometimes lacks imagination. There is good support for individual students. Courses are effectively managed. GCSE pass rates are poor and teaching rooms are often too small for the classes.
Business	Good. Good standard of work in lessons, good imaginative teaching and good formative assessment. Very good monitoring of students' progress. There are well-conceived paper resources designed by staff. Accommodation is poor. There is limited access to ICT. Action plans and reports lack subject-specific comment.
Information and communication technology	Unsatisfactory. There is good individual support for students and good resources. Pass rates on many courses are unsatisfactory. Teaching on Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses is unsatisfactory and leadership, management and the monitoring of students' performance are ineffective.
Leisure and tourism	Satisfactory. There is thorough monitoring of students' progress, assessment and attendance. Learners are well supported. There is a lack of travel operations area. No company-specific practice in college.
Visual arts and media and performing arts	Satisfactory. Good teaching in media and performing arts. Good retention and pass rates in performing arts. There is poor monitoring of action to improve standards in visual arts and a narrow range of curriculum provision.
Social sciences	Good. Teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable in their subject areas. Assessment is rigorous and thorough at all levels. There is good support and guidance for students.
Modern foreign languages	Good. Pass rates on most courses are good. Course management is effective. Resources are good and well used. The correction of students' work is not always thorough.
English	Satisfactory. Most teaching is good or satisfactory, but some is unsatisfactory. There has been some improvement in retention and pass rates. The monitoring of students' performance compared with their predicted attainment lacks thorough analysis.

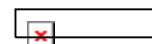
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. The governors and senior managers are agreed on the priorities for the college. In the operational plan key issues are addressed and responsibilities and time-scales for action are clear. The framework for reporting to governors is good and they receive regular appropriate information, though before the recent revision of the equal opportunities policy they did not receive complete reports on this important aspect of provision. Courses and programmes are well managed in most areas of the college. However, the management team has been slow to remedy the weaknesses that have been identified by the college in some curriculum areas. Standards of achievement are just above the average for sixth form colleges, but there is evidence that students do not achieve as well as they might. Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive, but there are weaknesses in their implementation. The lack of an effective appraisal

Budgeting has in the past been imprecise, but financial management is now more soundly based. The college, however, has insufficient information to judge how well its resources, including teachers, are used.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

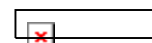


The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college serves well the post-16 educational needs of most students in the area.

Students choose to attend the college usually because they wish to pursue a course at level 3, and over 80% of the provision is at this level. As a result of the selection criteria, the student group is fairly homogenous. The college has good links with two schools for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose students are well integrated with the work of the college. Students feel secure in the college. Due to the lack of firm data on social inclusion, the evidence base is mainly limited to inspection observation including discussion with students.

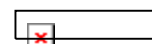
The equal opportunities policy has recently been revised and an equal opportunities working group has been established. The college has a team of co-ordinators for key skills work and is having some success in improving students' attendance at key skills lessons. It provides opportunities for enrichment activities in which about a third of the students participate. Since the last inspection, the college has developed learning opportunities for adult students in both the college and the community and some 700 have been recruited to courses.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



There is a good range of personal, pastoral and learning support systems for students. It is a significant strength of the college. Students feel well supported and valued as individuals. However, there is poor communication between student support services and curriculum and subject areas. Many subject tutors are not aware of the specific needs of students. All too often the good initial diagnosis and supporting information are not used by teachers in the classroom as a basis for their teaching. The newly revised tutorial system is not implemented effectively by all staff; in some tutorials there are few opportunities for students to participate and contribute. There is good career education and guidance provision and effective guidance on progression to employment and higher education (HE).

Students' views of the college



Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below:

What students like about the college

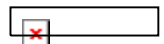
- supportive and friendly tutors

- good resources centre
- good specialist teachers
- new science laboratories.

What they feel could be improved

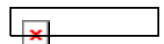
- timetable arrangements
- poor accommodation
- insufficient recreation areas
- compulsory key skills.

Other information



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the LLSC. The LLSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	67	27	6
19+ and WBL*	66	34	0
Learning 16-18	66	28	6
19+ and WBL*	50	50	0

Key: The range of grades includes: Excellent (Grade 1), Very Good (Grade 2), Good (Grade 3), Satisfactory (Grade 4), Unsatisfactory (Grade 5), Poor (Grade 6) and Very Poor (Grade 7).

*work-based learning

Achievement and standards

16 to 18 year olds

1. Worthing College provides a good range of level 3 academic courses and some vocational courses for the predominantly 16 to 18 cohort of students. The majority of the students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on full-time courses; most attend for two years although a small minority attends for three. Over 80% of students are aged 16 to 18.

2. The overall pass rate at General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A level) has been around or above the national average of 89% for sixth form colleges in the last three years. In 2001, the pass rates on many GCE A-level subjects at the college were at or above the national average, though they fell below the national average in theatre and dramatic arts, English language and English literature, business management and office studies, computing and sport. There has been a significant increase in achievement on some GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses. In 2001/02, results for the vocational AVCE provision were good.

3. In 2001, the overall pass rate on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) advanced courses fell significantly to 68%, well below the national average of 87%. On GNVQ advanced courses, science, health and social care and leisure and tourism had pass rates above the national average, but those in business and ICT were below. Retention rates overall on GCE A-level and GNVQ advanced courses have fallen to 78% and 67%, respectively, over the three years to 2001, and were below the national average of 84 % for level 3 courses.

4. On GNVQ intermediate courses, pass rates were at, or above, the national average with the exception of ICT, which fell significantly from 94% in 2000 to below the national average of 53% in 2001. GNVQ business had a 100% pass rate in 2001. Overall retention rates on intermediate courses have fallen to 69%, well below the national average of 81%. There has been a significant decrease in pass and retention rates in GCSE programmes over the last three years. Strategies have been in place to raise retention rates on intermediate GNVQ courses during 2000/01, such as four-day timetables and additional support on programmes where students are assessed 'at risk'. This has led to some improvement in retention and pass rates for 2001/02, but it is too early to

assess the effect of these measures over a longer term.

5. Over the three years to 2001, analysis of results indicates that student progress relative to their prior attainment and potential is poor on 10 GCE A-level subjects and 3 GCE AS subjects. In GCE A-level English, media studies, modular biology, computing and art and GCE AS art and design and drama and theatre studies, students have performed significantly below the level predicted. In law, ancient history and philosophy students have performed above the level. On GNVQ advanced level courses, students have performed better than predicted. The system of progress review using minimum target grades and entry GCSE scores at level 3 for monitoring students' progress relative to their prior attainment is not implemented with sufficient rigour in some curriculum areas. Figures from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for 2001, show that the average points score for students taking GCE AS and A-level, and GNVQ courses is 16 and the average points score for each entry is 5.6. The average scores in the West Sussex Local Education Authority are 16.0 and 5.4, respectively.

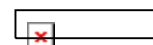
6. There have been some improvements in achievement in key skills, but students' key and basic skills are not always adequately developed in the subjects and some students' written work displays grammatical errors and spellings.

7. Overall attendance in the lessons observed was 85.5%, which is above the average attendance of 84% for sixth form college inspections undertaken in 1999/2000, as quoted in the report for 2000 of the chief inspector of Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

Adult learners

8. The college has a commitment to widening participation and has attracted over 700 adult students, most of whom study on a part-time basis. The previous FEFC report (1997-1998) noted the recruitment of adults to study part time during the day or evening. The college has continued to develop this work and the main accreditation is through the Open College Network (OCN). Many of the 700 adult students are on ICT courses. They attend for a variety of reasons, often to improve skills for work or for leisure. There was good work, for example, in an evening geology class, where students worked very well together and enjoyed the demanding tasks set. Similarly, in an evening Spanish class, students worked with confidence and took great pride in what they had achieved. Those who study part time on the OCN short ICT course achieve well. There was a pass rate at levels 1, 2 and 3 of 89% and retention rates are good at 96%.

Quality of education and training



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 152 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 67% of the sessions observed, satisfactory in 27% and unsatisfactory in 6%.

10. Most of the work seen was at level 3. In the best work, teachers effectively use a range of teaching methods to extend students' learning. For example, in business studies, students learn through simulation, role-play, case studies and presentation. In an AVCE business studies lesson, a simulated auction was well used to demonstrate price determination and the consequences of supply. In an intermediate business studies lesson, effective use of role-play enabled students to understand quickly and clearly the concept of cash flow forecasts.

11. In many lessons, in the social sciences, teachers offer clear explanations of their subject. Many tutors use question techniques skilfully to assess and extend students' knowledge and understanding.

12. In modern foreign languages, up-to-date technology, satellite, television, video, the Internet and the language laboratory are well used. Students enjoy working with a wide range of resources and they gain confidence in using language in a variety of well-structured situations. The more able students are offered a good extension programme that enables them to make significant progress.

13. Good use is made of an ICT suite for practical science. Teaching is very well planned and includes appropriate emphasis on health and safety. Students make enthusiastic contributions to discussions and produce practical work of a high standard.

14. Students enjoy the work they undertake in the college and many make good progress and achieve satisfactory, and sometimes good, standards. For example, in mathematics, a GCE A-level class was given a clear explanation of what was required of them in a statistics lesson. The teacher made sure that they worked at a good pace and checked that they understood what they were doing. The students responded well and learned new skills in the application of statistics.

15. Where the work was less effective, the teachers' planning was poor and they failed to set students assignments that were sufficiently demanding. In some cases, teachers talked for too long and did not allow students to participate fully. Students were not encouraged to work on their own and undertake research. Many students underachieve in class.

16. In the less than satisfactory lessons, the teaching was dull and uninspiring. Teachers failed to engage students in the work and many lost interest. Students were unclear about what was expected of them and teachers did not check on their understanding or progress.

17. The college has a well-qualified teaching staff, and all full-time and part-time teachers have appropriate academic and vocational qualifications. Some 97% of teaching staff have recognised teaching qualifications. Technician and support staff are mostly qualified and some have academic and professional qualifications.

18. The college management monitors the adequacy and suitability of staff and is currently building a flexible bank of staff that can be called on to provide effective course cover, as required.

19. Arrangements for staff development are generally good with the staff development costs currently 1.65% of budget. Regular professional development has enabled teachers and senior managers to respond effectively to changes in the GCE AS/A-level curriculum. Staff share the usefulness of staff development events, schemes of work and assessment practices, and good practice about teaching and learning.

20. The college has invested heavily in industrial-standard IT equipment, but this has yet to have a positive impact on students' learning in all curriculum areas. Most teaching rooms do not have computers that may be used in the teaching. The college provides over 200 networked computers across the college for students' use. These have access to normal applications, including software, the Internet and e-mail. Twelve computers in the resource centre are attached to the network, and there is a further workstation for non-networked CD-ROM use. The need for increased and industrial-standard IT facilities, has been supported by the college corporation, and new facilities have been provided in most of the student IT access areas. The college has achieved good computer student ratios, which are currently 1:5.1. For teaching staff, the ratio is about 1:2.0. Computers, available in open-access resource areas, are used extensively by students for research and investigation.

21. There have been recent improvements to accommodation and facilities and an extensive new college building project is currently awaiting the outcome of planning permission. As a consequence of the college accommodation strategy for further developing the existing site, over the past two years, the college has held back on planned maintenance and selected improvements. This policy has impeded the development of many courses, in particular in the science, social sciences, performing arts and photography areas. There are important health and safety issues to be addressed in the photography darkroom and drama studio.

22. There have been some recent improvements for some science areas and social sciences teaching rooms. Some areas of the college are bright and modern, in particular in a few science rooms and the resource centre. Other accommodation is drab and some is unsatisfactory, in particular, music rooms, drama studios, photography and the social sciences huts. In the newly refurbished areas, teaching rooms are good and well resourced, with appropriate furniture and teaching aids. In some older areas, rooms are too small for the classes containing large numbers of students, as in mathematics. Some of the poor quality teaching rooms and studios do not enable teachers to provide stimulating learning opportunities.

23. Access to the college for staff and students with restricted mobility is unsatisfactory. A recent audit was carried out against the findings and recommendations of existing legislation and good practice in meeting the needs of people with disabilities. There is no lift provision to all levels within the college. This restricts access to major teaching rooms and support services, such as careers guidance. The last inspection report (FEFC) noted the provision of a new student refectory. The refectory is inadequate for the current student numbers in the college and at peak times or in bad weather it is overcrowded. The college has restricted outdoor and indoor sports and recreation facilities. The recently refurbished resource centre is of good quality. There is a good supply of specialist textbooks, videos and CD-ROM. The area is well used and valued by students.

24. The college has produced clear policies and procedures for the assessment and monitoring of students' progress. Methods of assessment are appropriate for the courses and standards are well matched to the requirements of examining and awarding bodies. Assessment practice is thorough. Assessment procedures for GCE AS/A-level provision are appropriately detailed and well documented. Although in the various subjects teachers generally adhere to the marking policy as agreed, there is no cross-marking or checking. There is inconsistent practice in the marking of GCE work in mathematics and no guidance on the standards of marking other than for mock examinations.

25. Overall assessment and monitoring of students' work is good; there is a particularly significant amount of thoughtful formative and summative assessment in business studies and social sciences. Curriculum team self-assessment reports help to develop appropriate assessment information. For example, the analysis of performance of different groups of students is used to determine whether to allocate more teaching time to a particular student or group of students. However, there is no common college assessment policy across all programmes so that students experience a consistent approach to the marking of their work in all subjects. There is a particular need to develop consistent assessment systems for lifelong learning provision.

26. The college serves well the post-16 educational needs of young people from the five partner schools, and two schools for students with learning difficulties/and or disabilities in the area. For example, there is close collaboration with Highdown School whose students are well integrated with the work of the college. The college also recruits students from other secondary schools in the Worthing area and beyond. Links with the partner schools are strong and well developed to ensure a good match of courses at levels 2 and 3 to the needs and interests of the pupils.

27. For its size, the college provides a good range of GCE AS, GCE A-level and AVCE subjects for full-time students aged 16 to 18. Students give this wide range of choice as the most significant factor in their decision to come to the college. There are 46 GCE AS subjects and 36 GCE A-level subjects. The close links with the partner schools have enabled the college to identify changes in demand and offer new GCE AS courses to broaden students' experience.

28. Similar intelligence has enabled the college to improve its recruitment to level 2 courses, especially GNVQ intermediate courses and to expand the range of level 2 courses in line with its strategic aims. There are now four GNVQ intermediate courses that recruit well and two Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma courses, including the recently introduced course in public services. There is a small range of core GCSE subject courses to allow students to re-take examinations and a number of modern foreign language courses that may be taken as additional studies.

29. The range of courses at level 2 has increased since the last inspection and the enrolment to

these courses has improved in line with the strategic needs identified by the Sussex LSC and adopted by the college. However, the proportion of full-time students aged 16 to 18 on level 2 courses over the last three years has remained at around 10%.

30. The college has played its part in contributing to increased flexibility afforded by Key Stage 4 reforms with the partner schools. It has assisted the schools in the development of GNVQ part one pathways and mapped out progression routes from these to level 2 and 3 courses at the college. The college also provides access to level 2 courses for a small number of Year 11 students from the partner schools in an effort to improve their participation in education and attempt to re-engage them in learning.

31. The college has developed a well-conceived approach to the introduction of the reforms for Curriculum 2000, with an appropriate emphasis on enrolling students according to capability on three, four or five GCE AS or AVCE/GCE AS equivalent subjects in Year 12, with progression to an appropriate number of subjects for GCE A-level/AVCE in Year 13. There are good opportunities for students to combine vocational GCE A levels with GCE AS and A-level awards and most vocational GCE A-level students take advantage of these combinations. The great majority of students undertake a good range of subject combinations, usually related to their first choices.

32. The college makes a significant commitment to providing key skills teaching and assessments for students aged 16 to 18 in line with the most recent recommendations from the DfES. Year 12 students are all required to develop key skills at level 2 in application of number, communication and IT and to complete the assessed awards where they do not possess a good grade in an equivalent GCSE. Year 13 students are required to develop at least one of these key skills at level 3. The cross-college key skills co-ordinator works with specialist co-ordinators and teams to provide these programmes. The proportion of Year 12 and Year 13 students, however, achieving these awards remains very small. There has been poor attendance at classes and examinations and many students have been reluctant to complete their portfolios. Over the last two years, there has been some improvement in results. New strategies adopted this year to integrate key skills work more closely with the main subjects have led to improved attendance at key skills classes. The college is participating in a development agency project to establish good practice in this area.

33. In order to broaden their experience and enhance personal development, students generally have access to enrichment activities in the performing arts and sport, and student union activities. At enrolment and induction cross-college co-ordinators for enrichment and guidance tutors work hard to encourage active participation by at least one fifth of the Year 12 students. Overall, around 350 students, almost one third of all students, are participating in some enrichment activity including choir, jazz band, chamber ensemble, individual sports activities, team games and tournaments. Wednesday afternoons and other slots on the time-table are protected for these activities, but a growing number of students find that their subject time-tables clash with these slots so that they are unable to participate.

34. The college actively promotes a wide range of cross-college extra-curricular activities as well as those sponsored by particular courses. There is a regular exchange programme with a high school in Cleveland, USA. College ski trips are well supported, as are students' union trips to Europe. These bring particular benefits to students in areas such as modern foreign languages, travel and tourism, art and design, science, business studies and geography.

35. The college has developed learning opportunities for post-19 students in Worthing, resulting in considerable growth in this work since the last inspection. Through collaboration and partnerships with other agencies and providers it has concentrated on extending the provision of accredited ICT short courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 in areas in the community where there was under provision, as for example in Lancing, where it is supported by funding from Sussex LSC. The LEA adult education service and the local FE college, provide basic skills courses, and the ICT students are encouraged to join these. The college has also developed IT training and access to Learndirect at the Methold House training centre in a deprived ward of the town. Adult students can join the main daytime sixth form provision at the college, and there is a range of adult evening classes, including languages.

36. In addition, the college supports the Worthing Enterprise Centre in facilitating IT support for small

business start-ups, and provides IT training and tutoring for trainees from the Worthing Foyer. Overall, more than 720 adult students have been recruited to these courses, including attendance at three centres in the community.

37. The college has been represented on a number of local learning networks and community groups which have served to raise local awareness of its potential to contribute to initiatives concerned with widening participation as, for example, the college's support for a childcare development project and the youth and community centre on the nearby Maybridge estate. There are holiday learning clubs supported by the college and an initiative with one partner secondary school, Durrington High School, to encourage children from families with no previous experience of HE to progress to college and then to one of the three local universities providing progression pathways for the project.

38. However, the volume and range of this work remains very small. For example, the entire enrolment of adult students accounts for only around 65 full-time equivalent students. Overall, the college lacks the capacity to develop this work. There are few specialist adult teachers or volunteer support workers, no community workers and no middle managers or project managers for community education development.

39. There is an enterprise manager in the college responsible for managing the large nursery and childcare centre which generates a substantial surplus income each year, a work-based learning programme for in-service training of childcare workers not funded by the LSC, and the enrolment of fee paying students from overseas to the sixth form, linked to a consortium with two other colleges in Sussex. These income-generating activities serve to widen the college's capacity for development and provide subsidies to its general provision.

40. Students are generally well supported on their courses. As part of a newly revised tutorial system, all full-time teachers and those with substantial part-time teaching commitments are guidance tutors. All students aged 16 to 18 are allocated a guidance tutor, who meets with them regularly to monitor their progress and acts as a point of contact for any welfare issues. Adult students on short ICT courses are also well supported. All guidance tutors receive useful weekly bulletins outlining key actions to take in tutorials and the materials needed. However, some sessions are ineffective; students are given little opportunity to discuss matters or ask questions.

41. Students have access to good career education and HE guidance and students value the support they receive with Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applications. There is good welfare advice and specialist additional learning support.

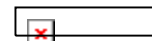
42. There are clear and well co-ordinated arrangements for identifying students' support. Using an IT system, information on learning styles and additional learning support needs is generated for all students aged 16 to 18 and adult students on long courses. The support provided includes working with individuals or groups, 'drop-in' sessions and assisting students in lessons. One student with Aspergers syndrome, for example, had good support in lessons while on a GNVQ intermediate course in ICT and this helped him to progress to the advanced course. Individual support for students with dyslexia is particularly effective. Support for students in literacy, numeracy and in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is not well established. The extent to which subject and guidance tutors make effective use of the information on learning styles to accommodate individual students' needs is small.

43. Students value the opportunity to attend 'taster' classes prior to, or during, enrolment and for some it confirms whether or not they wish to change subjects. Some induction programmes are effective; in other curriculum areas the introduction programme is weak. The information provided at induction is usually clear, but it is sometimes presented to students in a dull manner. Induction for geography GCE AS students is particularly effective. Students take part in a field trip and the report they produce for this forms the basis of their initial assessments.

44. Guidance tutors monitor attendance rigorously and students are aware of the importance of regular attendance. To address retention rate problems, learning support in classes has been

targeted at level 2 sessions, particularly in ICT and leisure and tourism. To meet the growing demand for additional learning support, the college plans to appoint more learning support staff.

Leadership and management



45. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and managers are agreed on the college's priorities, in particular developing its accommodation, widening the range of level 2 programmes and improving the quality of provision. However, college plans lack a clear, concise statement of key strategic objectives that reflect these priorities. The operational plan provides an appropriate agenda for action. Key issues, including raising achievements and improving teaching, are addressed. It is informed both by college priorities and the findings of self-assessment. Responsibilities, targets, evaluation criteria and time-scales are clear. The framework for reporting to governors is good. They receive appropriate information on students' achievements, financial forecasts and progress made towards achieving college priorities.

46. The college mainly provides long courses for students aged 16 to 18. Overall retention and pass rates on these courses improved marginally over the last three years and are satisfactory. Pass rates are slightly above the national average for sixth form colleges, but retention rates are slightly below. Data for the last 3 years for GCE A-level subjects, show that in 10 subjects students performed significantly less well than predicted on the basis of their GCSE grades. In three subjects, they performed significantly better. In other subjects, the variance from expected performance was not significant.

47. The number of full-time students has remained reasonably stable over the last three years. The college achieved its student number targets in 1999/2000 and 2001/02, but fell short in 2000/01, mainly because more students left at the end of the first year of their GCE A-level programme than the college had predicted. A successful new IT centre in Lancing helped to increase the number of part-time adult students to over 700 in 2002. However, the number of adults and range of community work remains modest, despite the re-naming of the college.

48. The management of most curriculum areas is satisfactory or good. For example, in business studies, science, mathematics, humanities and languages, course teams meet regularly, students' progress is closely monitored, quality assurance procedures are followed, targets for attendance, retention and achievement are agreed and progress towards these targets is monitored. Aspects of management in some curriculum areas are unsatisfactory. For example, the new college timetable is not working effectively in some areas because staff are introducing unscheduled breaks into two-hour periods. There is little college-wide curriculum planning. The college lacks formal procedures to approve new courses, a forum for the discussion of curriculum development, and an annual curriculum plan.

49. The college has comprehensive quality assurance arrangements for both teaching teams and support services. Self-assessment is a key feature of the quality assurance system. Most teams produce thorough self-assessment reports. Action plans are monitored three times each year. Useful termly quality assurance reports are provided for senior managers and governors. The college's weaker curriculum areas are designated as 'quality hotspots'. These areas are more closely monitored by senior managers. However, action taken in two key areas, art and design and ICT, has not had a significant impact and more should have been done to secure the necessary improvements. Some other aspects of the quality assurance system are unsatisfactory. The lack of an appraisal system for teaching staff is a major weakness. Many lesson observations took place too late in the year and the grades were over-generous. The results of surveys of students' views are poorly presented and some significant findings are not referred to in course teams' action plans.

50. The college has excellent links with its five partner schools. Senior managers, linked to each school, maintain close personal contact with head teachers and school staff. College staff attend

school parents' evenings to talk to prospective students and their parents. The college is an active member of the West Sussex Learning Partnership and other local strategic planning groups. It is developing links with the local FE college, leading for example, to a new level 2 public services course. A worthwhile link with a local school for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables adults to supplement their schoolwork with weekly visits to the college.

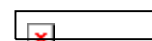
51. The college management information system is reliable, well structured and easy to use. It meets the needs of both managers and teachers. Its structure enables them to both input data and gain access to appropriate, up-to-date information on for example, enrolments, individual students' timetables, progress compared with target grades and end of year reports on individual students.

52. The college has recently revised its equal opportunities policy and established an equal opportunities working group. The policy states the general responsibilities of governors, managers and staff for promoting equal opportunities and combating discrimination. It is too early to judge its impact. Governors are aware of their duties in relation to the new legislation on race relations. Before the revised policy, the promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities was weak. For example, governors did not receive complete reports on this aspect of the college's work. However, all full-time staff recently attended an equal opportunities training day.

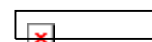
53. Staff enjoy working at Worthing College. They appreciate the open management style. The clear management structure facilitates good communication.

54. For the two years prior to 2002/03, budget setting was imprecise. In 2000/01, the college significantly overspent its budget. Costs were cut and a few staff were made redundant. The following year, the college budgeted for a deficit, but achieved a substantial surplus. The budget for 2002/03 is more soundly based than the previous two years. The college has insufficient formal information to judge how efficiently its resources are used, although it has recently evaluated the jobs of support staff. For example, there is no data showing how efficiently teachers are used over the whole year and the unit costs of courses are not calculated. Overall, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- well-planned and enthusiastic teaching

- well-organised and integrated practical work
- effective self-assessment
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on some courses
- some poor accommodation.

Scope of provision

55. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and attend full time. GCE AS and A-level courses are offered in biology, chemistry, electronics, environmental science, geology, human biology and physics. There are one-year programmes leading to a GCE AS in science for public understanding and in archaeology (new in 2002). There is a well-established, one-year full-time GCSE science course for school-leavers. The curriculum area has 566 enrolments. Recruitment is good with current enrolments to first-year courses representing an 18% increase on 2001/02.

Achievement and standards

56. Attendance at classes observed was 92%. The average group size is good at 15.5. Retention rates on most two-year (legacy) GCE A-level courses were below the national average for sixth form colleges. In 2001/02, retention rates on the one-year GCSE course improved significantly, but for GCE AS chemistry, human biology and physics, the retention rate has declined.

57. The pass rates on most GCE A-level courses are above the national average. For example, in the last four years, the pass rate on the GCE A-level course in geology was 100% and in chemistry and physics it was over 90% over the same period. Pass rates on most GCE AS courses are at, or above, the national average for sixth form colleges. The pass rate in GCSE science is consistently well above the national average. The proportion of GCE A-level students achieving A to B grades in biology, chemistry, electronics, geology and physics is also good. Analysis of students' achievements as compared with what might be predicted from their previous attainment indicate mixed performances within the science subjects; achievement is good in chemistry, but poor in biology. Students are well motivated, work productively, and respond positively.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE science and	2	No. of starts	39	50	38

technology		% retention	85	72	89
		% pass rate	79	75	79
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	54	45	31
		% retention	59	73	97
		% pass rate	94	85	90
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	47	45	40
		% retention	79	76	95
		% pass rate	97	97	97
GCE A-level geology	3	No. of starts	17	21	12
		% retention	82	86	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level human biology	3	No. of starts	42	41	31
		% retention	98	98	94
		% pass rate	80	85	86
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	46	49	19
		% retention	85	78	100
		% pass rate	92	95	95

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

Quality of education and training

58. A high proportion (78%) of the teaching is either good or better. Lessons are well planned. In the best lessons, teaching activities are suitably varied and include exposition, question and answer and group work. All teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject. In all lessons, there were good relationships between students and teachers. Students are well motivated, work productively, and make effective contributions to their learning. For example, GCE AS environmental science students constructed and used their own photosynthometers to record the rate of oxygen production in sample of pondweed. The apparatus enabled them to understand how photosynthetic oxygen production is dependent on light intensity.

59. Laboratory activities are well organised. Very careful attention is paid to health and safety practice with all students wearing laboratory coats, goggles, and hairnets, as appropriate. In practical sessions, teachers relate theory to practice clearly and effectively. For example, in a GCE A-level chemistry lesson, the teacher introduced the structure of a benzene ring and the concept of de-localised electrons through a simple model. The students were then able to test the hypothesis from thermochemical data and followed this by undertaking experiments that confirmed the conclusions they had made. The lesson concluded with a discussion of the students' findings. A GCSE science class undertook simple experiments on their own body's responses to visual, touch and temperature changes as a precursor to a consideration of the response of an organ such as the eye to external stimulus.

60. Inspectors observed a number of examples where uninspiring teaching inhibited learning. Little use is made of videos, CD-ROMs or the Internet in the classroom. There was little imaginative use of overhead transparencies and overhead projector screens were not available in most rooms. Consolidation and reflection are a strong feature of lessons. The range of learning material used was small and the handouts seen were not stimulating.

61. The only laboratory equipped with computers is that used for electronics. Good use, however, is made of the computers in the suite provided for science students. A GCE AS class took readings in

the physics laboratory to measure the focal length of a lens and transferred to the computer room where they each used a special package to produce the best-fit plot for their data and determined the focal length of the lens. Students value the ready access to the Internet and are referred to appropriate web-sites by their teachers.

62. Teachers are approachable, friendly and supportive. Students value the system of weekly tutorials. Support on academic matters is given on an individual basis or through small groups. Students' progress is rigorously monitored and the expected outcomes determined from their GCSE grades on entry are discussed with them. Effective learning was given in a tutorial for biology students; they were given clear and direct teaching on the stages of the respiratory pathway in living cells and were then able to complete the set homework. 'Clinics' provide further support for weaker students. Teachers effectively take account of students' learning difficulties. For example, a number of dyslexic students are given additional support.

63. The standard of students' written work is high. Teachers give constructive and helpful written feedback on their work. Students undertake challenging projects with enthusiasm.

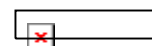
64. The science laboratories are all located in ground floor accommodation. Some of the accommodation is poor. The self-assessment report identified deficiencies in accommodation and the chemistry laboratories were refurbished this summer. Chemistry students confirm that the modifications have provided a much-improved learning environment. However, the benching in the physics laboratory is still outdated. Also the increased recruitment to chemistry and biology is leading to overcrowding and biology is taught in rooms that lack basic facilities.

65. Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic about their teaching. The students are well served by a dedicated team of technicians. Most resources are good. Textbooks and laboratory manuals are provided at reduced cost. The library resources for science are adequate. Textbooks relevant to the GCE A-level courses are well used, but some volumes are outdated.

Leadership and management

66. The science programme area is well managed. Communications between managers and teachers is good. There is an excellent team spirit within the science team and staff share teaching resources with each other. Student progress is rigorously monitored. Programme team leaders ensure that a strong emphasis is given to improving the quality of teaching and learning and preparing students adequately for examinations. Programme team meetings are held regularly and the agendas include the monitoring of students' performance. The well-developed, self-assessment reports acknowledge key weaknesses and contain action plans that address issues of student retention and pass rates.

Mathematics



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good achievement on advanced level courses
- good retention rates on GCE AS and A-level courses

- effective teaching
- good support for individual students
- effective course management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GCSE mathematics
- insufficient use of IT
- small teaching accommodation.

Scope of provision

67. The mathematics department offers an adequate range of courses. It has taken advantage of Curriculum 2000 to establish three GCE AS courses: pure with mechanics, pure with statistics, together with statistics as a stand-alone option. More able students are encouraged to take further mathematics units whilst remaining on their chosen GCE AS option. The GCE A-level courses provide opportunities for students who wish to progress from these strands. There are 188 students taking GCE AS courses and 90 on GCE A-level courses. There are 33 GCE A-level students following the further mathematics option. GCE AS science students who need extra support in mathematics attend a support class. Students with low GCSE grades attend an application of number course at level 2. This is offered as an alternative to GCSE. There are 195 students on intermediate courses. The evening mathematics course for adults was cancelled due to poor enrolments.

Achievement and standards

68. Pass rates for advanced courses are mostly good. In GCE AS mathematics, the pass rate has remained above 75% for the last two years; well above the national average. On GCE A-level courses, examined for the first time in 2002, 98% of students achieved a grade A to E, with over 70% achieving high grades. The pass rate in GCE A-level further mathematics has remained around 90% for the last three years. In GCSE mathematics, the pass rate is poor. Over the last four years, the rate has only once exceeded the national average and in 2002 at 33%, was 7% below the average. Retention rates on GCE AS and A-level courses are good and in 2002 were over 90%. This is a significant improvement on past GCE A-level retention rates, which were generally below the national average. In GCSE, the retention rate improved in 2002 to 87%, but in previous years it was well below the national average for sixth form colleges.

69. College data indicates that student targets for 2002 were exceeded in four out of six GCE A-level classes and seven out of eight GCE AS classes. Students' progression to HE is good. Key skills are covered during normal teaching, but it is not clear how the evidence of students' achievement will be evaluated. Most advanced level students develop good skills of evaluation, research and analysis. Attendance at lessons is usually good and above the inspection average of 80%. However, punctuality is a problem in some classes.

A sample of retention and pass rates in mathematics, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE mathematics 1 year	2	No. of starts	175	201	199
		% retention	71	74	87
		% pass rate	45	37	33
GCE A-level mathematics 2 years	3	No. of starts	75	85	*
		% retention	88	75	*
		% pass rate	95	92	*
GCE A-level further mathematics	3	No. of starts	24	8	*
		% retention	92	100	*
		% pass rate	100	100	*

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

* data unavailable

Quality of education and training

70. Teaching was good or better in 71% of the observed lessons and none was unsatisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned and linked to an appropriate scheme of work. Teachers mainly use examination specific textbooks as their main teaching resource. In the best lessons, students are engaged from the start of the lesson and learning builds on their previous experiences. Teachers ensure that their lessons are pitched at an appropriate level for the class. More able students are encouraged to try more demanding questions while teachers give good individual support to the rest of the class. Students taking advanced courses are generally well motivated and work conscientiously. In one lesson, the teacher effectively introduced the idea of calculating the angle between two lines by re-enforcing students' GCSE understanding of the straight-line equation. In another further mathematics group, the teacher extended the groups' understanding of differentiation at a fast pace. The group enjoyed the challenge and found the lesson both demanding and stimulating. Good teachers were confident not to rely on textbook examples. Teaching of GCSE mathematics is mostly satisfactory, but not enough attention is given to addressing individual weaknesses. Individualised support for application of number students is good.

71. Teaching, although effective, is very focused on the demands of the final examination. Teachers rarely inspire students and often the teaching lacks variety and imagination. The range of teaching methods employed by teachers is mostly limited to lecturing, writing on whiteboard and setting practice exercises out of a textbook. There is very little use of IT or any other learning resources. Teachers rely on their experience to maintain the interest of students. Teaching is often conducted at a fast pace. In some of the longer lessons, students lose their concentration. Teachers ask students too many closed questions that admit only one answer and do not allow students to explore the topic in more open discussion. In some less successful lessons, teachers continued teaching or ended the lesson without asking whether the students had understood the set example or not. In one GCE AS mechanics lesson, students were introduced to Newton's universal law of gravitation. The teacher did not explore adequately the physical aspects of the equation and moved too quickly into practice examples. Students' progress was then hampered by their inability to use graphical calculators. In some instances, students lacked the basic algebraic skills to be able to solve the set

problems.

72. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Most teachers have been observed teaching by other college staff in the previous year. The grades given were similar to those awarded during the inspection, but the commentary given by the observers did not focus sufficiently on the teachers' effectiveness. Staff development opportunities are good. For example, there has been a particular emphasis on improving the GCSE course and external training. However, there are few opportunities for staff to develop more varied teaching methods. Classrooms are often too small for the groups that use them and the teacher is not able to move easily around the classroom. There are no computers in any of the dedicated mathematics classrooms. Overhead projectors are available, but rarely used. The college intranet is underdeveloped for mathematics students. The section has purchased good new textbooks that meet the examination requirements. Library stock is good and up to date. Students have good access to computers outside of lessons and to areas for private study.

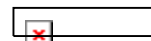
73. The mathematics department has good links with local feeder schools. A member of the team regularly visits linked schools to advise about opportunities at the college. A pre-enrolment event in July enables students to taste mathematics courses and adjust their options. To improve the flexibility of provision, more able GCE AS students are encouraged to take further mathematics modules without commitment. The decision to only offer GCSE mathematics to students with a previous grade of D or E is new. It is too early to judge whether this approach is in the students' best interest. There are no adult classes this year due to poor enrolments.

74. Teachers provide good support for students. Students meet regularly with their personal tutor and subject tutors provide extra help if required. Staff give generously of their time both inside and outside the classroom. Students speak highly of the help and encouragement they receive. Student handbooks for each subject are satisfactory and include a list of mathematics web sites. All subjects have a well-designed induction period at the start of the year. Mathematics teachers interview all prospective students. Some mathematics students receive learning support. The need for this is identified through initial screening, self-referral or by teachers. Most students who are referred attend their support sessions and tutors receive feedback on their progress. Mathematics students have poor opportunities for subject related enrichment activities. For example, there is no mathematics club or organised visits.

Leadership and management

75. The mathematics team is well managed. Teachers work effectively together and courses are well organised. The current model, allocating team members different responsibilities without a single team leader, is working well. Resources are effectively deployed. The monitoring and introduction of new schemes of work is good. There are minuted team meetings at least twice every term. Communication is good, but mostly informal. Teachers regularly meet to discuss mathematics issues. Good teaching practice is not always effectively shared. Course reviews are effective and all of the team was involved in writing the self-assessment report. Agreed actions are carefully monitored and there are clear examples of resulting improvements. All courses except GCSE achieved the annual college targets set to measure performance. The self-assessment report was mostly accurate. However, some aspects claimed as strengths were in no way exceptional and some weaknesses were omitted. In general, there was insufficient emphasis on issues relating to teaching and learning.

Business studies



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good standard of work in lessons
- good teaching and learning
- good retention and pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses
- well-conceived paper resources, developed by teachers
- good formative assessment
- good monitoring of students' progress
- well-managed curriculum.

Weaknesses

- poor accommodation that restricts teaching and learning
- lack of access to IT
- lack of subject-specific comments in action plans and reports
- narrow curriculum choices.

Scope of provision

76. The range of provision in business administration is satisfactory, including GCE AS and A-level business studies, economics and accounting, AVCE business and GNVQ intermediate business. There are, however, low numbers on the AVCE business courses and no provision at level 1. There are few enrichment opportunities such as Foreign Languages at Work. In addition, the part award is

not used to enrich the programme in other curriculum areas such as science.

Achievement and standards

77. Overall, the standard of work observed in lessons and students' written work is good. Students display a good understanding of terminology and key concepts, such as perfect competition. They show a good ability to apply these concepts to case studies and business situations. Overall, students' analytical and evaluative skills are not well developed, but there were a few examples of students having acquired good skills; in one GCE A-level lesson, for example, students were able to analyse the effect of 'window dressing' and apply this to the recent American scandals. Most students demonstrate well-developed research skills and use a good combination of primary and secondary sources. There were some good examples of students' logical thinking in lessons and in their written work. Some lengthy and high-quality projects contained good cogent arguments. Students cope very well with number work and graphical presentation. For example, intermediate students were able to draw up cash flow forecasts quickly and accurately. Students are encouraged to read around the subject and some, though by no means all, do this well.

78. In most lessons, students make good progress. They listen attentively, apply themselves well to tasks set, and respond well to questions directed to them. Though there were some examples of students making spontaneous comments, and giving extended answers to questions, overall there was little discussion and debate in lessons.

79. On GCE A-level business two-year courses, retention rates are above, or around, the national average, and pass rates over a three-year period are above the national average. In GCE AS business studies, retention rates are slightly below the national average, and pass rates within 1% of the national average. On the GCE AS accounting courses, retention rates are slightly below the national average and pass rates significantly above. However, for all GCE AS and A-level subjects the percentage of high grades is below the national average. In 2001/02, the invalidated data indicates that retention rates are above the national average in GCE AS accounting and business. Pass rates are above the national average in accounting and intermediate business, but below in GCE AS business. GCE A-level business has good retention and pass rates, but there is no national average currently available for comparison.

80. In GNVQ advanced business, enrolment, retention and pass rates have been an issue. This qualification has been replaced by the AVCE in 2001/02, where there are similar concerns. Intermediate business ran between 1998 to 2000, but did not enrol any students in 2000/01. On this course, though the numbers were small, retention and pass rates were significantly above the national average.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	10	*	16
		% retention	90	*	69
		% pass rate	100	*	91
AVCE business (Dbi award) 2 year	3	No. of starts	**	**	8
		% retention	**	**	100
		% pass rate	**	**	100
AVCE business (single award) 1 year	3	No. of starts	**	**	13
		% retention	**	**	100
		% pass rate	**	**	77
AVCE business (single	3	No. of starts	**	**	1

award) 2 year		% retention	**	**	0
		% pass rate	**	**	0
GNVQ advanced business	3	No. of starts	31	8	*
		% retention	71	25	*
		% pass rate	91	50	*
GCE A-level business 2 year	3	No. of starts	123	128	*
		% retention	83	79	*
		% pass rate	90	84	*

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

* data unavailable

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

81. Teaching in almost all cases is at least satisfactory and there is a significant amount of good and very good teaching that is both challenging and imaginative. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods that include simulations, role-play, case studies and presentations. In one AVCE lesson, a simulated auction was used effectively to demonstrate both price determination and the consequences of an inelastic supply curve. In an intermediate lesson, the use of role-play enabled students to understand quickly and clearly the concept of cash-flow forecasts. Most lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives, and pitched at the correct level. However, there is little reference to the provision of work that takes account of the differing abilities of students or to key skills in the planning. Lessons are well paced and explanations are clear. Teachers make good use of questioning to involve the students, check their understanding and extend their thinking. However, they do not use methods such as open questions or conversational statements to encourage debate and discussion.

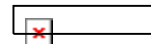
82. Work is regularly, accurately and speedily marked with helpful comments to lead students to improve their performance. Some teachers use marking levels, but this is not the general practice. There is good monitoring of students' progress, but the resulting action plans lack subject-specific comments, as do the termly reports. There is no moderating of the marked and assessed work by the programme manager.

83. Staff are experienced and well qualified in the subject areas they teach; most have a background in industry, but not recent experience. There is little access to IT for students, and the software available is incompatible with industrial standards. There are no smart boards or data projectors that the department might use to good effect. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and adversely affects the learning. It is too small for the student numbers and restricts the use of more varied teaching methods, for example, the arrangement of furniture for simulations or group work. It also makes it difficult for teachers to move around the room to carry out informal assessment and to question individual students to extend their thinking.

Leadership and management

84. The curriculum is well managed. Schemes of work are comprehensive and shared effectively across the teaching team. The implementation of quality assurance procedures are good. The programme manager carries out a number of lesson observations and written records of these are good. New staff are well supported through a mentoring process and an opportunity to observe the lessons of experienced staff. The team self-assessment reports could be sharper. The present method of analysing the strengths and weaknesses against the large number of criteria within the key questions of the common inspection framework masks the most important priorities and actions required. Action plans for identified weaknesses are generally good. Targets set are generally achieved.

Information and communication technology



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- good individual support for students
- wide range of level 3 ICT courses
- good quality computing resources.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on many courses
- unsatisfactory teaching on AVCE courses
- ineffective leadership and management in raising achievement
- ineffective monitoring of students' performance
- setting of undemanding tasks for advanced level students in many lessons.

Scope of provision

85. Full-time courses at intermediate and advanced levels are offered at the main college site. The majority of students recruited to the full-time courses are male and in the 16 to 18 age-range. Part-time level 1 and level 2 courses are taught mainly to adults at the main site, at a retirement centre and at a centre in the community.

Achievement and standards

86. Retention and pass rates for many courses are below the national average. In 2001, the pass rates for GCE A-level computing, GNVQ intermediate ICT, GNVQ advanced ICT and AVCE ICT were all more than 10% below the national average. There were improvements in the GNVQ intermediate ICT pass rate in 2002. Many students fail to submit coursework of adequate quality on time. Students' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential is poor in GCE A-level computing. The retention and pass rates are good on the part-time adult courses. Many mature students currently on the short courses are new to using IT. They quickly become competent and confident in using applications software. There are good retention rates on the GNVQ advanced courses. There were high standards of work on some GNVQ and GCE A-level courses, but the quality of work on the AVCE course was unsatisfactory.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communication technology, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	13	11	*
		% retention	100	82	*
		% pass rate	92	89	*
OCN ICT short courses	1/2	No. of starts	407	325	311
		% retention	98	96	94
		% pass rate	61	51	100
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	21	37	25
		% retention	81	81	92
		% pass rate	94	53	65
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	115	120	29
		% retention	83	62	97
		% pass rate	77	69	71
GNVQ advanced ICT	3	No. of starts	*	25	23
		% retention	*	80	91
		% pass rate	*	65	67
AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	*	12	38
		% retention	*	27	73
		% pass rate	*	0	32

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. It is better in lessons for first-year groups and adult classes. Some lessons are well planned with detailed schemes of work. In such lessons, students are well motivated. Teachers provide good individual support for students. Group work is sometimes hampered by inadequate access to multimedia projectors. Full-time students are assessed on entry for learning support needs and, if identified as necessary, appropriate support is provided. However, there is no initial assessment of IT skills to guide action planning. Within the first four weeks, students on a number of courses had not undertaken any assessed work. In many lessons, the work is undemanding. In one word processing lesson for adults, the more able students who had completed the work had to wait while the lesson proceeded at the pace of the slowest. In

one uninspiring AVCE lesson, time was wasted as students were required to word process the specifications of their unit. In another AVCE lesson, a teacher talked about the specifications of a unit for 35 minutes. An example of good practice occurred in a GCE AS computing lesson where programming skills were being developed through demanding tasks which also reinforced students' understanding of binary arithmetic. In another carefully managed lesson, GNVQ students were effectively acquiring skills in creating database queries. There were examples of good teaching of novice users of IT in adult and community classes.

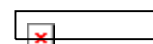
88. Staff have a secure technical knowledge of the subject maintained by opportunities for professional development, but a number of staff do not yet have a teaching qualification. Staff absence affected performance during 2001/02 and currently a number of the staff have to work overtime to cover for a staff shortfall.

89. The computer resources are good with access to up-to-date software. There are insufficient multimedia projectors for group work. Good-quality, paper-based resources have been developed including course handbooks and worksheets. The computing classrooms are often too warm and poorly ventilated.

Leadership and management

90. The lack of evidence of effective action to raise the achievement levels on many courses indicates ineffective management of the provision. There is insufficient monitoring of individual student's progress. The timetable, which is arranged on very long blocks of time, creates difficulties for staff teaching theory lessons and is unpopular with staff and students. Staff introduce many unofficial breaks in order to manage the long periods. There is a self-assessment process that identifies issues and action points, but this process has failed to improve the unsatisfactory performance. There were gaps in the evidence of minutes of meetings available from March through to July 2002. In the minutes of meetings that did take place, there is little evidence of the serious problems of low achievement being addressed. Plans have recently been drawn up to look at the problems and a new team management structure has recently been put in place.

Leisure and tourism



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good pass and retention rates in GCE AS physical education
- rigorous monitoring of students' progress, assessment and attendance
- good support for students
- good range of visits linked to assignment work.

Weaknesses

- no additional vocational awards in leisure and tourism
- lack of travel operations area
- no company-specific vocational practice in college
- little use of IT.

Scope of provision

91. The college offers a good range of leisure, tourism, sport and recreation courses. These include the GNVQ intermediate course in leisure and tourism, AVCEs in leisure and recreation and travel and tourism and GCE AS and A levels in physical education.

92. There are no foundation courses or specialist professional courses.

Achievement and standards

93. Pass and retention rates for AVCE courses in 2000/01 were significantly below the national average. Rates for these courses for 2001/02 have shown a significant improvement; both are above the national average, although this data has not been validated. Pass and retention rates for GCE AS and A-level physical education in 2000/01 were close to the national average and in 2001/02 they have improved. The pass rate for the physical education GCE A-level course is 97%, with 47% of the students achieving higher grades. This data has not been validated. Pass and retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate course in leisure and tourism were above the national average in 1998/99 and 1999/2000.

94. On the GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism course retention and pass rates for 1999 to 2001 were consistently above the national average. It was discontinued in 2001, when it was replaced by the current separate AVCE awards in these subjects.

95. Many students produce work of a satisfactory or good standard. Most AVCE students maintain well-organised portfolios of evidence. Students are punctual in lessons, attentive to their work and responsive in discussions. Second-year students are able to apply existing knowledge when learning new concepts. Effective use of IT is apparent in second-year travel and tourism students' files when all assignment work has to be word-processed.

A sample of retention and pass rates in leisure and tourism, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate in	2	No. of starts	40	41	46

leisure and tourism		% retention	88	62	87
		% pass rate	84	83	100
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	19	36	*
		% retention	68	89	*
		% pass rate	63	86	*
GCE A-level sport, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	58	44	48
		% retention	84	78	92
		% pass rate	94	69	97
AVCE travel and tourism 1 year	3	No. of starts	*	15	22
		% retention	*	43	100
		% pass rate	*	28	92
AVCE leisure and recreation 1 year	3	No. of starts	4	7	12
		% retention	75	67	100
		% pass rate	34	20	97

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

96. Most teaching is satisfactory or good. Teachers use a wide range of methods, prepare detailed schemes of work and lesson plans and use an appropriate range of activities and learning materials to engage the students, including presentations, video, current news articles and worksheets. Lecturers are supportive and encouraging to their students. Many of the students on the AVCE courses take additional qualifications such as GCE AS and A-level business and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) language courses.

97. However, there are no opportunities for students to take industry-specific vocational awards in leisure and tourism. Key skills are integrated with assignments and assessment opportunities are highlighted by teachers. There is thorough assessment and monitoring of students' progress and attendance on most courses. The assignments planned by the teachers provide good coverage of course requirements. Tasks are clear and students are aware of the standard required to achieve a pass, merit or distinction and are given good opportunities to develop evidence for these higher grades. All homework is recorded by students in a homework diary. All students are given a handbook when they start the course that contains information about the course content, assessment and moderation, key skills, health and safety, the appeal procedures and useful web sites.

98. Students progress well on courses and are well supported by staff and up-to-date textbook resources. Students make good use of the Internet and specialist trade papers for research on their assignments. Students are encouraged to write to tourism and leisure companies to obtain additional learning resources. Students make good progression into employment and HE. Past students now work for leading leisure and tourism companies.

99. A wide range of United Kingdom and overseas visits is linked to the needs of the courses. Most links with industry are not formalised, although the women's football academy is supported by Brighton and Hove Albion football club which offers weekly coaching sessions and matches. Travel and tourism students benefit from an overseas residential visit where they work with a tour operator and are able to meet the requirements for their study of overseas tour operation.

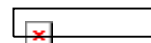
100. Teachers are well qualified and many have recent experience of the travel and leisure

industries. One lecturer has recently completed a week's work experience with a ski operator at a resort. Accommodation is dated and in need of refurbishment. Some accommodation is in huts that are noisy, small and hot. There is no college sports hall and physical education and AVCE leisure and recreation students have to use a nearby leisure centre. This causes organisational problems for practical work.

Leadership and management

101. Day-to-day management of courses is satisfactory. Two team leaders have responsibility for travel and tourism and leisure, recreation and physical education. Both team leaders work well with their course teams, but there is insufficient sharing of good practice between teams. Self-assessment is carried out, but the process does not sufficiently identify strengths and weaknesses.

Visual arts and media and performing arts



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good teaching in media and performing arts
- good retention rates and very good pass rates in performing arts
- well-motivated students.

Weaknesses

- poor monitoring of action to improve standards
- insufficiently demanding teaching in visual arts
- small range of curriculum provision
- inadequate computer facilities and some poor accommodation.

Scope of provision

102. The college offers a narrow range of provision in visual and performing arts and media subjects. Most of the provision is at GCE AS/A level and nearly all the students are aged 16 to 18. There are GCE AS and A-level courses in art, design, photography and media. There are also courses in GCE AS and A-level dance, drama, music and performance studies. There is some vocational provision in media and a new BTEC national award is recruiting well. There is very little provision at level 2 or for adult students. There are currently 263 enrolments on visual arts courses, 202 on media courses and 136 on performing arts. The inspection covered all the provision in the area.

Achievement and standards

103. There were 100% pass rates for the last three years in GCE A-level music performance and GCE A-level performing arts. Most GCE AS and A-level pass rates in performance studies were above the national average for the three years to 2002. Retention and pass rates are improving significantly in GCE AS and GCE A-level art, but some students are failing to realise their full potential in achieving high grades and progress in addressing this is slow. Practical skills in visual arts are good, but students do not reflect critically enough on their work. In media, the retention and pass rates are erratic and although much improved last year at 100%, with 76% of students achieving high grades, a pattern is not established. Vocational provision in media has low student numbers and is too recently initiated to indicate clear trends.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual arts and media and performing arts, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE A-level art	3	No. of starts	38	49	18
		% retention	74	75	89
		% pass rate	92	97	100
GCE A-level music	3	No. of starts	6	8	14
		% retention	83	88	93
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level media 2 years	3	No. of starts	55	57	32
		% retention	88	76	100
		% pass rate	91	76	100
GCE A-level photography 2 years	3	No. of starts	18	26	16
		% retention	63	80	88
		% pass rate	100	95	100
GCE A-level performance arts	3	No. of starts	18	19	14
		% retention	77	58	87
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level theatre and dramatic arts/drama	3	No. of starts	22	35	20
		% retention	79	74	100
		% pass rate	80	100	90

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

Quality of education and training

104. Much of the teaching in media is good. One excellent media studies lesson was a fast paced exploration of protagonists and heroes in which the teacher led a dynamic discussion prompting informed critical comments from the students. Carefully selected video clips were used to illustrate key points and to encourage debate about complex issues of film genre in a captivating manner. In other media lessons, students were able to collaborate effectively in video production.

105. In performing arts, the programme of visits to and by professional practitioners is extensive and supports course requirements well. For example, drama students visit two different productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, at The Globe and at the Chichester Festival Theatre. This enriches students' classroom experience and enables them to develop a critical evaluation of the play.

106. In art and design, students were able to work independently in the studio. In art, the teaching is not demanding enough. In a number of art lessons, students were able to demonstrate a range of painting techniques such as wash-off and wax resist. They worked industriously to produce a series of sample sheets. However, not enough emphasis was placed on the context and content of their painting and an opportunity to link technique with the expression of ideas was missed.

107. Well-qualified, dedicated teachers contribute to the successful learning experience of the students. They demonstrate good knowledge of their subjects and use it to inform teaching. Poor accommodation and equipment in performing arts have been the subject of adverse comment in the last two inspection reports. The drama studio is a poor teaching and learning area. The studio floor is dirty and an acknowledged hazard. The music room is too small for choir practice. Some off-site accommodation used for drama involves a walk that diminishes lesson time. There is no computer provision for music composition.

108. The increased recruitment to media has resulted in some lessons being held in crowded classrooms that are hot and uncomfortable. Teachers make good use of video and television. Access to the darkroom in photography is inadequate and the room is too small. Ventilation and print washing facilities are poor. Good use is made of wall displays in the photography studio with a stimulating selection of exemplar work from last year. Exhibition listings and reviews contribute much to fostering students' enthusiasm for and knowledge about the subject.

109. The art studio has three computer workstations each with inappropriate image manipulation software, and without printout facilities. Much of the art studio is given to still-life set-ups with consideration given to the collections of themed objects. However, the space available for groups to observe and to work is small and poorly lit. Neither local nor directional lighting is available in the set-ups to enable dramatic emphasis of tone shadow. There is no facility to address a full range of spatial issues in drawing by suspending objects.

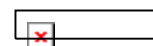
110. Students' work is assessed fairly and accurately and meets the requirements of the awarding bodies. Termly reports in most areas are thorough and detailed and monitor students' performance effectively. In music, teachers devised a document to record instrumental and singing practice and reward these activities with certification in improving own learning and performance. In performing arts, formative assessments are infrequent. Strategies are not adequately developed to assess individual performers working within a group. In some visual arts lessons, feedback did not ensure that students engaged in sufficient critical analysis of their practical work. Formative assessment in design is generally good, with the teacher able to indicate good reference sources with which students could further their research. However, students often failed to write them down.

Leadership and management

111. There is some good planning and co-ordination between teachers, leading to improved students' learning. In music, there are good schemes of work that are shared with students. The online management information service works well. Information on attendance patterns, target setting, assessment and reporting are well organised. Student profiles on entry and their eventual destinations are not used effectively as a basis for teaching and curriculum developments.

112. Management of some of the programme areas has been effective in raising the quality of education in some subjects and in improving retention and pass rates. In media, the quality of students' work has risen significantly over the last year. In art, the improvement is less satisfactory and under performance by students in examinations persists. Course reviews identify the need for improvements, but actions to address issues are only partially implemented and are ineffectively monitored. Art and design are located in adjoining studios. Photography and media operate in separate locations and there is little opportunity for collaboration and sharing of good practice in teaching and learning.

Social sciences



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- consistently good pass rates at advanced level
- good teaching in the majority of lessons
- rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress
- effective support and guidance.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates in some GCE AS subjects
- little use of IT.

Scope of provision

113. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in psychology, sociology, law, government and politics, history, geography, philosophy and religious studies within this programme area. Currently, there are 1,064 enrolments on the above courses, the largest numbers being 357 in psychology, 189 in law, 108 in sociology and 105 in geography. Students are generally in the 16 to 19 age-range and are studying full time.

Achievement and standards

114. Pass rates have been consistently very good in GCE A-level law, history, government and politics and in philosophy, and students have achieved significantly higher grades than would have been expected based on their achievement at GCSE. Student pass rates in GCE A-level psychology, sociology, geography and religious studies, are in line with national averages. Retention rates at advanced level are generally in line with national averages except in GCE A-level religious studies where it fell in 2000/01 and in GCE A-level sociology where the retention rate has been consistently below average.

115. Results indicate a successful implementation of the new Curriculum 2000 syllabuses. Pass rates in all subjects were in line with, or above, national averages in 2000/01 and in 2001/02, except for GCE AS psychology and GCE AS religious studies where they were below the average in 2000/01, but above it in 2001/02. The retention rate was poor in 2000/01, but improved in 2001/02. Attendance in all subjects is good.

116. Standards achieved in lessons, in students' files and in their marked work are overall satisfactory or better. Students are well motivated and most participate actively in lessons. The most able students have good basic knowledge. They can analyse data and use source material effectively. Students in philosophy and religious studies engage in debates of high quality and are able to present their personal views as well as argue from a range of theoretical perspectives. Philosophy students effectively debated the relationship between the mind and physical substance, quoting references from early Greek philosophers through to modern psychologists. Religious studies students engaged in lively discussion on issues in the philosophy of religion, distinguishing between philosophical and theological explanations of existence.

A sample of retention and pass rates in social sciences, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	116	132	91
		% retention	84	77	96
		% pass rate	84	91	97
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	110	91	66
		% retention	76	75	87
		%pass rate	95	90	94
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	48	57	18
		% retention	66	66	100
		% pass rate	89	88	100
GCE A-level philosophy	3	No. of starts	21	19	18
		% retention	72	61	94
		% pass rate	85	91	94
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	67	72	49
		% retention	78	82	92
		% pass rate	100	96	98
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	23	26	18
		% retention	80	90	89
		% pass rate	94	95	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

Quality of education and training

117. Lessons in psychology, sociology, law, government and politics, history, geography, philosophy and religious studies were observed during the inspection. Teaching was good or better in 76% of the lessons. Teachers are well qualified and have regularly updated their subject knowledge. Students benefit from the additional expertise of those teachers who are experienced examiners. Teachers have an enthusiasm for their subjects that they communicate to their students. Lessons are well planned and interesting. Students have the use of high quality handouts that contain source material and case studies directly related to the syllabus. Planning takes place within the framework of detailed schemes of work that identify assessment opportunities and resources to achieve effective learning.

118. In psychology, sociology and geography teachers are skilled in the use of question and answer techniques to assess and extend students' learning. As well as class work and individual study, students work together in pairs and small groups on original research and fieldwork. They are acquiring the skills necessary for the interpretation and analysis of complex data. Second-year psychology students demonstrated their research skills through coursework projects that covered a wide range of experiments. First-year geography students produced some very good field trip reports on 'The Characteristics of the Sand Dune Ecosystem at East Head'. In law and government and politics, students are acquiring good knowledge and understanding of legal systems through their study of the British judicial system and American presidential elections. Second-year law students practised their adversarial skills through arguing a case based on contract law. Historians debated issues from the rise of National Socialism in Germany to the changes in political style in Ancient Greece.

119. In a small number of lessons, teachers do not give students enough opportunities to find out for themselves. There is little IT in teaching and learning in most subjects. However, in geography, there was imaginative use of video to demonstrate the effects of excessive rainfall, and extensive use of web sites to obtain data for second-year coursework projects. Most students are making good progress in their learning and are developing the skills appropriate to advanced level study.

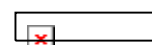
120. Resources within the department and the resource centre are adequate for the learning needs of the students. Some of the classroom accommodation, however, is dull and uninspiring.

121. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress is rigorous and effective. Students' work is marked regularly and accurately. Written comments help students to improve the standard of their work. Early identification of additional learning needs leads to effective intervention. However, there is insufficient use of prior attainment data in planning lessons, leading to a lack of work and teaching materials that take account of the different abilities and needs of students. Guidance and support for individual students are effective. Targets are set to motivate students and to raise standards of achievement. There are positive and purposeful relationships between students and staff.

Leadership and management

122. Management is effective. There are rigorous systems of quality assurance in place to monitor teaching and learning. Subject areas engage in effective self-assessment. Strategies are in place to address areas of weakness and progress is being monitored. There are regular, minuted meetings at programme and subject level, which have a clear focus on monitoring students' progress and raising attainment. Teachers work closely together and share expertise. Standards of achievement in the programme area are good.

Modern foreign languages



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good pass rates on most courses
- much good teaching
- good well-utilised resources
- good departmental management and leadership.

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to the correction of basic errors
- no effective strategy for rapid transition from GCSE to GCE AS.

Scope of provision

123. The college offers Spanish courses at GCSE, AS and A level. Students can also study GCSE Italian, but there are currently no progression routes from this course. French and German is provided at GCE AS and A level. Recruitment is reasonably strong at GCE AS. Despite efforts to widen the range of courses at 19+, only OCN level 1 Spanish has been able to recruit sufficient numbers for the course to run.

Achievement and standards

124. Both overall pass rates and higher grade pass rates have improved in the last two years; this is particularly the case at GCE A level in French and German. Results in Spanish GCSE are well above the national average. Retention rates in Spanish GCSE and Spanish A level were giving cause for concern, but the latest figures for 2002 show that the situation has been rectified. Many students' results at GCE A level are better than their previous record might indicate, although this is seldom the case at GCE AS.

125. The standards achieved by students at GCSE are good. However, GCE AS students do not initially make rapid progress towards grammatical accuracy but their listening and comprehension skills are fairly well developed. They have little opportunity to base their language work closely on appropriate authentic models. They do not have sufficient knowledge of foreign language structures to express themselves clearly and at length. Student performance improves significantly at GCE A level when many students finally are able to speak and write with appropriate accuracy. This enables

them to take full advantage of the very good resources for independent study that are available in the department.

A sample of retention and pass rates in modern foreign languages, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE Spanish language 1 year	2	No. of starts	28	34	36
		% retention	68	50	55
		% pass rate	74	88	86
GCE A-level French language	3	No. of starts	24	30	34
		% retention	83	83	100
		% pass rate	90	96	95
GCE A-level German language	3	No. of starts	19	14	16
		% retention	84	86	89
		% pass rate	94	100	97
GCE A-level Spanish language	3	No. of starts	10	11	12
		% retention	80	55	75
		% pass rate	100	100	92

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

Quality of education and training

126. Teaching is good. No lesson was unsatisfactory and some 83% of lessons were good or better. Teachers are highly competent in their respective languages and are enthusiastic about their subjects. Lessons are invariably well planned and organised with all the language skills being practised, although more reading out aloud is needed to improve pronunciation and intonation and to boost oral confidence. Lessons usually proceed at a challenging pace so that the available time is fully utilised. Learning is supported by an unusually wide range of resources. Long lessons are effectively broken up into carefully timed segments in which a rich variety of activities and materials are deployed. In one GCE A-level German class, the teacher acquainted students with Hundertwasser's architecture and ecological ideas using a well-chosen variety of books, pamphlets, magazine articles and a short film. The students then enjoyed formulating a range of convincing arguments for and against Hundertwasser's work and views in reasonably fluent German. A few lower attaining students, however, were still prone to basic grammatical errors.

127. Insufficient attention is paid to correcting basic errors, particularly early on in the GCE AS programme. The aftermath of this is clearly evident in the work of lower attaining students at GCE A level where these errors still persist.

128. Teachers are becoming adept at catering for the learning needs at both ends of the ability range and offer one-to-one support at every opportunity. They monitor work in pairs and groups very closely. More attention needs to be paid to introducing new words in a meaningful context to enable students to practise correct usage and to assist retention. Some students need to be encouraged to respond to questions at more than minimal length.

129. Enrichment opportunities are good. Study trips take place to Lille and Berlin and an exchange with Gijon has also been organised. Three foreign language assistants hold conversation sessions to improve speaking and listening skills. They also support the teacher in some lessons, where appropriate.

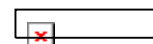
130. Teachers, whether part time or full time, are well qualified and experienced. The department has a very busy and active staff development record. The courses attended have kept them abreast of the latest developments. A new full-time member of staff underwent a very thorough and helpful induction programme and was thus well placed to make a good start at the college. There is a good range of technical equipment, including satellite television, and a fully functioning language laboratory which both staff and students enjoy using.

131. Accommodation is more than adequate. The language resources room is particularly valuable. Unfortunately, there is no access for users of wheelchairs.

Leadership and management

132. Considerable success has been made in raising achievement at GCE A level. The challenge now is to adopt a strategy to obtain the same degree of improvement between GCSE and GCE AS. There is much good practice, but it is not always shared. There is no regular observation of each other by teachers. The day-to-day running of the department is smooth and efficient. An excellent team spirit has been forged. The department makes very good use of its wide range of resources.

English



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good results in GCE A-level English language
- good management and monitoring of coursework assignments
- good improvement in all pass and retention rates in 2002.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on most level 3 courses in 2000/01
- low results of students in GCE A-level literature from 1998 to 2001 compared with those predicted
- low percentage of high grades on level 3 courses 1998 to 2001

- some ineffective management and co-ordination procedures.

Scope of provision

133. The area inspected encompassed GCE AS and A-level courses in English language and in English literature and GCSE courses in English. Overall provision caters for approximately 440 learners almost all of whom are full-time students aged 16 to 19; 80% of the advanced level English students are females.

134. The curriculum is narrow. There are no discrete, part-time courses in English and no access courses involving English studies. There are no arrangements to accommodate pupils under 16 nor supplementary classes for students whose first language is not English. There were only 78 GCE A-level English examination candidates in 2002 compared with 202 in 2001. Approximately 49% of GCE AS English students in 2001 continued with the subject to GCE A level the following year. GCE AS and A-level language and literature courses have been discontinued.

Achievement and standards

135. The achievement, retention and high grades in all English courses in 2002 were a significant improvement on the previous year's poor overall results. Pass rates in GCE A-level English language have been consistently good over the past three years, but none of the English courses had achieved a good percentage of higher grades until 2002 and the results of English literature candidates, compared with their projected performance based on GCSE scores, are disappointing. Similarly, overall retention rates have been poor until 2002. GCSE English results have been sound over the past four years except in 2001.

136. The standard of work is generally good. Students have a positive attitude to their studies and participate relevantly in discussion. The quality of their coursework is particularly good. Many of the assignments they had chosen to study were demanding and original. Students in all courses reach a good standard of close analysis of literary texts or language usage. In GCE AS and A-level literature classes, students showed confidence and skill in reading Shakespeare aloud, but public reading in GCSE courses was avoided.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	200	93	99
		% retention	72	63	78
		% pass rate	71	44	53
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	43	34	14
		% retention	81	62	100
		% pass rate	89	86	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	91	101	34
		% retention	87	84	100
		% pass rate	91	92	97
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	42	67	30
		% retention	79	81	93

		% pass rate	100	94	100
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Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002).

Quality of education and training

137. Most of the teaching observed by inspectors was good or satisfactory; a small amount was less than satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and know their students and their subjects well. They readily give praise and encouragement. Much appropriate guidance is given, especially regarding the preparation of coursework. Course reviews indicate that students greatly appreciate this additional support.

138. A central characteristic of the teaching in all the courses is the good quality of close analysis, both of texts and of language usage. The teachers are skilled in guiding students to read to deeper levels. In the literature lessons, the students' develop understanding of underlying technical and thematic significance and learn what makes a piece of writing 'work'. In language classes, there is close focus on purpose, audience and function, and students successfully explore how different language usage might be classified.

139. The best lessons were those which had clearly defined learning goals and carefully designed activities which addressed those objectives. Lesson plan forms are flawed by the omission of timings, but in the more productive lessons there was no wastage of time. Examples of such successful teaching were not confined to a specific course, level or topic. A new GCE AS literature group was given a lesson on how to write an essay, but this potentially quite tedious or mechanical subject was made both immensely enjoyable and instructive by the precision and intelligence of the activities set. In another lesson, second-year literature students were set the demanding task of assessing contrasting interpretations of Iago's character in *Othello*. In a GCSE lesson, students embarking on the analysis of a short story were guided through several short exercises and examples that demonstrated to them what constitutes informed, well-evidenced critical appreciation. In most of these lessons, the skills learned were related explicitly to assessment objectives set out in the specification and displayed on the wall. Another fine lesson on language classification concluded with the students having to record briefly, but exactly, what they had learnt in the lesson.

140. In the less productive lessons, the objectives and activities are not related to specific learning goals. Planning is too generalised and time is wasted. There is a too ready recourse to splitting into groups of five or so students. At best this achieves a relieving sort of variety, an opportunity for students to discuss and for the class to bond. But these are never expressed as aims of the activity in the lesson plans and too often the group work descends into chat with only the bolder students contributing. In the larger classes, the logistics of splitting into groups proved awkward and disruptive and learning momentum was lost. Work in pairs proved much more productive especially when preceded by the students individually working on the set task for a few minutes. In these sessions, all students had something to bring to the discussion with their partners and in one notable instance they had to read aloud to each other from scenes in *Othello*.

141. In the schemes of work and in the lessons observed there was no use of dramatic representation, IT, audiotapes or other 'invention' by which to illuminate the topics and skills being addressed. Large class sizes that make rooms cramped and the relentless pressure and focus on examinations inhibit teaching styles. There is too much narrowing down, with many lessons sharing the exact same lesson plan, materials and format. The schemes of work are insufficiently detailed and are not used by the teaching teams as a means by which they might address and record collectively and imaginatively issues of teaching method.

142. Marking of written work is generally accurate, supportive and prompt. The major task of internally managing and monitoring the large coursework entry for GCSE and GCE AS and A-level English courses is rigorously and efficiently conducted. Moderators' reports are very complimentary and rarely are grades changed.

143. There are good stocks of novels, texts, literary criticism, periodicals and videos in the library

and good communications ensure that stocks are adjusted to meet the changes in syllabus and set text each year. Rooms are sometimes uncomfortably cramped and stuffy. Wall displays are adequate, but there is no advertisement of English studies in the corridors.

Leadership and management

144. The management structure has two staff sharing the one post of responsibility for advanced English courses and another taking charge of intermediate programmes. These three programme team leaders are responsible to a programme manager who among other tasks controls staffing and timetabling. The structure has realised an increasingly unified English team in which all staff assume teaching responsibilities in at least two courses or levels. The single common room facilitates curriculum dialogue and administrative communication.

145. The team is keen to improve its performance, but some quality and strategic issues are not adequately monitored or addressed in the self-assessment reports. The English curriculum offer is narrow and declining. The provision for weak level 2 English students in 2001/02 was limited to one key skills communications lesson each week. The much improved blocking of GCSE English courses this year has been impaired by other timetabling anomalies. Though there is a sound structure for the lesson observations of staff, the profile last year did not encompass all courses and none of the six observations were of level 2 provision. There is no system for teachers to observe each other or strategic planning to identify good practice within the team and in other institutions. The precise technical training needs regarding the use of ILT are not clearly defined.

146. The meeting system is generally very effective though more time is needed to address some of the curricular and pedagogic issues listed above. Minutes, record keeping, file organisation and general administration are good. Part-time staff are fully informed and student representatives from each class are involved in course review meetings with staff.

147. The introduction of Curriculum 2000 represented a major demand on the staff partly because there was no existing experience of GCE AS or modular delivery. The overall results in 2001 were disappointing. However, achievements in 2002 were very promising.

Part D: College data

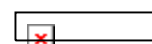
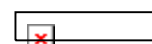


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18	19+
1	0	38
2	38	40
3	62	20
4/5	0	0
Other	0	2
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	1,823	55	28
Agriculture	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering	35	0	1
Business	245	694	14
Hotel and catering	141	1	2
Health and community care	55	11	1
Art and design	536	21	8
Humanities	2,978	98	46
Basic education	0	19	0
Total	5,813	899	100
Source: Provided by the college in 2002			

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1998/ 99	1999/ 2000	2000/ 01	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000	2000/ 01
1	Starters excluding transfers	12	10	18	35	11	12
	Retention rate (%)	75	40	50	74	100	83
	National average (%)	80	81	83	70	74	74
	Pass rate (%)	0	50	0	85	91	80
	National average (%)	62	70	66	61	65	66
2	Starters excluding transfers	373	994	490	31	47	105
	Retention rate (%)	81	85	69	77	77	56
	National average (%)	80	81	81	71	75	74

	Pass rate (%)	83	56	82	71	72	54
	National average (%)	81	79	83	68	68	67
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,024	1,850	3,673	101	39	108
	Retention rate (%)	74	79	81	62	79	54
	National average (%)	78	80	84	65	70	71
	Pass rate (%)	86	87	87	62	68	52
	National average (%)	85	85	85	61	63	66

Note: Summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary or sixth form colleges).

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/00: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

2. College rates for 1997/98 - 1998/99: Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/00: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

3. College rates for 1999/00: provided by the college in spring 2002.

Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	68	27	5	123
Level 2 (intermediate)	57	30	13	23
Level 1 (foundation)*	83	17	0	6
Other sessions	0	0	0	0
Totals	67	27	6	152

** this represents 19+ and adult and community provision*

