



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## John Leggott Sixth Form College

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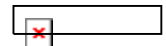
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**Basic information about the college**



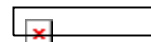
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Name of college:	John Leggott
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	David Linnell
Address of college:	West Common Area Scunthorpe DN17 1DS
Telephone number:	01724 282 998
Fax number:	01724 281 631
Chair of governors:	Lady Margaret Mason
Unique reference number:	130588
Name of reporting inspector:	Gill Reay HMI
Date of inspection:	30 September - 4 October 2002

**Part A: Summary**

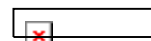


## Information about the college



John Leggott Sixth Form College was established in 1968 following post-16 re-organisation in North Lincolnshire by the Local Education Authority (LEA). Beacon and accredited status were awarded in 1999. The college is located to the west of Scunthorpe in North Lincolnshire, which has a population of 152,423 in a predominantly rural setting. The economy of North Lincolnshire is largely manufacturing (41%): metal products, furniture, chemicals, electronics and food. The college offers 38 subjects at General Certificate of Education Advanced level and Advanced Subsidiary (GCE A level and GCE AS), 12 at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), six for the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE), five for the intermediate General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), one GNVQ foundation programme, and 1 entry level programme. In addition, there is significant part-time provision for adults. During 2001/02, 1,652 full-time students aged 16 to 18, and 966 part-time adult students were enrolled at the college. The gender balance was 42% male and 58% female, with 14.7% of minority ethnic origin. The college's mission is "to be a centre of excellence for 16-19 year old students".

## How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of the provision to be outstanding. Out of ten curriculum areas, four were outstanding: science, business studies, humanities (psychology, sociology, religious studies and philosophy), and humanities (history, geography and politics). Four were good: mathematics, sport sciences, performing arts and media, English and modern foreign languages and two were satisfactory: fine art and design, and information and communication technology (ICT).

### **Key strengths**

- high pass rates
- much excellent teaching
- highly motivated students and staff
- high standards of students' work
- very good support for students

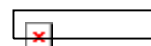
- very good integration of ICT in the curriculum
- outstanding contribution by governors
- outstanding leadership and management.

***What should be improved***

- pass and retention rates on GCSE programmes
- overcrowded classrooms
- co-ordination of college information systems (CIS)
- monitoring of equal opportunities.

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**



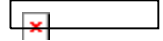
*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	<b>Outstanding.</b> Pass rates on many courses are excellent but are low in GCSE chemistry. Retention rates at least match the national averages and in many cases are better: some teaching is excellent; none of it is below satisfactory and a very high proportion is good or

	better. Very effective use is made of ICT both as a teaching tool and to assist learning. The curriculum area is well managed and students from a variety of backgrounds and ethnic groups are well integrated.
Mathematics	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is very good. A high proportion of students take mathematics and progress to higher education (HE). The department is well managed, and students are well supported and highly motivated. Pass rates are low for one-year GCSE students.
Business studies	<b>Outstanding.</b> There are excellent pass rates and many students achieve at levels higher than predicted. Teaching is very good with a substantial proportion of outstanding lessons. The excellent use of resources and feedback on assessment helps students to improve. Business studies staff work effectively as a team and courses are well managed.
Information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The teaching of basic concepts is good. Students use the Internet with confidence but are largely passive and unresponsive in lessons. Part-time ICT courses have high pass rates, but success in the new GCE AS ICT course is poor. The computer network is fast and modern but insufficient use is made of the college intranet as a teaching resource.
Sport science, leisure and tourism and physical education	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates in level 3 courses are excellent. Good teaching integrates ICT, key skills and use of resources. Ineffective conclusions to lessons do not support learning. There is good programme management and well qualified staff.
Fine art, photography and design and technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is effective to individual students, with careful monitoring of progress, but a low proportion of students achieve high grades. The pass rate is high in GCE A-level design and technology. Students' work in design and technology and photography links theory and practice together well. There is insufficient development and use of observational work in fine art, and one art studio is too small and restricts the scope of work.
Performing arts and media	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates on most courses are good, with a high proportion of students achieving high grades. Retention and pass rates on GCE AS music technology are poor. A well-qualified teaching team plans lessons effectively; students and staff make good use of ICT. There is some cramped accommodation and pressure on specialist resources. Students benefit from a broad range of enrichment opportunities.
Humanities: psychology, sociology, religious studies and philosophy	<b>Outstanding.</b> There are very good pass and retention rates on most courses and high added value scores at GCE A level. Good to outstanding teaching is effective and skilful. Well-motivated students develop good skills in analysis, critical evaluation, the use of knowledge and can communicate effectively with each other in group exercises. Courses are well managed and there is a developing culture of self-assessment within a common aim to improve the quality of provision.
Humanities: history, geography and politics	<b>Outstanding.</b> GCE A-level pass rates are excellent and represent added value for students. There is much excellent and very good teaching based on a student centred approach which helps students develop excellent critical and analytical skills. ICT is used effectively in lessons to enhance learning. Subjects are efficiently organised and managed.
English and modern foreign languages	<b>Good.</b> There is much effective teaching and learning, with effective support for students, who participate well in most classes. The curriculum area, which provides an extensive range of level 3 options, is managed very well, with efficient course administration and good teamwork. Teachers make very good use of excellent resources,

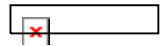
	including ICT. There is low recruitment on GCSE modern language courses, low retention rates in GCE A-level Spanish and low pass rates in GCE AS English and GCE AS German.
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### How well is the college led and managed?



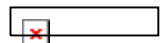
Leadership and management of the college are outstanding. An extensive building programme is managed effectively. High pass rates have been maintained and retention has improved. Senior management has been restructured and some improvements have been made to the tutorial system since the last inspection. There is strong and supportive leadership. Quality assurance is effective and incorporated into planning. Self-assessment is rigorous and outcomes are consistent with those reported by inspectors. Curriculum management is effective. Teaching and learning are very good. Governors demonstrate exceptional commitment to the college and oversee its strategic direction and performance. College staff and governors share a good understanding of the college's strategic direction. The college is in a strong financial position and provides very good value for money. It recognises the need for better monitoring of equal opportunities and for further improvements in information systems.

### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



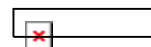
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Monitoring by gender is effective, although there is a gender imbalance. The monitoring of ethnicity is underdeveloped. The college has a comprehensive race equality policy and an action plan with clear responsibilities and time scales, but awareness of the policy by staff and students is low. Good liaison with external agencies ensures appropriate support is available. There are strong links with the Connexions service and with the North Lincolnshire psychological service. Staff development is effective and meets the needs of adults returning to learning. Good links with feeder schools ensure individual needs are identified prior to enrolment. An individual learning plan is regularly reviewed and updated. Teaching staff receive guidance to support effectively individual students. Ramps and specialist equipment allow access to most buildings on site. Access to a 1960s block is limited, although a stair lift is available. The block is due for refurbishment by 2004. Specialist equipment is good.

### How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students and trainees have good support and guidance. The induction process is thorough and support from subject tutors, the college chaplain and careers centre is effective and valued by students. The quality of information and guidance on progression to HE is good. Partnerships with Connexions provide good careers education and guidance. Group tutorials are less effective than one-to-one support and planned learning outcomes were not systematically checked. Adult and part-time students are able to request meetings with a tutor and are encouraged to identify their own learning needs. There is a specialist team of learning support staff who provide good support for referred students identified with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Parents are kept well informed by information evenings and consultations with tutors, as well as receiving progress reports and general newsletters.

## Students' views of the college



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

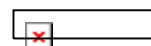
### *What students like about the college*

- comprehensive pre-course advice and guidance
- supportive friendly staff with high expectations
- teacher feedback giving guidance for improvement
- good accommodation and resources.

### *What they feel could be improved*

- overcrowding in open access information technology (IT) rooms at peak times
- overcrowding in the canteen at peak times
- teaching rooms cramped
- lack of enrichment activity in subjects.

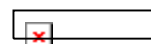
## Other information



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once

it to the local Learning and Skills Council (local LSC). 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 local LSC. The local LSC 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

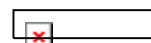


### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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 (all ages)	81	15	4
Learning 16-18 (all ages)	79	17	4

*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).*

### Achievement and standards



#### 16 to 18 year olds

1. John Leggott College provides GCE AS/A-level courses in 38 subjects and GCSE in 12 subjects. There are six courses leading to the AVCEs, five intermediate GNVQs, one foundation GNVQ programme and one entry level programme. The college also provides significant part-time provision for adults, although at the time of inspection most adult courses had not yet started.

2. Students between the ages of 16 and 18 taking advanced courses account for 87% of the provision. Their performance in GCE A-level examinations is outstanding. Over 98.5% of students passed at GCE A level in 2002, with 47% achieving grades A to B. Pass rates of 100% were achieved in 21 subjects. The results achieved in examinations are well above the average for sixth forms. Most students achieve better results than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. Analysis of these added value data shows positive residuals in most subjects and a year on year increase for the last three years.

3. Similarly, pass rates for students taking 12 unit AVCEs is outstanding at 98.9%, with 43.2% achieving grades AA to BB. Five subjects had a pass rate of 100%. The pass rate on GNVQ intermediate business is also outstanding, reaching 100% for the third successive year.

4. Pass and retention rates at level 1 were declining between 1998 and 2000, but there has been a



significant improvement in 2002. At level 2 in the same period, most retention and pass rates were at or just below the national averages for all sixth form colleges. However, GCSE courses in chemistry, one-year mathematics, biology and Spanish had declining A\*-C pass rates in 2002. Retention rates in GCSE mathematics, science and year one AVCE in business are low. Also retention and pass rates on GCE AS music technology are poor. Overall attendance is good, average attendance for the inspection week was 88%. Attendance in GCSE classes is significantly lower than in GCE AS/A-level lessons.

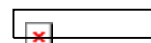
5. Students display good motivation to work and make clear progress towards fulfilling their potential. They develop a broad range of analytical and practical skills. In media, for example, students work creatively and autonomously, and in science they carry out practical work to a high standard, using scientific equipment confidently and accurately. Students' course work is of a high standard.

6. Rates of progression to HE are high: in 2001/02, 76% of students progressed to HE. The college has an excellent programme aimed at helping students gain entrance to Oxford and Cambridge Universities; for example, 20 students gained places in 2002. There are also many achievements in a wide range of sporting activities in football, rugby, hockey, netball, cross country, golf, trampolining and table tennis. The college reached the national finals of the British Colleges Sport Awards in 2001.

### **Adult Learners**

7. Since the last inspection in 1998, there has been an expansion of part-time courses for adults. There were 594 enrolments funded by the LLSC in 2001/02. The majority of enrolments were at levels 1 and 2 in ICT and modern foreign languages; 181 students take Open College accreditation on modern foreign language courses. Students are able to progress from level 1 to more advanced levels. Pass rates on short courses in computing have been above national averages for the last three years. Some GCE AS/A-level courses have low pass and retention rates. Good standards of work are achieved in GCE AS art and design. The Saturday College in 2000/01 showed increased retention, but pass rates often reflect adult students' desire to gain experience rather than participate in formal assessment processes.

### **Quality of education and training**



8. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded in 192 sessions. Teaching was good or better in 81% of lessons, satisfactory in 15% and less than satisfactory in 4%. The figures for learning were similar.

9. Teachers are very experienced; have good qualifications and show considerable enthusiasm in their teaching. They use these attributes well in designing interesting lessons and motivating students. Students value the high expectations which their teachers have of them. They make good progress in most subjects and have high added value. In some subjects this progress is outstanding. Lessons and schemes of work are well planned. Lessons have clear objectives which are shared with the students. Teachers make good links with what has been learnt previously. There is a sharp focus on the requirements of external examinations. In most subjects, students participate in a good variety of practical activities and in discussion to reinforce their learning. Teachers monitor the progress of individual students well during these activities. In whole-group teaching the checking of students' understanding is not so effective. Too many questions are answered by a small number of more able or articulate students. The college has recently begun to assess the preferred learning styles of new students. Many teachers make good use of this information in planning their lessons. Homework and project work are set regularly and returned promptly. Work is thoroughly marked with good indications of how learners can improve. Students receive good individual support from tutors both within classes and outside.

10. Many teachers make excellent use of ICT particularly in science, business studies, humanities, performing arts and media. In many subjects, students make good use of the Internet and college intranet for research as part of homework, and use computers to prepare written work. Teaching materials are of good quality. They include a range of comprehensive study guides prepared by staff. The use of these guides alongside other learning activities successfully promotes independent learning. In a minority of classes, students are not given sufficient opportunity to work together or take responsibility for organising their own learning.

11. Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. All staff undertake planned career and professional development linked closely to changes in the curriculum. The college has recently upgraded the capacity and efficiency of the networked computer system across the college. All staff and students have an e-mail address. Every department has space on the developing college website to support learning. Investment in interactive whiteboards provides good opportunities for information learning technology (ILT) to be used in most classrooms. Staff development linked to the new technology has been strengthened by the appointment of ILT champions in each teaching department. A well-used computer centre provides space for teaching and drop-in facilities for individual students. There is heavy demand for this facility at peak times. Additional computers with appropriate specialist software are available in most departments to extend the teaching of specialist subjects.

12. There are very good specialist resources in all curriculum areas. The library is well stocked with a range of current texts to meet the needs of the curriculum. Students use the facility well to undertake quiet study or read one of the many daily newspapers or periodicals available. There are close links between teaching and library staff who collate information into topic files to support project work. Arrangements with the local college of further education provide a cost-effective way to reproduce material in colour.

13. The campus is well maintained with accommodation of a high standard. The social areas become overcrowded at peak times. Access to the upper floors of a 1960s building containing sciences and art and design, is restricted for students with limited mobility. The college has taken steps to ensure that such students are able to take these subjects elsewhere in the building. The block is due to be refurbished by 2004. A small proportion of rooms are cramped, restricting the range of learning activities which can be used successfully.

14. The college carries out a thorough assessment of each student's potential attainment and support needs when they join the college. GCSE grades are used well to set challenging individual targets. Diagnostic testing during induction and the early weeks of term is used to identify preferred individual learning styles. Teaching staff use the outcomes to ensure that teaching and assessment reflect the range of styles to be found in each group.

15. An early review of progress is used well to confirm the appropriate level of study and choice of course. Regular tutorials and an effective twice-yearly review are then used to monitor progress of full-time students. Individual targets are reviewed to ensure students are maximising their potential. A standard individual student record is used to note a student's achievement and to produce action plans where necessary. Parents receive regular feedback through parents' evenings and copies of the twice-yearly individual reviews.

16. Assessment as part of teaching is well planned and rigorous. Regular formal moderation of student work is carried out satisfactorily in line with awarding body requirements. Informal cross-checking of assessed work is to be found across all departments including adult part-time programmes. Work is clearly marked with written comments by the teacher designed to assist continuous improvement. Homework is frequently set, marked and quickly returned in line with college homework and marking policies.

17. There is a wide range of level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18. A small number of students complete foundation qualifications and some progress well to other college courses. Students aged 16 to 18 who meet entry requirements for level 3 are able to study their first choice subject combinations and to choose an appropriate extension activity from a wide range. All full-time students are required to participate in extension studies. The college has also developed a

programme of part-time and short course provision for adults, particularly during evenings and on Saturday. This includes courses in ICT, languages, leisure and creative studies. There is a small off-site provision taught in a number of local schools.

18. The college has a clear policy on the teaching of key skills. All full-time level 3 students have the opportunity to gain an external award for one key skill at level 3 and any of the three key skills at level 2. All GCE AS, A2 and AVCE courses are expected to provide opportunities for students to develop the skills of either communication or application of number at level 3 within their schemes of work. In many subjects, good opportunities are provided to develop these skills. As well as incorporating them in lesson plans, many teachers have prepared additional extensive subject-based assignments which students undertake between their GCE AS and A2 courses. In 2001, 45% of full-time students on level 3 courses achieved key skills ICT level 3.

19. There are good links with local businesses to support the curriculum. Business studies students are able to benefit by participating in the Young Enterprise scheme, while two chemistry students have been accepted on to an industry run summer link scheme leisure and tourism students have participated in organising primary school sports days and events for disabled members of the local community as part of their course.

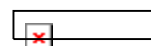
20. The college has developed extensive and successful links with local schools. A specialist team of college staff provides information and guidance during visits to the schools. Information on the college and its courses is available in a variety of formats including prospectus, CD-ROMs, website and video presentations. Places are offered to applicants on the basis of clear entry requirements. These are intended to extend participation to all those likely to succeed. A carefully designed induction programme enables students to settle in quickly and review their initial choice of courses.

21. The college provides an initial assessment of support needs in literacy and numeracy for all full-time students on foundation and intermediate programmes. This is also offered to other full-time students who score below an average of 4.7 GCSE points. Those identified as requiring additional support receive help as part of foundation classes or are encouraged to attend individual tuition sessions. Attendance at these sessions is voluntary. Links between the learning support team and subject teachers are under-developed. Some good support is given to international students. No clear strategy is in place to improve the availability of additional support or to co-ordinate and analyse the effectiveness of the various forms of help students currently receive.

22. Students value very highly the personal support they receive, particularly from subject tutors and the college chaplain. There is excellent support, information and guidance for students wanting to progress to HE. This is provided by college staff in partnership with the Connexions service. A careers centre provides a good focus for this activity. Advice is also given to students wanting to explore other options when their course is completed.

23. The college has recently introduced a common tutorial framework. Personal tutors have received some initial training in its use. In addition to attending formal group sessions with their personal tutors, students have regular individual interviews. Initial indications show that students value the individual sessions but find group meetings less productive. Information on attendance is collected electronically and quickly fed back to subject and personal tutors. Any absence patterns causing concern are quickly acted upon. Technical difficulties have limited the full impact of this system. Parents of 16-18 year olds are kept well informed by a process of information evenings and consultations with tutors as well as receiving progress reports and general newsletters. Adult students also have access to trained tutorial staff.

## Leadership and management



full-time students has increased and the college has made significant investment in the buildings to accommodate this growth and to meet the demands of Curriculum 2000. Pass rates have been maintained at high levels and students achieve well compared to their previous qualifications. Senior management has been effectively restructured, and roles and lines of communication are clear. There have been some improvements made to the tutorial system.

25. The college's mission to be a centre of excellence providing many high quality educational opportunities and the high priority given to 16-18 year olds are widely understood. Staff and governors share this common aim. The mission is regularly reviewed within the planning cycle. The principal and senior management team demonstrate strong leadership, which contributes significantly to the maintenance of high standards of achievement. The curriculum is well managed and teaching and learning are very effective. There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability, which support effective communications. The staff fully understand the college priorities and use them in action planning, course review and evaluation. Teamwork is good and there is a strong focus on quality improvement and teaching and learning. Senior managers set demanding targets for student retention, achievement and progression, many of which are above sector averages. They evaluate thoroughly the extent to which targets are achieved. Curriculum managers are provided with comprehensive, timely, and mostly accurate information to enable them to monitor progress.

26. Quality assurance processes are well established, comprehensive and effective in securing improvement. Self-assessment grades for the curriculum show a high degree of consistency with those reported by the inspectors. All staff are involved in self-assessment and the process is thorough and rigorous. Amongst all categories of staff there is a commitment to continuous improvement and strong support for the quality assurance framework. In the curriculum, there is a strong focus on improvements in student retention and achievement, and in teaching and learning. The analysis of performance data, including added value information, is effective in identifying areas for improvement. Lesson observations are also analysed for strengths and weaknesses. There are many examples of effective action being taken as a result of reviews, and in some cases, the improvement in achievement has been significant. In a small number of departments, lesson observations or data analysis do not lead to clearly measurable targets for improvement. There are very effective systems for gathering views from students, parents and staff, and for taking appropriate action. Survey reports, and subsequent actions, are closely monitored by the quality committee, the executive and the governors.

27. Staff development and appraisal are good. New staff benefit from a structured, comprehensive induction that provides an effective introduction to the college, its systems and values. A new appraisal system for curriculum staff uses the outcomes from lesson observations to inform target setting and action plans. As a result of the appraisals, curriculum managers are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of individuals. The schedule of appraisals for curriculum staff is on target, although not all appraisals for support staff have been completed on time.

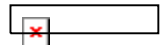
28. The college has produced a thorough equal opportunities policy that is widely publicised to students and staff. There is strong commitment to equal opportunities at all managerial levels, and this is exemplified by the effective monitoring that occurs at college level of student enrolments and achievements by gender and ethnicity. Curriculum areas also analyse performance data by gender, but not yet by ethnicity. The college recognises that managers will need to review the collection of data to meet the requirements of its race relations policy. Staff and students' awareness of the race relations policy, and their role in ensuring it is carried out, is low. Many curriculum areas have set targets for improvements in their approach to teaching to take account of the needs of different learners. There is a system for complaints, but these are not systematically recorded.

29. Governors have made an outstanding contribution to the development of the college. Their knowledge of the key issues facing the college is thorough. Governors monitor the performance of the college closely and have a strong interest in the success and welfare of the students. The work of governors in supporting improvement has been very effective. They have a good awareness of areas that are under performing and monitor progress effectively against targets for improvement. Governors are clear about their strategic role and have used their expertise well to give good support to the college in, for example, the areas of personnel and estates management. The

corporation performs its strategic role well and appropriately delegates powers to committees. The corporation also monitors its own performance well.

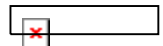
30. The college gives very good value for money. It sets and meets challenging targets for student recruitment and achievement. Pass rates on many courses are very high. Students achieve well compared with their previous qualifications in many subjects, and although there are a few areas that under perform, the number is declining. Resources are used well although inappropriate allocation of rooms causes a small minority of lessons to be less effective. There have been protracted problems with information systems that have caused some disruption and instability to key information sources. Management have taken some action but it is recognised that more work will be required to ensure that the needs of the college are met. Average class sizes are high. Since the last inspection, the college has effectively introduced Curriculum 2000, offering students a wide range of opportunities to broaden and enrich their studies. Amongst students and parents there are high levels of satisfaction with the provision made by the college.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



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#### Science



Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

#### **Strengths**

- excellent teaching
- excellent, well-used ICT resources
- excellent retention and pass rates at GCE A level in 2002
- excellent retention and pass rate in GCE AS geology
- good performance by students in lessons
- well-managed and well-organised science provision.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention in GCSE subjects and a poor pass rate in GCSE chemistry.

### **Scope of provision**

31. Science provision is for 16-19 year old students with the exception of a GCSE biology class that runs in the evening. Over 88% of the work is at level 3. There is a wide range of GCE AS and A-level subjects covering biology, chemistry, geology, physics and electronics. The college is successful in recruiting students to science subjects, partly as a consequence of its high reputation in the area and nationally. The remainder of the provision is at GCSE level. There is no vocational provision and one course for adults.

### **Achievement and standards**

32. In 2002, retention rates at GCE A level were excellent. All chemistry and geology students completed the course and none of the subjects had retention rates below 97%. In the same year, the retention rates for GCE AS were good. Retention rates on GCSE courses were below the national average. The attendance in GCE AS/A-level lessons was high at 94%, whereas in GCSE lessons this fell to 75%.

33. There are excellent pass rates in science subjects. Out of 218 students on science GCE A-level courses in 2001, only 4 students did not achieve a pass grade. In geology, only 3 students out of 104 have failed the course in the last 3 years. The GCE AS results in geology are similar, with only 2 out of 123 students failing to achieve a pass grade over the same period. The results in electronics are also very good, with a 95% pass rate in 2002. Most of the students studying these subjects achieve better than predicted from their GCSE scores on entry. There are poor and declining pass rates in GCSE chemistry. In 2002, only 4 students out of 18 who started the course achieved better than a grade D.

34. There are many examples of excellent results achieved by individual students in 2002. For example, one student gained the top mark nationally in Salters chemistry GCE A level and five others were amongst the top five in their subject. A biology student won a gold medal in the prestigious biology Olympiad. Students perform well in lessons and in the set work. Students' practical skills are at least at the level expected for the stage of the course. Many students are eager to learn and well organised. They demonstrate a good use of technical language and an understanding of scientific terms. International students have some difficulty with communication in lessons. However, they are successful at the end of courses as a consequence of the caring support given to them.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GCSE chemistry	2	No. of starts	28	15	18
		% retention	61	73	83
		% pass rate	65	45	27
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	*	79	77
		% retention	*	81	99

		% pass rate	*	100	99
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	16	122	92
		% retention**	81	88	87
		% pass rate	31	90	84
GCE AS geology	3	No. of starts	12	51	60
		% retention**	64	98	97
		% pass rate	100	100	97
GCE AS electronics	3	No. of starts	13	34	52
		% retention**	85	94	85
		% pass rate	82	94	95
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	101	94	100
		% retention	81	58	97
		% pass rate	69	83	99

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* data unreliable

\*\*retention rates for 2002 GCE AS/A2 level courses are in-year retention, whereas GCE A level relates to two years

### **Quality of education and training**

35. The teaching of science is excellent. Much of this is enthusiastic and maintains students' interest. The lessons are very well planned and organised. Schemes of work for each subject are well written and regularly reviewed. An appropriate variety of activities is used. There is skilled, up-to-date use of ICT. Teachers often use simulations downloaded from the Internet to clarify difficult concepts or to show real life applications of what is learnt in lessons. In one GCE AS physics lesson the teacher used a simulation of a laser reading information from a CD. This approach clarified the topic and led to discussion about the accuracy of the simulation. A large number of lessons start with theory and move into effective practical work.

36. Staff are very well qualified and experienced. Many are external examiners. The science laboratories provide a stimulating learning environment with excellent wall displays. The IT facilities are excellent, all laboratories have Internet-linked data projectors and some have interactive whiteboards. There are sufficient network-linked computers for class use. The college intranet and website provide good learning materials such as revision guides, practice worksheets, simulations and links to science websites.

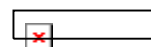
37. Students are given good initial guidance and very good subject-specific help through informal tutorial sessions and formal revision classes. Students value the help freely given to them by teachers.

38. There are effective assessment policies and guidelines. Students are assessed on entry for literacy, numeracy, IT skills and their basic knowledge of the subject. Students' progress is very carefully monitored. Homework, course work and classwork is regularly set, marked carefully with good annotation, and returned promptly. Students are fully aware of the progress they are making. This is checked regularly against the targets set for each of them.

### **Leadership and management**

39. The science curriculum area is led and managed very effectively. There is very careful analysis of data, which is used to measure the students' and department's performance. Results attained by students are analysed for each teaching group. The data are compared to national averages and to the averages of other subjects in the college. This analysis comparison results in college-wide targets that are realistic but challenging. At course level the target setting is not as strong. The attainment of many targets is not easily measurable. However, the performance of the science curriculum area in terms of students' success has been maintained at a high level for many years. In 2002 the department gained the Queen's Anniversary Award for the dissemination of good practice in science. Students from a variety of backgrounds and ethnic groups are well integrated and work effectively together. Equipment is well used. These strengths, along with relatively large group sizes and excellent overall pass rates, lead to an efficient use of resources.

## Mathematics



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

### **Strengths**

- very good teaching
- GCE A-level students are well motivated and supported
- good progression to HE
- high proportion of students taking mathematics
- well-led and well-managed department.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rate for one-year GCSE mathematics
- below average retention on GCE A-level mathematics
- limited use of computers to support learning.



### **Scope of provision**

40. The college provides mathematics courses from foundation to advanced levels. Recruitment to mathematics is high; approximately 700 students are currently studying mathematics. Students are normally allowed to take GCE A-level mathematics if they have a grade B in GCSE mathematics. They are able to choose from a wide range of GCE A-level units. A significant number of students, most of whom have GCSE A grades, take GCE A-level further mathematics. The department also supports the teaching of key skills, provides a GCSE evening course, and includes students on the City and Guilds in adult numeracy (levels entry, 1 and 2).

41. Approximately 250 students re-sit GCSE mathematics each year. Intermediate level students with a grade D can re-sit in November following a short intensive revision course, whilst other students re-sit in June. There is no progression route at present for students with a grade C at GCSE but the college is hoping to offer a GCE AS course in the use of mathematics in 2003.

### **Achievement and standards**

42. Overall pass rates are very good. The pass rates at GCE A-level mathematics and further mathematics have been similar to or above the national average over the last three years. Retention rates at GCE A level are good for further mathematics but low for mathematics, prior to the introduction of A2. The proportion of students gaining the higher grades at GCE A level is generally close to the national averages. The pass rate for GCSE students who re-sit in November is good, but the pass rate for one-year students is well below the national average.

43. Most students achieve grades the same or slightly higher than those predicted on the basis of their entry qualifications at GCE A level. Many students on the one-year GCSE fail to improve their grades when they re-sit. In 2002, out of 107 students, only 45% did so.

44. Progression to HE for mathematics is high. Five students are going on to study mathematics-related subjects at Oxford. Attendance in the GCE A-level lessons observed was very good at over 95%, but lower for GCSE at 74%. In most lessons, students were punctual.

45. Students work well in lessons and are interested and attentive. The quality of their work is good. Most students show well-developed mathematical techniques relevant to the level at which they are working.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GCSE mathematics (one year)	2	No. of starts	199	183	173
		% retention	69	83	76
		% pass rate	49	23	26
GCSE mathematics (short)	2	No. of starts	72	96	104
		% retention	99	99	98
		% pass rate	58	59	63
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	204	108	135
		% retention	78	74	97
		% pass rate	86	91	94

GCE A-level further mathematics	3	No. of starts	15	11	19
		% retention	100	91	100
		% pass rate	100	90	100
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	162	267
		% retention	*	96	88
		% pass rate	*	67	82

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* retention rates for 2002 GCE AS/A2 level courses are in-year retention, whereas GCE A level relates to two years

### **Quality of education and training**

46. In mathematics, 80% of teaching is good or better. Staff demonstrate very good subject knowledge and have productive working relationships with their students. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and topics are taught well, giving clear and careful explanations. In weaker lessons, teachers dominate and students are not given sufficient opportunities to contribute. Students make effective use of graphical calculators when working on mathematical functions, but they do not use computers in their lessons. Teachers and students make good use of ICT in presentations. In a good lesson on geometric series, the teacher got students to pace across the classroom, then halve the number of steps each time to introduce convergence and limits.

47. Teachers apply homework and marking policies consistently: they mark work promptly and include solutions and constructive comments. Students' performance, progress and attendance are monitored effectively in two reviews a year. Students in need of extra help are encouraged to follow a specific programme of work in the workshop. There are detailed schemes of work for all courses which, together with solutions to recently set homework, are available to students on the college intranet.

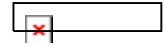
48. The mathematics department runs a successful taster day for new entrants. With well-structured and informative course booklets, this day ensures a smooth transition from school to college. In November 2001, 50 students entered the UK Senior Mathematical Challenge and three students progressed through to round one of the British Mathematics Olympiad, one of whom obtained a prize.

49. Most of the mathematics teaching takes place in a suite of adjacent classrooms. The rooms contain comfortable furniture, whiteboards and interesting poster displays but no examples of students' work. Access to some classrooms involves going through others, which hinders teaching and learning. Students appreciate the support given by experienced staff in the mathematics workshop and the up-to-date textbooks with which they are all supplied. The number of GCSE students who use the workshop is small.

### **Leadership and management**

50. The mathematics department is well organised and led effectively by a head of department who gives a clear sense of purpose and direction. There are regular team meetings and account is taken of students' responses to questionnaires. Appropriate attention is paid to the development of staff by a thorough performance review. Strong emphasis is given to improving the quality of teaching and learning and preparing students for examinations. Courses are reviewed annually and an action plan is produced to improve performance. A strategy has been recently implemented to improve the GCSE pass rates for one-year students, but it is too soon to judge its effectiveness.

## **Business studies**



Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

### ***Strengths***

- very good pass rates
- students achieve better results than predicted
- much excellent teaching which promotes students' learning
- excellent use of resources to support learning
- good use of assessment to help students improve
- well-managed courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor retention on first-year AVCE course.

### ***Scope of provision***

51. The college provides full-time GCE AS and A-level courses, GNVQ intermediate and AVCE courses in business studies for 326 students aged 16 to 18. AVCE courses have replaced advanced GNVQ courses. This year, 101 students have progressed from GCE AS to A2 level. Ten out of 19 students have continued into the second year of the AVCE course. Six part-time adult students are currently enrolled on a GCE AS course in business studies.

### ***Achievement and standards***

52. Pass rates for business studies are very good. The GNVQ intermediate pass rate is outstanding, achieving 100% for the third successive year in 2002. Pass rates for AVCE and GCE A2 are also excellent in 2002. In AVCE and GCE A2 in 2002, many students have exceeded their predicted GCE grade, based on previous grades achieved in the GCSE. Students demonstrate good development

of research, analytical and evaluative skills and their work is of a high standard. In the last two years, students have gained awards in the Young Enterprise scheme. The retention rate on the first-year AVCE course is poor at 55%. The retention rate for GCE AS has declined slightly, dropping to just under the national average.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE AS business studies	2	No. of starts	***	183	174
		% retention**	***	94	86
		% pass rate	***	88	89
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	21	16	19
		% retention	79	88	89
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GNVQ advanced business (2000/01)AVCE business studies 2002	3	No. of starts	21	27	***
		% retention	81	85	***
		% pass rate	100	76	***
GCE A-level business studies (two year) 2000/01	3	No. of starts	168	139	129
		% retention	86	77	98*
		% pass rate	96	98	98
GCE A2 business studies 2002					

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* data unreliable

\*\* retention rates for 2002 GCE AS/A2 level courses are in-year retention whereas GCE A level relates to two years.

\*\*\* data not available

***Quality of education and training***

53. Enthusiastic teaching promotes students' confidence and motivation. Overall teaching was good or better: in a majority of lessons it was outstanding. Schemes of work were well written and lessons were well planned. Excellent use is made of teaching methods to match different learning styles. Good questioning techniques probe and challenge students. There is excellent use of resources to support learning. Teachers use their industrial experience to provide good examples of theory as it is applied in the business world. Students value the comprehensive learning resource packs available, supplied for each topic being studied. The college has excellent links with industry. Visits to local businesses are included in learning programmes and are used as a basis for projects. Guest speakers provide an opportunity for students to explore further particular aspects of business.

54. Excellent use is made of technology in lessons to support learning. Students on the GCE A2 course carried out individual research on different types of legal structures in business. Each student then planned a lesson for the class on the topic. In one lesson, a student gave a lesson on franchising: the lesson was presented confidently and included a good powerpoint presentation. The teacher skilfully reinforced learning in a discussion summarising the lesson.

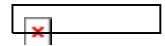
55. Good use of assessment helps students to improve their work. Clear, constructive feedback is promptly given. Most teachers are examiners for awarding bodies and use their experience to keep students well informed about the requirements of the course and how to prepare for coursework and

examinations. Students are set a target grade based on their GCSE results on entry. Students maintain their own progress records and these are monitored regularly against their targets.

### ***Leadership and management***

56. Courses are well managed. Business studies staff work effectively as a team. The comprehensive learning resource packs are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect current business practices. These provide appropriate and stimulating material for students with different learning needs. Regular meetings ensure effective communication between staff. There is good provision for staff development. The department regularly reviews data on students' progress; retention and achievement; and students' opinions are gathered through questionnaires and focus groups. This information is carefully analysed and progress is monitored against targets. Classroom observations are completed regularly and used to inform development plans. All staff contribute to the rigorous self-assessment process and to the development of departmental action plans.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- students confidently use the Internet to support their learning
- good pass rates on some adult computing courses
- much emphasis placed on ensuring the learning of key concepts
- fast, modern, networked computer stations.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass and retention rates on GCE AS ICT 2002
- most students do not participate in lessons
- intranet is underdeveloped as a learning resource

- computer teaching rooms not suited to theory or group work.

### ***Scope of provision***

57. The college offers full-time GCE A-level courses in computing and in ICT. Many part-time ICT courses are offered on evenings and Saturdays through the Continuing Education and Training programme, for example, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), the European computer driving license (ECDL), computers for beginners and a website programming course. Some ICT courses are offered in local 11-16 schools. Students also have the opportunity to study ICT courses such as web page design and computer graphics in the college's enrichment programme. Approximately 250 students are enrolled on full-time courses and 160 part-time courses.

### ***Achievement and standards***

58. In 2002 the pass rate for the full-time GCE A-level computing course was very good at 93%. The GCE AS ICT course, which was offered for the first time in 2001, had a low pass rate of 70%. The college has recognised this and has recently appointed a new member of staff with special responsibility to improve teaching of the course and schemes of work. On part-time courses achievements are generally good. Pass rates on the short CLAIT courses have been above national benchmarks for the last three years.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
CLAIT short	1	No. of starts	493	269	63
		% retention	93	98	85
		% pass rate	85	88	94
IBT II (one year)	2	No. of starts	632	54	88
		% retention	78	72	81
		% pass rate	44	85	72
GCE AS ICT	3	No. of starts	**	**	119
		% retention	**	**	78*
		% pass rate	**	**	70
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	**	106	90
		% retention	**	86	88
		% pass rate	**	91	76
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	52	65	61
		% retention	85	78	93
		% pass rate	82	67	93

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* retention rates for 2002 GCE AS/A2 level courses are in-year retention, whereas GCE A level relates to two years

\*\*course did not run

### **Quality of education and training**

59. Most of the teaching is satisfactory or better. Good quality, clear handouts are used to support learning. Often these are gapped or interactive handouts which students fill in during the lesson and use later as revision aids. In one lesson, students were asked to fill in a handout on how eight different benefits of IT systems were relevant to three specific companies. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced for the subject they teach.

60. Use of the Internet and e-mail is well integrated into lesson plans. Most students are able to use the Internet well for research and for their classroom studies. In one class, students were researching into the biographies of IT company chairmen to determine if they have similar personal characteristics. In another lesson, students were downloading images and information to prepare a presentation which was then e-mailed to the teacher for assessment.

61. Students are able to use standard office programmes effectively, such as spreadsheets and word processors. They understand the use of these programmes in everyday life and in industry, and are able to give examples of their use in business and commerce when asked. In a minority of lessons, students do not have an overview of the tasks they are doing and fail to understand its relevance.

62. Proper emphasis is paid to the teaching and understanding of the basic elements of a topic, which gives students a firm grounding for tackling harder topics later on in the course. This approach is especially relevant for students doing computer programming modules such as Visual Basic. In one lesson, students studied extensively the elements of what makes a good or bad questionnaire before being asked to design one themselves.

63. Teachers do not encourage students enough to participate in lessons. Students are quiet and unresponsive in many lessons and learn passively without challenging themselves or engaging in discourse or debate with each other or with the teacher. They have little opportunity to work in groups. In many lessons the class does not respond to the teacher's questions. Teachers often take answers from the same two or three students or answer the question themselves. In some lessons a proportion of the students are clearly bored and unstimulated. The college has recently installed overhead data projectors in most teaching rooms and teachers are beginning to use these to vary the style of their delivery.

64. The college intranet is underused as a teaching resource. The college has recognised this in its self-assessment report and has started to place revision materials and other resources on the intranet. An IT champion has been appointed to co-ordinate this initiative.

65. Part-time students who wish to study for the ECDL qualification in the evening can do so by using an interactive CD-ROM system. A tutor is on hand to provide extra help and to set up end-of-topic tests when the student is ready.

66. Students' written work and assignments are generally good and show the proper use of computer screen printouts and diagrams to demonstrate points. Some work contains examples of poor use of English, spelling errors and inappropriate use of informal language or colloquialisms, which are usually corrected by the marker. Feedback on students' work and by informal discussions gives clear guidance on how to improve work.

67. Specialist resources for computing and ICT students are very good. Rooms are equipped with fast, networked computer stations running the latest Windows XP operating system. Internet

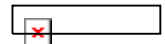
connections are fast and this enables students to use the Internet quickly and easily during lessons. There are four specialist teaching rooms with modern IT specific furniture. The rooms, however, are a little cramped and their design is not conducive to theory lessons or group work, as students can only remain at their workstations and receive information from the teacher at the front of the class.

68. The library has a small but modern stock of suitable texts for computing and ICT students. Appropriate texts are provided for the students in class as required for a particular topic. The library also has a small suite of computers that can access on-line archives such as Guardian on-line and Oxford Reference on-line.

### ***Leadership and management***

69. The department is well managed. Regular meetings generate action plans which are followed through and checked at subsequent meetings. There has been some progress on these plans, for example, the running of compulsory lunchtime sessions for students who have been identified as requiring extra help. Some important issues are still outstanding, for example, the further development of teaching methods which take account of the individual needs of all students.

### **Sport science, leisure and tourism, and physical education**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- most teaching is good or better
- very good retention and achievement at level 3
- very good resources to support learning
- very good integration of ICT and use of the Internet to aid learning
- good integration of key skills in lessons and in coursework
- good leadership and management of well-qualified and experienced staff.

#### ***Weaknesses***



- insufficient checking of learning in many lessons
- overcrowded classrooms in a small number of cases.

### **Scope of provision**

70. The leisure and tourism department offers the GNVQ advanced and intermediate leisure and tourism at level 2, and AVCEs in leisure and recreation and travel and tourism at level 3. The physical education department offers level 3 courses at GCE AS and A-level physical education. Last year, 257 full-time students attended provision for students aged 16 to 18. No adult or work-based learning programmes are available. Both departments offer a number of coaching awards to cross-college students as enrichment.

### **Achievement and standards**

71. Students achieve very good pass rates as a result of effective teaching, good course management and student support.

72. Pass rates improved in GNVQ advanced and GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, both are now higher than national averages. Pass and retention rates in 2002 in AVCE leisure and recreation and travel and tourism; in GCE AS physical education and in GCE A-level physical education were very good. The number of students achieving high grades in GCE A-level physical education in 2002 improved from 26% to 51%, and AVCE high grades were well above sector averages. The section has implemented changes to tutorial and support systems which have proved effective in improving students' performance. Most students achieved additional short vocational qualifications. Students spoke highly of the extra support they receive from staff.

73. The pass and retention rates in GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism have dropped significantly between 2001 and 2002, although they remain equal to and higher than the 2000/01 national average. Action has been taken to reverse this downward trend. There are also considerable individual and team sporting achievements by students in a wide range of regional and national events.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in sport science, leisure and tourism, and physical education, 2000 to 2002**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	32	32	26
		% retention	75	84	76
		% pass rate	95	96	89
AVCE leisure and recreation (start 1999-2000)	3	No. of starts	*	*	16
		% retention	*	*	86
		% pass rate	*	*	100
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	35	39	*
		% retention	74	72	*
		% pass rate	88	93	*

GCE A-level physical education	3	No. of starts	71	79	76
		% retention	83	77	99
		% pass rate	85	82	100
GCE AS physical education	3	No. of starts	*	107	117
		% retention	*	90	88
		% pass rate	*	97	96

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\*course did not run

### **Quality of education and training**

74. Nearly three quarters of lessons were good or better. Lessons are well planned and use a range of resources to support learning. Teachers employ a variety of teaching methods to stimulate learning. Students work diligently and contribute constructively in discussions, and class tasks challenge students and improve learning. In practical physical education lessons, students work responsibly and are clearly focused on developing new skills. Individual needs are identified through one-to-one interaction and effective guidance is given. Students value the expertise, knowledge and vocational relevance of staff and the relationships developed during enrichment activity (for example, sports teams). Work experience is offered to all first-year AVCE students and evidence from this supports achievement. Students are involved with many community events, and links with local organisations and employers provide valuable opportunities for students to develop personal and vocational skills.

75. In the weaker lessons, insufficient time is allowed to summarise key issues and conclude the lesson effectively and in many cases learning is not checked sufficiently to ensure that key concepts are understood. In two lessons teaching was less than satisfactory.

76. Homework is given regularly in GCE AS and A-level physical education and work is marked promptly and returned, clearly indicating areas for improvement. Strict deadlines are set and adhered to. There is close monitoring of assessed work and students' progress is regularly reviewed. Attendance is good and absences are monitored and followed up. Students who miss lessons are given extra support.

77. Sports facilities are very good, providing the opportunity for students to participate in a wide range of sports. All classrooms provide students with access to good learning materials and IT access is very good. Large groups cannot be accommodated in the classroom allocated and in a small number of lessons observed, cramped conditions adversely affected learning. All students have a textbook and may borrow other resources as required.

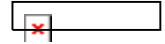
78. Teaching staff are highly qualified and they are very experienced practitioners in the sport or travel profession: they promote good teaching. Staff work very well as a team.

79. Staff maintain positive relationships with local schools and employers, and are instrumental in providing advice to Year 11 school pupils. Students claim that the courses exceed their expectations and are successful in meeting their aspirations. Career and university advice is offered and found useful by students. There are formal channels through which individual needs are identified and dealt with, although students advise that the very supportive staff best deal with this informally and outside the normal timetable.

### **Leadership and management**

80. The area is well managed and strong leadership results in a very effective team. This has impacted positively on teaching and learning and raised achievement. The curriculum area has good quality assurance systems that enable course evaluation to be effective. Senior and middle managers contribute effectively to self-assessment.

### **Fine art, photography and design and technology.**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- effective teaching to individual students
- good retention rates in design and technology
- good student work in photography and design and technology
- close monitoring of students' progress.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient challenge to extend students through group work and questioning
- low pass rates for GCE AS in 2002
- low proportion of students achieving high grades
- insufficient use and development of observational work in art and design
- inadequate accommodation and resources for some art students.

### **Scope of provision**

81. The college offers an appropriate range of courses at GCE A2 and AS for students aged 16 to 18 in art and design, fine art and photography options, design and technology, product design and textiles options. Student numbers in photography have increased this year. Textiles was not included in the inspection.

82. Photography is offered at GCSE, taken in combination with other level 2 courses at the college. A GCE AS evening course in art and design has low recruitment of adult students: in addition, a small number of art classes at entry level and level 1 are held during the day.

### **Achievement and standards**

83. Pass rates are at or just below the national average for GCE A2 and AS art and design (fine art and photography) and GCE AS design and technology. The pass rate for GCE A 2 design and technology in 2002 was 98%, an improvement from previous years. For the last two or three years, students on art and design and GCE AS design technology courses have not achieved the expected proportion of high grades, when compared with their GCSE point scores. There is an improvement in 2002 for GCE AS and A2 art and design. Also, the proportion of students awarded high grades has improved for GCE A2 design and technology to 60%.

84. Retention rates for design and technology are high over the last three years, but in GCE AS art and design in 2002 they fell to 7% below the national average. Small numbers of students follow GCSE photography; in 2002, however, recruitment has significantly improved. Retention rates are erratic, but pass rates are generally above the national average.

85. The college provides a small number of art-related courses for adult students at entry level and level 1, and GCE AS art and design. The majority of adult students who completed the GCE AS course in 2002 achieved high grades. Pass rates are low for level 1 courses.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in fine art, photography and design technology, 2000 to 2002**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GCSE photography	2	No. of starts	25	13	11
		% retention	68	100	36
		% pass rate	71	54	75
GCE AS art and design, fine art, photography options	3	No. of starts	*	144	188
		% retention	*	92	78
		% pass rate	*	90	83
GCE A-level design and technology (2002)	3	No. of starts	33	57	40
		% retention	88	91	100
		% pass rate	76	88	98
GCE AS design and technology	3	No. of starts	*	54	76
		% retention	*	93	86
		% pass rate	*	84	74**
GCE A-level art, fine art	3	No. of starts	42	57	91

studies, GCE A2 art and design - fine art (2002)	% retention	69	77	93
	% pass rate	90	95	96

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* course not running

\*\* includes textiles

### **Quality of education and training**

86. All teaching is good or satisfactory. Teaching to individual students is effective in all subjects. Careful discussions on aesthetics, time management or design problems between student and teacher allows close supervision. In a lively photography lesson, GCE AS students, working on their first practical project, used a theme of geometric shape and form to successfully produce prints and photograms. The teacher managed the darkroom and studio with skill and students were very well motivated. Each student's intention and progress was recorded before and at the end of the lessons. The teacher also recorded the progress of all students during the project. In many lessons, the structure of activities for group or individual teaching and questioning by teachers does not extend all students sufficiently. Students are involved in their own work and the opportunity to debate or to exchange and research ideas outside their immediate area of interest is insufficiently used. All students speak highly of the support they receive from teachers. Extra curricular activities include a range of visits to galleries. Enrichment classes are provided in community art and in the use of computer software. Former students return to show their work as part of the preparation for HE career choices. Students' work is well displayed throughout workshops and studios, and enhances the whole college environment.

87. Design and technology students develop appropriate, good research and analytical skills. Second year students working on a major study had original ideas, many based on their own experiences. A typical example, included the design specification and prototype of an aid to assist arthritic or elderly patients to call for help. Students had drawn their visual ideas for products and some were already confident using IT 'pro desktop' three-dimensional modelling to develop the specification. Fine art students have researched study topics for journals effectively. A study of collage as a medium compared the work of Braque, Hannah Hoch and contemporary artists. In some journals there is insufficient emphasis on the development of observed images awareness of space and balance and annotation is not considered carefully enough.

88. Design and technology workshops, which are well equipped and organised, have an adjacent subject-specific computer area. Photographic resources are good. Accommodation, although crowded at times, has been extended to cater for a large increase in student numbers. Students use the Internet link well for photographic research. First-year art students use an open-plan studio, but accommodation and resources for GCE A2 fine art are inadequate. The room is cluttered and too small, with only 8 tables, despite group sizes being 14. This cramped accommodation restricts the scale of work and the scope of materials used. There is insufficient use and development of observational work in fine art.

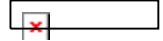
89. In all subjects, students benefit from the use of lunchtime workshops to continue their work or they can use the studios outside their timetabled lessons. Staff are knowledgeable, several have good IT skills relevant to their subjects. Each department has excellent technician support. Course handbooks and comprehensive briefs for each unit of the course keep students informed of what is expected of them.

### **Leadership and management**

90. There is a sense of unity and collaboration within each subject team. Two department heads manage the subjects. Communication with senior management is very good. The new head of art and design has initiated a greater focus on student learning styles and on improved systems for monitoring work and commenting to students on their progress. Each head of department has identified courses where they wish to raise achievement and completed a detailed data analysis.

Strategies such as sharing good practice with partner colleges, learning approaches and subject updating are given priority.

## **Performing arts and media**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates with a high proportion of students achieving high grades
- good or better teaching in three quarters of lessons
- impact of new media technology adds to teaching and learning
- broad range of enrichment opportunities
- well-qualified and experienced staff team.

### ***Weaknesses***

- cramped accommodation and limited access to specialist resources
- poor retention and pass rates in music technology.

### ***Scope of provision***

91. The college offers courses in media and performing arts aimed almost exclusively at the 16-18 age range. This includes GCE AS and A2 in media, dance, music, music technology, drama and theatre studies; AVCE in performing arts and media, and intermediate GNVQ in media. There is no level 2 provision and only limited vocational provision in performing arts. At the time of inspection, 231 students were enrolled on performing arts courses and 322 were on media courses.

### ***Achievement and standards***

92. Pass rates on most courses are good. In 2002, pass rates were 100% in GCE A2 drama and theatre studies, in GCE A2 music, in GNVQ intermediate media, 98% in GCE AS drama and theatre studies and GCE AS media, and 92% in GCE AS dance. The pass rate in GCE AS music technology was, however, significantly below the national average at 63%. Retention rates were 100% in GCE A2 drama and theatre studies, 97% in GCE A2 music, 89% in GCE AS dance and GCE AS media, and 88% in GNVQ intermediate media. The proportion of students achieving high grades was also high with 95% in GCE A2 media, 80% in GCE A2 music, 76% in GCE AS drama and theatre studies, and 74% in GCE AS media. High standards have been maintained; over the last two years GCE A-level media studies has had a pass rate of 100%.

93. The standard of students' work in relation to learning goals is generally high. Students' progress is monitored and reviewed thoroughly. In 2002, a high proportion of students successfully achieved places on leading HE or professional vocational training courses. Curriculum staff dedicate time and resources to preparing interview portfolios, audition pieces and provide advice on career routes. Students are punctual for classes. Attendance at lessons was high at 88%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	10	15	16
		% retention	80	87	88
		% pass rate	63	92	100
GCE AS drama and theatre studies	3	No. of starts	*	39	61
		% retention	*	92	84
		% pass rate	*	100	98
GCE A2 music	3	No. of starts	*	*	32
		% retention	*	*	97
		% pass rate	*	*	100
GCE AS music technology	3	No. of starts	*	27	29
		% retention	*	78	83
		% pass rate	*	86	63
GCE AS dance	3	No. of starts	*	*	28
		% retention	*	*	89
		% pass rate	*	*	92
GNVQ advanced performing arts and entertainment industry	3	No. of starts	10	15	*
		% retention	80	87	*
		% pass rate	88	92	*
GCE A-level media	3	No. of starts	*	119	145
		% retention	*	85	89
		% pass rate	*	100	98
GCE A2 drama and theatre studies	3	No. of starts	*	*	31
		% retention	*	*	100

		% pass rate	*	*	100
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Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* course did not run

### **Quality of education and training**

94. Most teaching and learning is designed to meet the needs and interests of the learners. Schemes of work and lesson plans are good. Staff teams ensure a fully integrated approach to curriculum planning. Schedules are available to students in classrooms and on the website. Most students are highly motivated, feel rewarded by the learning experience and speak highly of the teaching they receive. Staff use a broad range of teaching styles, and encourage students to develop analytical and critical evaluative skills. In performing arts, staff actively encourage experimentation in practical work. There is a clear emphasis on encouraging students to take the initiative with their learning. This approach is effective for many students. For example GCE A2 media students were working creatively and autonomously, using a range of media technology including video, digital photography and website design software to produce high quality and original design concepts. Academic and technical staff are on hand to provide advice and support when required, to extend learning and foster creative and original thinking. However, on occasions, with less experienced first-year students, there is too little teacher input, which results in slow, unfocused progress for the students. Teaching was good or better in 72% of lessons; satisfactory in 14% and unsatisfactory in 14%.

95. Most accommodation for media and performing arts is adequate, with a well-equipped performance space, music and media classrooms and suites for IT, audio and video. LED projectors, video, DVD and laptops are present in media rooms and are fully integrated into the teaching. Some rooms are too small and airless. In particular the huts are too small for practical drama classes and some media classrooms are cramped. In one lesson a student felt ill as a result of the heat and airlessness in the room. Access to the media classrooms is limited for students with restricted mobility. There is a good range of well-maintained technical equipment. This includes personal computers; with industry standard music sequencing and media software, video editing facilities, and a well-equipped theatre. Access to some of the equipment is limited due to the high number of students that need to use it. Students have to gain access in evenings and weekends to enable them to complete their assignment work. First-year media students are discouraged from using video due to pressure on the limited equipment available. The library is well stocked for all subject areas. Staff are well qualified with a broad range of industrial experience. Several staff are examiners for lead awarding bodies, ensuring that students are well prepared for external examinations. Staff regularly undertake appropriate training and development events.

96. Thorough assessment and internal verification procedures are in place. Verbal and written feedback are provided on all assessment activities across both areas. Particularly good examples of written feedback are seen in performing arts where thorough analysis of students' learning is supported with clear advice and guidance. Monitoring of learners' progress is well documented. A customised tracking system has been implemented in media, which is used as a diagnostic tool in identifying students' achievement in support of individual target setting.

97. Recruitment to GCE AS programmes in media and performing arts is high. A wide range of enrichment activities is available to students including theatre and gallery trips, visits from touring theatre companies, opportunities to perform, instrumental tuition, membership of the choir, orchestra and band. Availability of some activities, such as dance, is restricted by the timetable. Film studies has grown in popularity. Widening participation is viewed in terms of increasing student numbers rather than as expanding the curriculum to accommodate a broader ability range of students.

98. Students receive good pre-entry support through a series of taster sessions, induction programme and initial assessments. Performing arts students do not undertake any pre-entry audition process. Individual support for students is highly effective and students value the curriculum support and commitment they receive from staff. This includes considerable time given during holidays and evenings to ensure students meet deadlines for external assessment. Students have

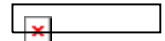


group tutorials twice a week. These are supported by an effective electronic register system. Students demonstrate little awareness of equal opportunities issues.

### ***Leadership and management***

99. The subject areas are well managed, with a strong focus on pass rates and a culture of continuous improvement and sharing of best practice. Staff teams work closely together to plan and develop new teaching materials. Detailed statistical analysis informs the self-assessment process, although some aspects of student feedback are not picked up in the action plan. Staff appraisal and the lesson observation scheme help contribute to a good programme of staff development.

### **Humanities: psychology, sociology, religious studies and philosophy**



Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

#### ***Strengths***

- very good pass rates on most courses
- effective, skilful teaching
- excellent resources used to support learning
- inclusive, differentiated group learning in the social sciences
- efficient monitoring and assessment of progress
- strong recruitment to psychology and sociology courses
- team work and good management particularly in psychology.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention and pass rates in GCE AS religious studies.

### **Scope of provision**

100. The main provision is at GCE AS and A level for full-time students aged 16 to 18. GCSE courses are also provided in psychology and sociology. In 2001/02 there were 726 learners on these courses: 62% studied on GCE AS courses, 31% at GCE A level and 7% on GCSE courses. Adult courses in philosophy, psychology and sociology have been offered by the continuing education and training department in the evenings and on Saturdays. These attracted very small numbers and are not currently running. Well over half the total students, currently 529, study psychology. Provisional enrolments for 2002/03 indicate an increase of 26% in psychology and 12% in sociology. In GCE A-level philosophy and religious studies, there has been a decline in numbers to single figures. Continuation rates for students completing GCE AS to GCE A2 vary from 70% in psychology to 39% in philosophy.

### **Achievement and standards**

101. Pass rates on most courses are very good. In GCE A-level psychology, significant numbers of students consistently achieve pass rates and high grades above the national average; pass rates of cohorts in religious studies have also been high since 2000; and in philosophy, rates have improved to 100% with 50% achieving high grades in 2001. There has been a significant improvement in pass rates in sociology. Added value scores for three of the four subjects are very high and good in the other subject. Except for GCE AS psychology, pass rates for 2001 were below the national averages, but these improved to high levels in 2002 except for religious studies. In philosophy the rate improved from 71% to 93%. In sociology more A-B grades were attained than in previous years, but except for psychology, high grade rates overall are modest. At GCSE level in the social sciences, grade rates for A\*-C were above the national average in 2002. Retention has improved to above national averages except in GCE AS philosophy and religious studies. Some 70% of psychology students continue from GCE AS to A2 studies which is in line with the college average.

102. Standards of attainment are well above the average for sixth form colleges. Most students make clear progress towards fulfilling their potential. They develop a broad range of learning skills on courses which have a strong emphasis on understanding ideas and principles and on measuring their usefulness in everyday situations. Attainment is often at a high level. Students in the social sciences attain well in exercises which require critical analysis. In philosophy and religious studies there is impressive evidence of independent thought in the study of complex ideas. They take part in intellectual debate at a high level. Students on all GCE AS and A-level courses demonstrate competence in the assembly and use of knowledge, and those just starting at GCSE level are establishing good foundations for further learning. Coursework is of a high standard and students are very well prepared to conduct investigative research and evaluation. In addition to completing challenging assignments, students' communication skills improve in lessons designed to provide opportunity for the sharing of opinion and making oral presentations. In lessons, this was a common activity in which all students were able to participate, often vigorously.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities: psychology, sociology, religious studies and philosophy, 2000 to 2002**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GCSE psychology and sociology	2	No. of starts	61	44	48
		% retention	67	70	71
		% pass rate	66	42	71
GCE AS philosophy	3	No. of starts	**	42	38
		% retention	**	83	71

		% pass rate	**	71	93
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	**	230	259
		% retention	**	86	86
		% pass rate	**	92	94
GCE AS religious studies	3	No. of starts	**	26	18
		% retention	**	92	83
		% pass rate	**	73	60
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	**	126	138
		% retention	**	94	88
		% pass rate	**	83	88
GCE A-level philosophy	3	No. of starts	15	21	16
		% retention	67	48	100*
		% pass rate	70	100	100
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	99	118	137
		% retention	82	78	96*
		% pass rate	94	91	98
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	88	74	60
		% retention	83	73	98*
		% pass rate	85	82	98

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* GCE A-level retention rates for one year

\*\* no appropriate data

### **Quality of education and training**

103. There is a high proportion of good to outstanding teaching and learning across the subjects. Lessons have clear objectives and are managed skilfully and effectively by knowledgeable staff. In GCE AS sociology, students examining the working class and educational underachievement, benefit from the carefully integrated use of group tasks, and feedback in verbal and visual form, appropriate reference to study guide material and a presentation by the teacher. In most lessons, students are usually taught in small groups; they are engaged in learning which involves them all and which takes account of their individual needs. For example, GCE AS psychology students discuss the differences in the treatment of psychological disorders. They learn well from each other, express themselves clearly and make good progress in understanding challenging ideas. All lessons include student-centred learning which is exceptionally well directed and monitored. Challenging exercises involve students in decision making from which effective feedback ensues. Students respond well. In sociology and psychology students are required to evaluate the significance of theories in the context of present-day situations. In some psychology lessons, students are segregated into working groups according to preferred learning styles and outcomes are compared. This approach takes account of different learning needs and excellent levels of learning result. The quality of learning is richly enhanced by the association of theoretical study with practical examples. This was effectively demonstrated in all subjects. For example, in a GCE AS religious studies lesson on the moral thinking behind Bentham's utilitarianism, students form judgements on the values of pleasure, in particular modern activities, using his philosophic principles. There are some shortcomings. There is a good enrichment programme but at the time of the inspection very little

curriculum enrichment activity had taken place. This dimension of learning is being given closer consideration. The use of questioning in lessons is not always used to its best advantage and there is a need for deeper probing of understanding and a development of dialogue.

104. Resources to support learning are excellent and the new premises offer an attractive teaching and learning environment. Staff are well qualified and have a good balance of experience which has benefited from the recruitment of some newly qualified teachers. Most classes have shared teaching and staff are imaginatively deployed. In sociology, four of the five teaching members have responsibilities in other subject areas. Classrooms are well equipped, furnished flexibly to facilitate variety in teaching/learning methodology, and are dedicated to individual subjects. Students have access to banks of laptop computers. Little use was made of IT in the classroom but students commented that, particularly in psychology, IT is used extensively for research, word processing and study guidance. The development of subject study packs linked to course units is impressive. They are exceptionally well produced and used effectively, especially in the social sciences. There are good links with the college library and students report that they experience few problems obtaining required texts.

105. Much improvement has taken place in establishing effective monitoring and assessment procedures and this is a strong feature of provision. Some of this development is aimed at improving retention. Regular checks are made on absences, purposeful recording is carried out and analysis of performance is used to advise action. In psychology these practices are well established and in sociology there is a greater awareness of tracking students' progress. The quality of feedback on assignments is good. It is detailed and constructive and establishes a focused dialogue between teacher and student. In psychology a diagnostic test in the form of a skills survey has recently been introduced for GCE AS students. This is intended to produce individual profiles of students' progress for use in matching the working targets of learners against predicted grades based on GCE A-level information system (ALIS) scores.

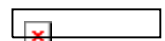
106. Courses in psychology and sociology are popular especially with female students (the ratio is 3:1). Attempts are being made to improve male recruitment. Subjects organise their courses to be responsive to local interest and emphasise their relevance to modern situations. Opportunities are built into courses to develop key skills, and schemes of work indicate when assignments can be set and marked and how they contribute to a key skills qualification in communication. The latest enrolments indicate a 23% increase on these courses since 2001. Most of this increase is on psychology courses.

107. Students speak highly about staff support and guidance. They comment on the willingness of teachers to show concern for their development and welfare. Examples of this care and attention were visible in lessons. There are no timetabled sessions for additional support at subject level but each department has one free period of flexi-time for the purpose of mentoring students. At appropriate times in the year, subjects have developed the practice of arranging extra lessons for revision, re-sits, and coursework completion. One-to-one guidance and advice regularly forms part of lessons and there are subject-related and skills-related guidance booklets as well as information on the college intranet.

### ***Leadership and management***

108. Course management is effective and responsive. Course leaders provide clear leadership and encourage teamwork. Responsibility is delegated and roles are well understood by staff. The quality of teaching and the application of procedures are consistent. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed and course files contain thorough records of meetings and analyses of performance data. In all subject areas a culture of self-improvement is achieved through dissemination of good practice.

## **Humanities: history, geography and politics**



Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

### ***Strengths***

- excellent pass rates at GCE A level
- very effective use of ICT in lessons
- strong focus on student-centred learning
- effective subject organisation and management
- much excellent and very good teaching
- excellent student progress compared with entry grades.

### ***Weaknesses***

- limited independent research by students.

### ***Scope of provision***

109. GCE AS and A2 levels in history, geography and politics are options for students aged 16 to 18 who combine them with other subjects to construct their full-time programme. GCSE geography is also offered, but does not always attract enough students to make it viable. Some part-time GCE AS and A2 classes are offered but enrolments are rarely sufficient to run the course. GCE A-level history enrolments have risen from 46 in 1998 to 169 in September 2002, and geography recruitment is stable at around 127. Approximately 77% of GCE AS students in these subjects proceed to GCE A level. There is usually one GCE AS politics group each year of 23 students, but few have the intention of studying politics for two years.

### ***Achievement and standards***

110. There are excellent pass rates in GCE A-level history, geography and politics, with politics students achieving a 100% pass rate for the last ten years. Students' achievement of high grades is excellent; in GCE A-level geography they reached 68% in 2002, and 76% in history. Added value data also show that students' final grades exceed predictions. GCSE geography pass rates are very good.

111. Most students apply to HE: 19% of history students and 33% of politics students progress to related degree subjects; 27% of geography students were accepted on related courses in 2002 and three took up places to read geography at Oxford. Standards of attainment are good or better. Attendance at lessons is very good.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities: history, geography and politics, 2000 to 2002***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	131	127	93
		% retention	88	84	99
		% pass rate	99	98	99
GCE AS geography	3	No. of starts	**	127	133*
		% retention	**	96	93*
		% pass rate	**	97	94
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	**	23	23*
		% retention	**	91	83*
		% pass rate	**	86	89
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	67	73	113
		% retention	84	89	99
		% pass rate	93	97	100
GCE AS history	3	No. of starts	**	134	134*
		% retention	**	99	97*
		% pass rate	**	98	98

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001)

\* retention rates for 2002 GCE AS/A2 level courses are in-year retention, whereas GCE A level relates to two years

\*\* non-comparable courses offered

***Quality of education and training***

112. Most teaching is excellent: lessons are based on a strong student-centred approach. Learners work enthusiastically and purposefully in thoughtfully planned lessons featuring careful selections of teaching material, clearly directed at examination success. The use of study booklets enables students to develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of their subjects. This approach is supplemented by materials placed on the college website. Only a minority of students research independently outside of class time.

113. Whole-class teaching gives opportunities to use study packs in preparing presentations, either oral or using computers. ICT facilities are excellent and are effectively used to enhance learning. In one GCE A-level politics lesson, groups of students were able to research US elections using the Internet, and geography students prepared powerpoint presentations on coral reefs and mangrove swamps, including downloaded images. GCSE geography students researched and prepared to present information on alternative energy sources from the intranet. Materials from lectures are also placed on the intranet for students to use, and they can submit work electronically.

114. Staff have high expectations of students. Planned teaching involves all members of the group and is designed to meet individual needs, but often when whole-class teaching is used, questioning techniques do not allow full participation. The development of key skills is built into the three subjects; application of number is taught in geography, and communications in history and politics.

115. Teachers set homework regularly, mark students' work promptly and carefully, and use examination mark schemes. Teachers' constructive comments enable students to improve their work. Errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar are not routinely corrected. Progress is carefully monitored and target reviews are discussed with students and parents twice a year. Students value the personal support and study guidance which teachers readily provide. Students found the interview and induction process helpful. There are strong links with associated schools so students can make an informed selection of courses and settle into college successfully.

116. Staff are well qualified and enthusiastic. Geography, and history and politics have adjoining rooms each of which is well resourced. Teachers prepare an extensive range of printed resources and reference copies of books are available for classroom use or short-term loan. The library is adequately stocked but students prefer to use class materials or the Internet. External speakers, fieldwork and educational visits enhance students' learning.

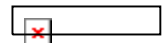
### ***Leadership and management***

117. Subjects are well organised, with strong teamwork, sharing expertise and good practice, through personal contact or through a shared work area on the website. Students' results are carefully monitored and analysed.

118. There is a clear focus on improving achievements. Course reviews and self-assessment are thoroughly carried out, and actions agreed. For example, since examination results indicated that females achieved better results in coursework modules in history and geography, the balance is being redressed by an adjustment of learning styles to encourage male students, an increased use of computers in class, and by allowing students to submit work or request help using e-mail.

119. Staff attend external courses for professional development, with the emphasis on improving teaching and learning.

## **English and modern foreign languages**



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

### ***Strengths***

- much good teaching giving students frequent opportunities to participate
- high pass rates on most courses
- very good and well-used resources

- strong and effective support for students
- very effective management.

**Weaknesses**

- low recruitment on GCSE modern language courses
- low pass and retention rates on some courses.

**Scope of provision**

120. There are GCE AS and A2 courses in French, German, Russian, Spanish, and three different options in English: language, literature and combined language, and literature. GCSE courses are available in English, Spanish, French, and Italian, and non-accredited courses are offered to full-time students in Chinese, Spanish and Italian. Evening classes in French, Spanish and Italian have Open College accreditation. Over 800 students take these courses. Recruitment to Italian and French GCSE and German GCE AS courses is low. All others recruit well.

**Achievement and standards**

121. Pass rates at GCE A level have been generally high over three years. In 2002, GCE AS and A2 pass rates were good, with 100% pass rates at GCE A2 in English language, English language and literature and the range of modern language courses. There was a low proportion of higher grades in GCE A2 English language in 2002 and low overall pass rates at GCE AS German and GCE AS English language. At GCSE English, A\*-C grades are above the national average (57% in 2002). Retention rates in most courses are satisfactory, but well below the national average in GCE A-level Spanish, although most students choose to take a GCE AS in Spanish. Added value analysis of GCE A-level pass rates indicates that students achieved significantly above expectation in English literature and English language and literature, but below expectation in English language and the modern foreign language courses.

122. In most classes observed there was evidence of students working to a high standard, taking responsibility for their own learning, and developing their research skills. Punctuality and attendance were good, especially in modern foreign languages classes.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE English (one year)	2	No. of starts	188	169	187
		% retention	79	83	83
		% pass rate	51	58	57
GCE A-level English	3	No. of starts	61	59	29



		% retention	80	60	90
		% pass rate	87	89	100
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	123	146	124
		% retention	90	82	99
		% pass rate	92	83	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	58	59	65
		% retention	88	75	97
		% pass rate	96	88	98
GCE A2 French	3	No. of starts	31	33	21
		% retention	83	59	90*
		% pass rate	80	100	100*
GCE A2 Spanish	3	No. of starts	19	17	10*
		% retention	58	63	70*
		% pass rate	64	100	100*
GCE AS French	3	No. of starts	**	56	40
		% retention	**	91	85
		% pass rate	**	78	85
GCE AS German	3	No. of starts	**	16	25
		% retention	**	96	84
		% pass rate	**	76	76
GCE AS Spanish	3	No. of starts	7	16	22
		% retention	100	50	77
		% pass rate	***	100	43

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

\* retention rates for GCE AS/A2 level courses are in-year, whereas GCE A level relates to two years

\*\*course did not run

\*\*\*data unavailable

### **Quality of education and training**

123. Most teaching and learning is very good. All lessons are planned carefully with clear objectives which are shared with students. In most classes, teachers create varied opportunities for students to contribute. In English classes, students often work purposefully in pairs or small groups. In one GCE A2 language and literature class, students studied a section of *Othello* in groups. They divided initially into groups each of which focused on one main character. Later the groups were re-constituted with one representative from each initial group in each new group. In these groups each student had a reporting role and each student gained an overall view. Students reacted well to this responsibility. In a few classes, teachers were over dominant and failed to create a variety of stimulating learning opportunities.

124. Modern languages teachers provide different tasks to match the varying abilities of students in the classes. They also encourage the use of the target language, and students are confident in this approach. In one German class, the teacher put students at ease by starting the class with a joke in German. There is good attention to accurate pronunciation, and a variety of effective strategies are used to develop this skill. Modern languages staff co-operate with local schools to provide a range of opportunities for students to visit the countries whose languages they are studying. These visits also provide work experience opportunities.

125. Resources to support learning are excellent. They are used well in many classes. Modern language classes exploit fully the range of opportunities offered by a new audio laboratory and multimedia centre to develop language skills and accuracy. The language assistants are used well in this process. In English, students develop research skills with the assistance of well-produced study guides for topics and assignments. These lead them on to read further and to use reference books in the learning resource centre, CD-ROMs and the Internet. In the English department a small workshop contains networked computers, which are used extensively. In a GCSE English class, students prepared for a presentation on the Globe Theatre. They used a variety of information sources including the Internet. Some students continued their work together out of college through e-mail. GCE A-level English students have a handbook which provides valuable background information for the study of *The Great Gatsby*. It covers jazz, prohibition and the liberated role of women in the 1920s.

126. Teaching and learning benefit from dedicated accommodation. This enables materials and ideas to be shared among teachers, and provides opportunities for attractive and instructive display. Two rooms are too small for the sizes of some groups. At times this restriction inhibits the range of teaching. The learning resource centre provides valuable background reading and information for students on these courses. The fiction section in English is very extensive and useful.

127. Staff give very effective support to individual students. Many individual appointments are made to help with particular assignments or to overcome language difficulties. Comments by staff on students' written work usually give clear indications of the standard achieved and what is required for further improvement. Much of this comment is closely related to the assessment objectives of the external examination. Subject tutors conduct regular interviews with individual students to assess progress and set improvement targets. Although students value these interviews, there is evidence of a failure to evaluate progress clearly and set definite targets.

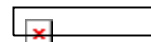
### ***Leadership and management***

128. The leadership of this provision is very effective. Great emphasis is placed on staff working well together to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is a strong ethos of extending opportunities to all students and providing whatever support they may require. Students are able to begin a course in one modern language in which they have no previous experience. Individual courses are well managed. On courses with several teachers, teams work well. Tutors sharing the teaching of a class work well to plan and teach courses. Minutes of meetings are businesslike and demonstrate a self-critical and purposeful approach. Schemes of work are thorough and specify clearly how courses should be taught. Current practice and resources have been extensively revised to match the demands of GCE AS and A2 courses. Careful note has been taken of problems encountered in the first full cycle of the new examination, and some appropriate measures taken. The analysis of achievement, teaching and learning is thorough. In some cases the thoroughness of the analysis is not matched by precise identifications of issues, and the actions needed to address them. New teachers are integrated successfully into the department by being paired with experienced tutors. The range of courses provided successfully matches students' needs. However, recruitment to some GCSE modern language courses is low and too many students take GCSE English with low previous grades and little realistic expectation of success.

## **Part D: College data**



**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	2	56
2	11	36
3	87	7
4/5	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Note: percentages in column 19+ have been rounded and hence do not add up to 100

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	2,381	467	33
Agriculture	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering	68	2	1
Business	330	313	7
Hotel and catering	154	152	4
Health and community care	100	101	2
Art and design	878	59	11
Humanities	3,346	264	42
Basic education	36	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,293</b>	<b>1,358</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in 2002

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	738	381	140	329	357	300
	Retention rate (%)	88	69	72	84	72	77
	National average (%)	80	81	83	70	74	74
	Pass rate (%)	54	31	25	52	37	35
	National average (%)	62	70	66	61	65	66
2	Starters excluding transfers	704	1,229	613	224	190	112
	Retention rate (%)	76	76	77	87	71	761
	National average (%)	80	81	81	71	75	74
	Pass rate (%)	81	65	80	64	81	65
	National average (%)	81	79	83	68	68	67
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,805	3,054	5,565	121	121	129
	Retention rate (%)	80	83	85	80	65	71
	National average (%)	78	80	84	65	70	71
	Pass rate (%)	82	86	87	43	56	66
	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 colleges or sixth form colleges).*

*Sources of information:*

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 1997/98 to 1999/2000: 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 1999/2000: Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.*

3. College Rates for 1999/2000: *provided by the college in spring 2001.*

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

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Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	81	15	4	157
Level 2 (intermediate)	79	14	7	29
Level 1 (foundation)	60	40	0	5
Other sessions	100	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>192</b>

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