



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Wigan and Leigh College

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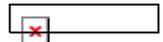
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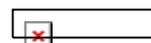
Basic information about the college



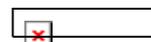
Name of college:	Wigan and Leigh College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Jim Crewdson
Address of college:	Wigan and Leigh College PO Box 53 Parsons Walk Wigan, WN1 1RS

Telephone number:	01942 761 600
Fax number:	01942 761 551
Chair of governors:	Stephen Timms
Unique reference number:	130521
Name of reporting inspector:	Jan Bennett HMI
Date of inspection:	28 October - 8 November 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Wigan and Leigh College is a large general further education (FE) college with approximately 4,500 full-time and 16,000 part-time students, and an annual budget of over £30 million. In 2001/02, it recruited 3,293 full-time students, aged 16 to 18, and 1,297 full-time adult students. There were 179 work-based learners mainly in engineering and construction funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college provides a wide range of courses and enrolls students in all of the LSC areas of learning, but there are very few students taking courses in either land-based subjects or retailing. Courses are available from entry level to degree level.

Wigan is one of the ten boroughs within Greater Manchester and has a population of 311,000. The borough is made up of 14 towns and villages and covers an area of 77 square miles of which 75% is open land or countryside. Wigan and Leigh are the largest towns and although external transport links are very good, internal travel is less easy. Some 55% of wards in Wigan fall within the 20% most deprived wards in England, and 16% of wards are amongst the 10% most deprived. Unemployment in Wigan is lower than the Greater Manchester average but is higher than the national average.

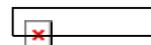
In the Wigan borough there are two schools with sixth forms and two sixth form colleges. In September 2001, 59.3% of the borough's 16 year olds were in full-time education compared to 70% nationally. The proportion of 16 year olds achieving five or more higher grade General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) was 47.1% in 2001 compared with 50% nationally.

Wigan and Leigh College has five sites in the two towns and provides community courses in over 100 venues. The main sites include the Pagefield Building and the Parsons Walk site in Wigan, and the Image Centre, Marshall Street and Railway Road buildings in Leigh. Some of the accommodation is in poor condition and in March 2002 the LSC has approved plans designed to radically improve the college estate at Wigan.

A new principal and vice principal have been appointed since the last inspection in October 1997. The principal took up his post in January 2002. After the previous principal's retirement in July 2000, the deputy principal and the director of curriculum were in charge of the college for 20 months. The new vice principal took up her post in June 2002. The college mission statement and core values were revised at the start of this academic year.

The new mission statement states that Wigan and Leigh College will strive to be the best general further and higher education college in the north of England.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be satisfactory. The quality of education and training is good in engineering; business administration; business, management and professional studies; computing and information technology (IT); visual and performing arts and media; and literacy and numeracy. The quality is satisfactory in science and mathematics; construction; information and communication technology (ICT); hairdressing and beauty therapy; health, social and childcare; humanities; and English and modern foreign languages. In sports studies and hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, the quality of education and training is unsatisfactory. The work-based learning provision in both construction and engineering is good. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- clear strategic direction given by the new management team, established June 2002
- good retention and pass rates at level 1 for the academic years 1998/99 to 2000/01
- above average retention rate of 91% in 2001/02
- well-planned teaching which meets individual needs
- good support and guidance
- effective integration of students with additional needs into the main curriculum
- wide ranging provision which meets the needs of employers and the community.

What should be improved

- poor standard of accommodation in many areas
- failure to meet funding targets

- well below average pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 2 in 1999/2000 and 2000/01
- insufficient use of ICT in teaching and learning
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

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



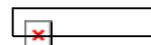
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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 and mathematics	Satisfactory. There is good practical and demonstration work in science but some laboratory accommodation is poor. Assessment and informal support for students are good. There are low pass rates in some General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) subjects and in GCSE mathematics. The retention rate on most courses matches the national average. Some 50% of teaching was judged to be good or better
Construction	Satisfactory. Pass rates are above the national average on most programmes. Retention rates are well below national averages on NVQ programmes. Teaching is satisfactory and learners' practical work is of a high standard. Work-based learning programmes are well managed. Course reviews are inadequate and not sufficiently evaluative.
Engineering	Good. Engineering provision is good and both retention and pass rates are well above average. The students benefit from good resources and very good quality teaching. The provision is responsive to local needs and communication with employers is good. Students' progress is effectively monitored.
Business administration	Good. Courses are effectively designed to meet the needs of employers and the local community. Programmes are well managed and well taught by highly committed staff. Students' written and practical work is of a high standard. There are good retention and

	pass rates on most courses.
Business, management professional studies	Good. Course materials are excellent and assessment is rigorous. Pass rates on accounting courses and many management courses are above the national average. Management students benefit from high quality facilities but accommodation for many students is unsatisfactory. Retention of students aged 16 to 18 on full-time GCE AS, Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses is below the national average. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, with a third being very good or excellent.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. The pass and retention rates for most ICT courses for adults are above average. There are low pass rates on European computer driving licence (ECDL) and low retention on integrated business technology stage 3 (IBT3). The teaching is at least satisfactory, with 70% being good or better. The college runs a wide range of courses from entry level to level 4 at a variety of venues across the district. There are insufficient resources in some rooms and some poor accommodation.
Computing and information technology	Good. Pass and retention rates are at or above the national average. Individual courses are well managed and teaching is very good with a strong focus on commercial standards and practices. Provision is comprehensive, enabling in-college progression from levels 1 to 5. However, there are inadequate computing resources in some classrooms and insufficient sharing of curriculum expertise across this area of learning as a whole.
Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism	Unsatisfactory. There is much good teaching and learning on travel courses. Specialist resources and realistic work environments are well utilised but much of the classroom accommodation is poor. Retention and pass rates on many courses are below the national average. Internal verification procedures are inadequate in hospitality. Leadership and management are weak.
Sports studies	Unsatisfactory. Pass rates on most advanced level courses are below average, and retention rates on several courses are significantly below the national average. Classroom accommodation and on-site practical sports facilities are poor. There is a good range of enrichment opportunities for sport students and support for individual students is good. Some 50% of teaching is satisfactory, but a significant proportion is unsatisfactory.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. The resources are excellent and there is a wide range of programmes available. There is strong leadership and programmes are managed well. Teaching is satisfactory or better. Retention and pass rates are well below the national average on many courses.
Health, social and childcare	Satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of courses within this area but little provision to meet the needs of adult learners. There is good teaching and learning on entry and foundation courses, but some of the teaching at level 3 lacks variety. Many schemes of work lack detail. There is good and well-managed support for students with additional learning needs. Retention and pass rates on most courses vary between above and below average.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good. There is much good teaching. Specialist equipment is up to date and in line with industry requirement in media. The college has effectively updated and refurbished old buildings to provide attractive learning environments at the Media Centre in Leigh. There is insufficient sharing of good practice across the curriculum area. Pass rates for many courses are well above average and retention rates

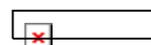
	match those nationally.
Humanities	Satisfactory. There is good support for students. Assessment is good and frequent, and provides informative feedback with constructive comments. The quality of most teaching and learning is satisfactory with some examples of very good practice. Limitations in resources and teaching methodology are holding back the development of students' independent learning skills. Pass rates overall match the national average.
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory. There is extensive provision in English and modern foreign languages from entry level to level 4. Pass rates in English are around the national average. Numbers are falling in modern foreign languages and some pass rates at level 3 are well below average. Most teaching of English is good, but most modern foreign language teaching is satisfactory with some unsatisfactory teaching at advanced level.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Pass and retention rates are well above average. Teaching was at least satisfactory. Leadership is strong and new developments, including implementation of new curricula, are being managed effectively.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management at the college are satisfactory. The leadership team established in June 2002 is providing a clear strategic direction for the college. Retention rates increased significantly to above average during the last academic year 2001/02. The college's procedures for self-assessment are comprehensive, evaluative and reliable. There is insufficient inter-faculty communication. The college has failed to meet its past funding targets and built up a significant budget deficit which adversely affected its financial position. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 2 were well below average from 1998/99 to 2000/01. Teaching practice is insufficiently shared across the college. Widening participation, equality of opportunity and respect for individuals are at the centre of the college's approach to its work.

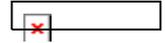
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college effectively meets the educational and social needs of young people and adults, both on full-time and part-time courses. Many students make significant gains in confidence and self-esteem. The college has produced a 'commitment to racial equality' statement and is revising its existing equal opportunities policy and plan in accordance with the Race Relations Act. The college makes sound provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, all of whom are on integrated courses. Significant numbers of students are recruited from socially and economically deprived areas, and many travel long distances to attend the college. The college has successfully established a welcoming and supportive environment that is valued by students. Access for people with mobility difficulties is good. The college has developed outstanding approaches to widening participation for under-represented groups. Examples of these are the innovative and flexible programmes for young people with little interest in education and the high quality support for people with mental health

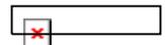
whatever their needs and provide very good and sensitive support for all students. The 'inter-college assessment service' is well established and facilitates the sharing of resources and staff expertise among partner colleges. The college is less successful in providing a range of realistic progression routes for those students who see little point in continuing their education.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



There is a very good range of support services with high levels of personal and academic guidance provided for students. Good staff/student relationships promote respect and trust. Well-trained inclusive learning officers are effectively deployed across college. There is excellent support and range of individual courses for under-represented students and there are effective links with a range of external agencies. Good pre-entry and induction processes are in place for full-time students. Individual learning plans lack rigour and there is variable quality of teaching on tutorial programmes.

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

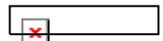
- friendly and supportive staff
- wide range of courses
- good student support and guidance
- good facilities and library resources
- being treated as adults
- non-competitive culture

- flexibility of courses
- quality of teaching.

What they feel could be improved

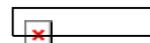
- high cost of food
- poor accommodation on some sites
- monitoring system for punctuality
- insufficient computers for private study
- poor toilet facilities at some sites
- poor state of the lifts
- cancelled sessions due to staff absences.

Other information



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (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



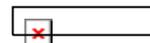
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	62	32	6
19+ and WBL*	65	32	3
Learning 16-18	59	34	7
19+ and WBL	70	25	5

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. Inspectors scrutinised data on students' achievements drawn from individualised student returns (ISR) to the LSC for the period from 1998 to 2001. Retention data for 2001/02 have been produced using kite-marked software, but achievement data for 2001/02 are incomplete.
2. The college's retention rates are around the national average for 1998/99 to 2000/01, but pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 2 and 3 courses during this period have remained below the national average. Where the data are available, pass rates have improved in 2001/02. Pass rates for all students on level 1 courses were well above the national average throughout the three-year period.
3. Attendance in the lessons observed during the inspection was 79% overall, compared with a national average of 76%, for all inspections carried out in general FE colleges in 2001/02. Attendance was lowest in construction and business administration, and highest in visual and performing arts and media lessons.
4. The standard of students' written work is satisfactory or better. The standard of project work on both computing and management courses is high and students demonstrate a good level of practical skills and technical competence in most areas. Independent research skills are being successfully developed on management, ICT and sports courses but students on some humanities courses are over-reliant on being given information by their teachers and are not developing their own research skills sufficiently.
5. The retention rate and the pass rate on GCE Advanced level (GCE A level), GNVQ intermediate,

and GNVQ advanced courses have changed very little over the three years from 1998/99 to 2000/01 and have remained below the national average. The pass rate on GNVQ foundation, however, has increased significantly from 58% to 71%. Whilst the retention rate on GCSE courses has changed little over the same period, the proportion of students achieving an A* to C grade has increased from 34% to 43%. There have been no significant changes in pass rates on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses in the years from 1998/99 to 2000/01 except for NVQ level 3 courses, which fell from 67% to 50%.

6. The overall retention rate for 2001/02 is 91%, which is 6% higher than the previous year. The retention rate on NVQ courses has improved significantly, particularly at level 3 where it has risen by 15% to 93%, compared to 78% in 2000/01.

16-18 year olds

7. Both retention and pass rates have been well above the national average on level 1 courses for the three years from 1998/99 to 2000/01. On level 2 courses, however, pass rates were well below the national average in both 1999/2000 and 2000/01. In 1999/2000 the pass rate was 25% below the national average, which was partly due to the large number of students on the ECDL programme who did not take the examination. The pass rate improved in 2000/01 but was still 18% below the national average. Retention rates on level 2 courses were around or above the national average for the three years from 1998/99 to 2000/01. On level 3 courses, retention rates were slightly below the national average but show an improving trend in the three years from 1998/99 to 2000/01. Pass rates have improved significantly from 59% to 68% but remained 9% below the national average in 2000/01. The retention rate for key skills in 2000/01 was around the national average and the pass rate has improved considerably over the three years from 34% in 1998/99 to 67% in 2000/01, which is 35% above the national average.

Adult learners

8. Although the retention rate on level 1 courses fell from 84% in 1998/99 to 79% in 2000/01, it remained above the national average. Pass rates have risen significantly from 64% in 1998/99 to 76% in 2000/01 and were above the national average for 1999/2000 and 2000/01. At level 2, retention rates improved between 1998/99 and 2000/01, and went from 5% below to 3% above the national average. Pass rates, however, have fallen and are now slightly below the national average. At level 3, retention rates were below the national average in 1998/99 and close to the national average in the following two years. Pass rates have been equal to or slightly above the national average during the three-year period. Retention rates on key skills courses have been well above the national average from 1998/99 to 2000/01 and the pass rate has improved by almost 30%. In 2000/01 it was 34% above the national average of 31%.

Quality of education and training



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 256 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 62.9% of these, satisfactory in 31.6% and less than satisfactory in 5.5%. The proportion of good or better teaching is close to the national average of 64% for general FE colleges, though there is less unsatisfactory teaching compared with an average for colleges of 9%. Most teaching is satisfactory or better and 30% of teaching is very good. The best teaching was in engineering, and health and social care. The weakest teaching was in hospitality and sport studies. Adult students are better taught than students aged 16 to 18: 66.1% of lessons were graded good or better compared with 62.2% for students aged 16 to 18. Fewer lessons for adult students were less than satisfactory, 3.4%, compared with 6.2% for students aged 16 to 18. Level 1 classes are well taught with 76.2% of lessons being good or better.

10. Only 55.6% of level 3 classes are good or better whilst 6.5% of level 3 lessons are less than

satisfactory. Learning and attainment are also weaker in level 3 lessons. All work-based learning lessons observed were satisfactory or better. Learning and attainment are high in literacy and numeracy lessons.

11. In the better lessons, teaching is well planned to take account of individual skills, interests and abilities. In the best science lessons, practical work is used well to illustrate theory and to reinforce and consolidate learning. Computing teachers make good use of their knowledge of members of their class to match the demands of new learning to individual abilities. Teachers of construction lessons show good awareness of health and safety. Engineering teachers make good use of their previous industrial experience and effectively call upon the previous experience of adult learners. Teachers of management courses encourage students to choose challenging and relevant topics for project and group activity; they do not present solutions but draw students' attention to potential issues and encourage them to think and act in a professional way. Performing arts and media teachers use a range of strategies to interest and motivate learners. In the most effective English lessons, teachers successfully build upon the existing knowledge of students. Literacy and numeracy teachers are making effective use of the new adult basic skills curriculum and the new national qualifications, introduced in 2001/02.

12. In weaker lessons, inspectors observed uninspiring and undemanding teaching, with little participation from learners. Teachers do not sufficiently check learners' understanding and do not plan a variety of approaches or methods to address varying needs and abilities of students; some lessons lack a sense of purpose. There are insufficient demanding activities for more able learners. In such lessons, students' learning is limited and they do not progress as expected. In many level 3 courses insufficient attention is paid to helping students to develop advanced learning skills, for example, undertaking research on their own initiative. Teachers failed to encourage students to extend their thinking, apply their knowledge or to provide relevant examples to illustrate points. In humanities lessons, students spend too much time copying from overhead projector slides, from the board, or in taking down dictation. Insufficient use is made of knowledge gained from work experience, particularly in travel and tourism, and hair and beauty courses. In many theory lessons there was a lack of use of ICT to stimulate learning.

13. Key skills are well taught in construction and hair and beauty, where teachers make effective use of vocational contexts. Health and social care teachers make insufficient links with key skills in lessons and within assignments. Literacy and numeracy support teachers work closely with key skills and curriculum teachers. They have regard to students' individual learning plans (ILPs) and provide coherent lessons with effective support for their needs.

14. Much of the accommodation is in poor decorative repair, uninspiring and sometimes inappropriate for their prescribed use; rooms are often not large enough for the number of students using them. A significant number of students comment on the poor and sometimes noisy classroom facilities, and curriculum area inspectors reported that inappropriate use of classrooms was having an adverse effect on students' learning, in particular in visual and performing arts, English and modern foreign languages, and health, social and childcare. The college recognises the high maintenance costs of its accommodation and is falling behind on its maintenance programme. The college does, however, have a long-term strategy that aims to remedy much of the poorer aspects of the accommodation. By contrast there are some good facilities at the Image Centre, the Investment Centre and the Pagefield Conference Centre. Specialist facilities are good in areas such as engineering, construction, hair and beauty, travel and hospitality, performing arts and media studies. These enable students to apply theory in a realistic practical setting. Access for students with restricted mobility is adequate and available in 85% of the buildings.

15. There are adequate numbers of staff to meet the needs of students and requirements of courses and programmes. Most of the teaching and support staff are well qualified and experienced, are deployed within their specialism and have attended recent development courses. Learning resource co-ordinators attend departmental meetings to promote the learning centre facilities and gain information about the requirements of students' assignments. Inclusive learning officers and support staff for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well trained; they provide effective support and monitoring against ILPs.

16. The learning resource centres are welcoming and provide learners with facilities conducive to effective research and study. There is a good range of textbooks, periodicals and audio-visual resources across the various sites. The ratio of computers available for student use is good, but it is less so for staff. Students make good use of the open-access ICT centres which offer research and self-study materials along with high quality facilitator support. Specialist ICT facilities are used extensively in engineering, computing, creative and performing arts, hair and beauty, and motor vehicle. In addition, there are banks of laptop computers for use in community venues and classrooms that can support a link to the network. In electrical engineering, business administration and some computing classes there are insufficient computer facilities and the shortage is made worse by the frequent delay in carrying out repairs.

17. Resources to meet the specific individual requirements of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good, particularly at level 1 in care, hair and beauty, travel, hospitality, motor vehicle, construction, and literacy and numeracy.

18. There is a comprehensive assessment policy, which is implemented well. Assessment of students' work is good. Various forms of assessment are used. Teachers set regular tests and homework for students. Subject staff and personal tutors review individual students' progress and full-time students have regular tutorials and reviews. On some engineering courses, teachers use inappropriate forms of assessment, for example, numbers and percentages, rather than judging standards by awarding grades in line with reference to the criteria used by examining boards. The progress of trainees in work-based learning is monitored effectively, both in the workplace and at college.

19. Teachers' written comments on students' work vary significantly in their detail and value. Assessment work in geography is marked thoroughly and feedback includes detailed reference to the assessment criteria used by examining bodies. There is some variability in the correction of poor grammar, spelling and punctuation in assignments across subject areas. Students have a clear idea about how they are progressing and where they have gained and lost marks. Individual learning plans are regularly reviewed during tutorials. Students receive detailed termly progress reports which are also communicated to parents and employers, where appropriate. In some vocational areas, for example construction, feedback from employers gives little indication of individual progress towards expected course requirements.

20. Inspectors agreed with the majority of external verification reports that assessment is fair, at the correct level and follows awarding body requirements. Most internal verification systems are well co-ordinated with adequate opportunities to share good practice on effective methods to raise standards. However, internal verification is unsatisfactory in health and early years, hospitality, and travel and tourism where there is insufficient monitoring of assessment to ensure consistency and reliability, and action planning to redress identified weaknesses is weak. All staff involved in formal assessment hold the appropriate assessor's award qualifications or are working towards them. Work-based learners' practice is assessed through direct observation both in the workplace and in college.

21. All full-time students undertake an initial assessment of their learning needs shortly after the start of their course and additional support is offered, where necessary. Most students make good use of this support.

22. The college compares data on students' qualifications on entry to the college with those attained at completion of their course. This information is used to plan courses and advise students of the standards expected of them. However, the college's model does not include current data on national comparisons. Data are analysed by gender and racial origin.

23. The college offers provision in all of the 14 LSC areas of learning and is responsive to adult, community and industry needs. Employers and students speak highly of the opportunities available and gaps in provision are identified and remedied through the annual self-assessment review. Some full-time courses in science, business, leisure and recreation at levels 1 and 2 have been withdrawn following insufficient enrolments. Most internal progression routes are good from entry level to HE, but the college has been less successful in catering for those students who see little point in

continuing their education.

24. There is growing HE provision in science, health and community care, business, management, tourism, construction and engineering which is attracting an increasing number of international students. Work-based learning in construction and engineering is good and programmes are taught that meet the needs of employers. The number of trainees profiled to start work-based learning delivered by the college's Training Works Agency is steadily growing. There is a good range of part-time, day and evening courses for adults in a variety of college and community venues. Courses include management development, English and modern foreign languages, ICT, and arts and craft. Much of the provision leads to qualifications, including level 1 and 2 accredited courses.

25. The college's partnership arrangements are wide ranging. There are collaborations with the local authority Metropolitan Training and Chamber of Commerce and the college is an active member of the local learning partnership. The college, in partnership with five other colleges and supported by the Transport and General Workers Union, was awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence status for the logistics industry in July 2002. In order to widen participation and to promote opportunities for under-represented groups, learning centres have been established in disadvantaged parts of the borough. Data produced by the college show that the proportion of students enrolling from disadvantaged postcode areas has increased over the last three years. Around 350 post-16 students are enrolled on life-skill development and community service programmes. A further 45 'at risk' learners and those uninterested in education aged from 14 to 16 are on individual programmes linked to the national curriculum, with some additional vocational tasters at the college. In addition, the number of asylum seekers has risen from 92 in 1999/2000 to around 500 in 2001/02. School links are good and over 600 school pupils benefit from a range of pre-entry and level 1 vocational courses at the college in engineering, motor vehicle, hairdressing, hospitality and computing.

26. Within courses there is a range of linked curriculum enrichment activities. However the personal development programme that enables students to participate in sport, art and drama activities is not widely offered to all students aged 16 to 18.

27. Effective and comprehensive support services are available from experienced and well-qualified staff. Pre-entry guidance is thorough and enables students to make informed choices from the wide range of provision available. Liaison between the college and local schools and the community is particularly effective. There are excellent links with local schools, including an extensive programme of taster days, course sampling and shared curriculum developments between schools and the college.

28. Thorough induction procedures are in place for all students. A follow-up induction course, some six weeks after the start of term ensures that students who start their course late receive the necessary information. The results of basic skills and key skills tests undertaken during initial assessment are used during induction to alert students and staff to any need for additional learning support. All work-based learners have an individualised learning plan. Students at risk of leaving prematurely are identified early and receive extra support.

29. Student liaison officers and tutors have worked co-operatively together to improve and sustain students' attendance and punctuality. Retention rates have improved significantly on a number of courses since these arrangements were introduced in 2001/02. Revised procedures have been introduced this term to rectify problems of poor punctuality.

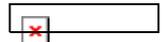
30. A Connexions service was established in the Wigan area in September 2002. Currently the college has a Connexions adviser for only one and a half days a week at both the Wigan and Leigh sites. This level of service, however, is expected to be extended in the near future. Students value the careers education and guidance information available from college staff.

31. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully integrated within all courses. Work is well developed through the inter-college assessment service, which facilitates the sharing of resources and staff expertise among partner colleges. Provision for students with additional needs is particularly effective. All students with additional needs have an additional support plan which is

regularly reviewed and monitored. An excellent team of well-trained inclusive learning officers assists students who need extra support. Teachers value these support systems which provide a positive input in their ability to meet students' needs. Parents, too, value the high levels of support given to their daughters and sons. Students receive good literacy and numeracy support which is well integrated with other aspects of their programmes.

32. Most tutorials offer valuable and relevant support to students. In a minority of tutorials, tutors pay cursory attention to the tutorial programme and students feel that their time is not being used effectively.

Leadership and management



33. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Over the period 1999 to 2001, the college has been successful in raising students' achievements at level 1 and at level 3 for adult students. Retention rates have been above the national average on level 1 courses. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 2 fell to an unsatisfactory level, well below the national average, mainly as a result of the large number of learners whose achievements fell well short of expectation on the ECDL programme. Although pass rates improved at level 3 over the three-year period 1998/99 to 2000/01 for the same age group of students, they remained below national figures. The college has invested considerable resources in tackling some below average 16-18 retention by, for example, the appointment of student liaison officers and a more careful match of students' capabilities to level of study. Data produced by the college for 2001/02 show that retention has significantly improved, especially for students aged 16 to 18. It is now above 80% at levels 1, 2 and 3.

34. Over the last three years 1999/2000 to 2001/02, partly as a result of an overestimation of the number of students likely to be enrolled, the college failed to meet its funding targets. This under performance has had an adverse impact on its financial position creating a significant budget deficit. The new leadership team is now striving to redress this situation by increasing average class sizes, reducing the number of teaching staff and reducing the cost base of the college. Monthly business reviews with budget holders are held to monitor spending against funding targets and ensure value for money. At the time of the inspection it was too early to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives in reducing the size of current operating losses.

35. The strategic aims of the college have been substantially rewritten by the new leadership team in the 2002/05 plan. A much greater emphasis has sensibly been given to improving students' achievements and to achieving a strong financial position. The resulting objectives for 2002/03 are specific and measurable, for example, to achieve a 5% improvement in achievements and a minimum attendance rate on all courses of 80%. The college strategic objectives have not, so far, been explicitly used to help devise faculty or service operating plans. In the past, 'development' plans have been written largely as a response to the self-assessment process. The last whole-college development plan, produced at the end of 2001, aimed to link the analysis of self-assessment with strategic aims. However, it focused primarily on actions to address self-assessment weaknesses rather than on the promotion of strategic priorities.

36. Self-assessment forms the major component of the quality assurance framework. Curriculum and service area reports are comprehensive in scope and particularly evaluative in terms of students' achievements. Course reviews, which feed into the area reports, are sometimes less rigorous. A validation committee, which scrutinises area reports, includes governor representation; national averages for achievements are considered when monitoring the validity of assessment standards. The outcomes of lesson observations are used to support judgements about teaching and learning and to provide developmental training. Students' achievement data, which form part of the curriculum reports, are presented inconsistently, in some cases covering three years and in others only one. Students' views on the success of particular courses are sought and assist in making comparisons between individual course and overall college performance, but these

summaries are not included as part of the self-assessment database. Most of the resulting action plans contain measurable time-prescribed targets; a few, for example care and early years, lack sufficient specific detail required to meaningfully judge progress towards targets. There was a close correlation between the grades for teaching awarded by inspectors, and those awarded through the internal college lesson observation scheme. Some 80% of curriculum grades matched those self-assessed by the college.

37. Improvements have now been made to the timeliness of management information returns to the LSC, following a period of illness on the part of key staff. Inspectors found centralised data on students' achievements, for the period 1999 to 2001, to be reliable. Data for 2002 were incomplete and could not, therefore, be used as part of inspection evidence. Teachers and managers have good access to computerised information including retention, enrolment data and the previous qualifications of students.

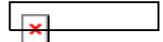
38. Action to promote equal opportunities is a recognised priority for the college. The existing policy is being revised and updated to comply with the requirements of the Race Relations Act. The equal opportunities committee has been reformed with a smaller membership and given remit to devise more specific and measurable targets. Data linking gender and age to curriculum performance are available, but have not so far been used to address, for example, apparent under performance on the part of male students aged 16 to 18 relative to females. The college has produced a 'commitment to racial equality' statement with a set of intentions to promote greater racial awareness.

39. Attendance at corporation meetings is good; governors are broadly representative of the different constituencies the college serves. The committees of the corporation monitor the different strategic objectives; the principal and chair make weekly contact to discuss key strategic issues. The regular meetings of the education and standards committee and their subsequent reports to the main board have helped to eradicate the weakness identified in the last inspection report that there was too little discussion of curriculum issues. Although governors are currently attempting to redress the deteriorating financial position of the college, they have not been successful in preventing operating losses for the last four years. The links that governors have with curriculum areas are largely informal; a scheme to link governors with groups of students in the different faculties is in the process of being established.

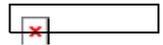
40. Curriculum management in most areas is satisfactory or good. Course teams meet regularly and sensibly concentrate on student performance. Minutes demonstrate that retention and achievement issues are frequently discussed. Part-time staff play a full part in developing work in curriculum areas. Where work-based learning is provided, for example in construction and engineering, it is mostly well managed with effective employer partnerships. Whole staff faculty meetings are held on a regular basis to share information on students' performance and share good practice. The interchange of information across the college is supported by the intranet and regular staff newsletters. Faculties act relatively autonomously and there is insufficient inter-faculty communication. This independence inhibits the sharing of good practice, particularly where the same or similar courses are run across a number of faculties. In addition, there is insufficient sharing of practice across the different college centres. In some curriculum areas, schemes of work lack a common format and can be merely a list of topics without reference to learning methods, assessment opportunities or resources to be used. In two curriculum areas unsatisfactory levels of achievement have not been successfully remedied and, in one area, enrolments are significantly falling.

41. Staff development policy and practice properly link training and development to the strategic aims of the college. For example, 77 staff attended training for a teaching qualification in 2001/02 to support the aim of 'achieving a suitable workforce'. Support staff are all provided with a specific allocation of professional development days. An internal staff development programme is published on a monthly basis, promoting particular themes, such as key skills. The staff appraisal scheme was remodelled in June 2002 to provide a greater emphasis on performance management. A pilot system under the new scheme is being implemented this academic year.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- good informal support for students
- good practical work and demonstrations in science
- examples of good assessment practice.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in GCSE mathematics and some GCE AS subjects
- some poor laboratory accommodation
- much unimaginative and mundane teaching in mathematics.

Scope of provision

42. A wide range of subjects is offered to students aged 16 to 18 at GCE AS and A level, including mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geology, environmental protection/conservation, and electronics. GCSE subjects include mathematics, human biology and science (both single and double award). The AVCE course in science did not recruit sufficient students in September 2002. Part-time courses including GCSEs and GCE AS are also available during the day or evening for adult students, and there is also an introductory evening course in forensic science. Just over 100 students aged 16 to 18 study GCE AS mathematics, 40 study chemistry and about 50 study physics. Between 10 and 15 students study each of the other subjects. At GCE A level there are between 10 and 40 students studying each subject. About 300 students study GCSE mathematics and over 100 students GCSE science. Approximately 20 adult students are studying each of GCE AS biology,

chemistry and mathematics at evening class, and about 90 are studying GCSE mathematics.

Achievement and standards

43. For two-year GCE A-level courses, the pass rates in some subjects were consistently below the national averages for the three years to 2001. College data show that there has been an improvement in 2002. GCE AS pass rates in 2001 were well below national averages in many subjects. The pass rate for mathematics was very low at 28%. Mathematics, human biology and chemistry also had well below average GCE AS pass rates in 2002. GNVQ advanced science had very low pass rates for the three years from 1999 to 2001. The GCSE science pass rate has been in line with the national average for the three years to 2001. College data show that this improved in 2002. The GCSE mathematics syllabus, with the largest number of examination entries, had pass rates below national averages in 2000 and 2001.

44. The retention rate for most two-year GCE A-level courses was around the national average for the three years to 2001. The low pass rates for GCE AS in 2001 precluded some students from progressing from GCE AS to GCE A level in some subjects. In-year retention for GCE A-level students in 2001/02 was 95% or higher in most subjects. For most GCSE subjects, the retention rate was in line with the national averages for the three years to 2001. In mathematics, the retention rate over the three years has been better than the national average.

45. The standard of current students' work is satisfactory. Students are competent at practical work. In chemistry, an award scheme is used to encourage accuracy in titrations. Some students are reluctant to contribute in class, they lack confidence in presenting their answers and they do not always use the correct scientific terminology. Attendance at the observed lessons was 76%.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	130	91	90
		% retention	82	74	72
		% pass rate	40	42	42
GCSE mathematics (one year)	2	No. of starts	640	546	455
		% retention	78	73	75
		% pass rate	29	33	34
GCE A-level physics (two year)	3	No. of starts	64	70	53
		% retention	78	71	60
		% pass rate	76	52	63
GCE A-level mathematics (two year)	3	No. of starts	79	103	133
		% retention	71	76	71
		% pass rate	81	64	57
GCE A-level biology (two year)	3	No. of starts	77	85	54
		% retention	75	71	61
		% pass rate	75	68	60
GCE A-level chemistry (two year)	3	No. of starts	79	75	53
		% retention	76	75	70
		% pass rate	82	65	83

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

Quality of education and training

46. Some 50% of the lessons observed were good or better, which is below the national average for the curriculum area. Most lessons are well planned and structured. Of the science lessons observed, the majority were very good or excellent and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In mathematics, there were fewer good or excellent lessons and there was some unsatisfactory teaching. In science lessons, well-planned practical work and demonstrations are used to illustrate theory and to reinforce and consolidate learning. In a GCSE science lesson the teacher gave an excellent heart and lung demonstration. Skilful questioning involved almost all the students and there was lively participation and interaction. Students' responses showed a good understanding of the topic and the teacher drew on their own experiences of choking and asthma, and used these to reinforce and explain aspects of the structure and function of the respiratory system. In a GCE AS chemistry lesson on bonding, the topic was introduced with a practical exercise making slime which the students tackled with evident enjoyment. In science, the best theory lessons included lively explanations which generated interest in the subject. Humour was used to good effect. There was good interaction with students and evident enthusiasm from the teacher for the subject. In a biology lesson on variation, humorous anecdotes and photographs were used effectively and skilful questioning involved all the students who displayed interest, enthusiasm and a willingness to contribute ideas of their own. Other science theory lessons were dull and uninspiring with too much talk by the teacher, a considerable amount of student note-taking and too little active participation. Questions were asked infrequently and students were sometimes reluctant to respond. Too much mathematics teaching is mundane and consists of an explanation by the teacher followed by practice. There is insufficient checking of students' understanding and some lessons lack a sense of purpose. Teachers do not always target the weaker students when offering help. In the better mathematics lessons, a brisk pace is maintained and all students are involved through question and answer. All the students are encouraged as they work on examples and they clearly enjoy their work and gain confidence in their developing skills.

47. Assessment of students' work is good. Homework is set regularly and marked and returned promptly. There are good examples of detailed written feedback in environmental science and GCSE mathematics. Students on GCE AS and A-level courses are given a personal predicted grade and their performance compared with this grade is regularly assessed. These data are collected centrally and circulated to personal tutors. Subject teachers draw up action plans with students who are underachieving. Managers monitor the data and check that action is taken to address any underachievement.

48. Teachers are very well qualified and experienced. Some laboratories at both sites are poor with dilapidated benches and fittings. They do not provide a stimulating learning environment. Biology laboratories are sometimes too small for the size of class. Laboratories do not have computers and no use of ICT was seen in lessons. Various materials are available on the college intranet and occasionally students are referred to useful web sites. The library bookstock is good at Leigh and satisfactory at Parsons Walk, Wigan. Students are able to gain access to computers in the library throughout the day.

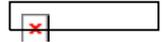
49. There is little encouragement to students to take up enrichment opportunities outside their subjects. Students value the friendly relationships they have with teachers who are encouraging and supportive. Teachers are willing to give help outside lesson time. Lesson plans often include references to students' individual needs to indicate special tasks to cater for the varying abilities of students.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Quality assurance procedures are insufficiently thorough. Managers have been slow to take action to address the consistently well below average pass rates at GCE A level. The end of academic year 2001/02 self-assessment reports for the curriculum area are ineffective and do identify these as a weakness, but managers have begun to take action during the current term. The entry criteria for science and mathematics GCE AS and A levels have been reviewed to ensure that students are not placed on inappropriate courses. Attendance is monitored closely and parents are kept informed. Co-ordination between the two

college sites is not always effective and different schemes of work are used for the same syllabus at the two sites. The college internal lesson observation profile for mathematics judged a far higher proportion of lessons to be good or better than those observed by inspectors.

Construction



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

Contributory grade in work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good standards of practical work
- good pass rates on GNVQ and precursors, NVQ level 2 wood occupations and electrical installation
- well-managed work-based learning programmes
- good support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- strong emphasis of equality of opportunity with employers.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on NVQ level 2 bricklaying and NVQ level 3 wood occupations
- falling retention rates on NVQ level 2 bricklaying and NVQ level 2 wood occupations
- inadequate course reviews that are not evaluative
- inflexible entry arrangements for work-based learning.

Scope of provision

51. The construction area offers a broad range of craft courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels including bricklaying, wood occupations, painting and decorating, plumbing, interior design and electrical installation. There are currently 189 students aged 16 to 18 and 90 adults on full-time programmes. Approximately 280 students aged 16 to 18 are on foundation modern apprenticeship schemes and 220 adults are on advanced modern apprenticeship schemes. Good links exist with Kingsdown High School and 60 pupils from Years 10 and 11 attend the college to undertake the foundation award in building craft occupations. Construction craft students also work in the community. Recently they constructed a Christmas float for the local Rotary Club and are currently refurbishing it.

Achievement and standards

52. Pass rates for the GNVQ advanced certificate in construction and the built environment have been above 90% for the three years 1999 to 2001. For the same period the pass rates for national certificates and diplomas are 85%, 88% and 86% respectively. These are consistently above national averages. For NVQ level 2 wood occupations, pass rates are also consistently above national averages. In contrast, pass rates for NVQ level 2 in bricklaying have been well below average at 20%, 56% and 27% for the three years to 2001. Pass rates for the same period for NVQ level 3 wood occupations are 81%, 77% and 65%. Both courses are showing a downward trend.

53. Retention rates for NVQ level 2 bricklaying are well below average at 39% for 1999, 68% for 2000, and 42% for 2001, against the national average of 62% in 2001. Retention rates for wood occupations NVQ level 2 for the same period are 41%, 69% and 49%, against the national average of 68% in 2001.

54. Students' practical work is good and matches industry standards. Most students' attainment is above average. However, in a few cases, students' attainments are below the level expected for the stage and type of the course. For example, in a lesson on the application of number, AVCE students who study units of mathematics and structural mechanics were given tasks compatible with a level 1 qualification.

55. The college has held a work-based learning contract for the two years 2000/01 and 2001/02. It is not yet possible to determine pass rates as no students have sat examinations but the retention rate for modern apprentices is currently at 74%.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds 2360 electrical installations	2	No. of starts	24	29	20
		% retention	39	93	70
		% pass rate	78	75	93
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	69	77	57
		% retention	41	69	49
		% pass rate	86	90	73
NVQ brickwork	2	No. of starts	31	36	40
		% retention	39	68	42
		% pass rate	20	56	27
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	33	63	50

		% retention	58	75	56
		% pass rate	11	79	67
NVQ painting and decorating	2	No. of starts	23	34	27
		% retention	45	44	58
		% pass rate	100	91	69
GNVQ advanced construction built environment	3	No. of starts	21	13	11
		% retention	67	77	64
		% pass rate	86	90	100
NVQ wood occupations	3	No. of starts	43	34	41
		% retention	98	91	90
		% pass rate	81	77	65
GNVQ precursors	3	No. of starts	18	13	20
		% retention	39	62	70
		% pass rate	85	88	86

Source: ISR (1999 to 2001)

Quality of education and training

56. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In two lessons, teachers did not have lesson plans and schemes of work. In a further three, teachers did not identify what it was that they expected students to know at the end of the lesson. In the better theory lessons, teachers checked students' understanding regularly by good questioning. Most recording and monitoring of students' progress are good. Construction students are aware of their progress against that expected and can readily identify tasks required for achievement. In some of the weaker theory lessons, teachers did not provide tasks of varying demand to match the needs of mixed ability groups. In two lessons, the allocated exercises were very basic for the level of the qualification.

57. Practical activities are well organised and relate to situations that are likely to occur in the workplace. For example, in carpentry and joinery students work on skirting boards, door hanging, mortice locks and the erection and dismantling of scaffolding. In a plumbing lesson, students carried out gas tightness tests competently and to industry standards. Emphasis on health and safety is good. Risk assessment sheets, health and safety signs and clear instructions are posted on the walls of the workshops. Students adhere to the regulations by using goggles, hard hats and safety footwear. The wearing of personal protective equipment is mandatory for all students and is monitored closely. College workshops are spacious with adequate stocks of good quality tools and equipment to industrial standards. Wood machines conform to the latest provision and use of work equipment regulations (PUWER).

58. All students have initial assessment/diagnostic tests shortly after they start their course. Students have a high regard for the support they receive from teachers. Most teachers explain clearly the measures they need to take to improve their performance. An effective induction introduces students to the demands of their programme. Tutorial support is variable. Not all tutors observe the guidelines in the college's personal tutor handbook. In some areas, tutorial support is satisfactory whereas in others, full-time and part-time students are not given tutorials. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. The teaching and assessment of key skills are good: teachers make effective links with the practical construction context to aid students' understanding.

59. There are significant variations in the quality of assessment and teachers' feedback to students. Feedback is not always constructive and does not help students improve their performance. In construction crafts, students' portfolios are well organised and presented, but teachers' feedback is

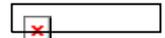
often confined to 'ticks', rather than identifying how the work could be improved. On Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) programmes, the assignments are of an acceptable standard but do not make reference to the assessment criteria expected by the council. Numerical marking and percentages are used instead of criterion referenced grading. In construction crafts, internal verification reports are reliable and contain helpful feedback for assessors. Internal verification on BTEC programmes is insufficiently thorough, and findings are poorly recorded.

60. Employers involved with modern apprenticeships provide on-the-job learning. They understand the frameworks and NVQ requirements and effectively link on-the-job learning with the college off-the-job element. The standard of work produced by apprentices in the workplace is high and is often subject to scrutiny by external organisations. Training advisers assess employers for health and safety, before learners are enrolled on a modern apprenticeship programme. Health and safety are regularly monitored throughout students' programmes.

Leadership and management

61. The leadership and management of construction are satisfactory. Team meetings at faculty, curriculum area and programme levels are held regularly. Teachers were appraised early in the term and their performance is monitored and reviewed through lesson observations. Course reviews are not sufficiently evaluative and do not provide sufficient evidence that weaknesses are being remedied systematically. Work-based learning programmes are well managed. The staff structure is clear and the two training advisers who look after construction modern apprentices have appropriate assessor qualifications. They work closely with employers and their apprentices to monitor progress towards completion of frameworks. Equality of opportunity is promoted actively with employers, who are given copies of the college policy and procedures to protect the apprentices from all forms of harassment. Many modern apprentices experience delays in starting their off-the-job learning as the college does not operate roll-on, roll-off programmes throughout the year.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- very good retention and pass rates
- good resources
- wide range of progression routes
- excellent support for students with special needs
- high priority given to health and safety

- well-organised work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- many poorly prepared handouts and poor use of overhead projectors
- poor accommodation
- inflexible entry arrangements for work-based learning.

Scope of provision

62. The engineering provision comprises three curriculum areas: automotive engineering, mechanical engineering including fabrication and welding, and electrical/ electronic engineering. Programmes offered in all three disciplines range from foundation to advanced level on a full-time, part-time day release and evening only basis. Qualifications are available at NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 plus national certificate and diploma levels, together with other craft and technician programmes. A vocational GCE A level in engineering can also be taken. There are a total of 752 students in the combined sections, constituting some 5% of the college total. Some 213 are in automobile engineering, 315 in mechanical and 224 in electrical/electronics. In the 16-18 year old grouping there are 99 students at level 1, 150 at level 2 and 184 at level 3. The figures for 19+ students are 19, 113 and 187 respectively. Full-time student numbers are 100 at level 1, 41 at level 2 and 149 at level 3, with 17,160 and 206 part-time students respectively. Evening only numbers are low with one at level 1, 62 at level 2 and 16 at level 3. Of the 55 modern apprentices undertaking work-based learning, 32 are motor vehicle apprentices, with small numbers in mechanical, electrical, welding and fabrication, maintenance, and technical services disciplines. Half of them are working at foundation level and half at advanced level. Many more apprentices from other training providers attend the college for off-the-job lessons. The work-based learning is managed by the training section. Level 2 training is provided within the college by the individual curriculum areas, whilst level 3 training occurs in the workplace.

Achievement and standards

63. Retention and pass rates on most courses are well above average. Retention was well below in 2001/02 on City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair and maintenance skills, and the BTEC national diploma in electrical engineering (though a number left to take up employment). Pass rates, however, in the same year were well above average for GNVQ intermediate engineering, and the two work-based learning NVQ programmes. Attendance in classes observed was 75% against the national average for engineering of 76%. The work produced by most students is of a satisfactory standard both academically and practically, and there are some examples of higher standard work. Examples of good academic work were observed in the design of a kettle in a materials lesson, in the use of creative calibration to measure the temperature of a closed hand and in the simulation of electrical circuits. A high standard of practical work by work-based learners was noticeably seen in the workplace and also in welding and fabrication.

A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	30	28	34
		% retention	97	79	76
		% pass rate	62	59	62
Computer-aided design 4351-01	2	No. of starts	37	32	32
		% retention	86	59	94
		% pass rate	91	79	63
NVQ engineering	2	No. of starts	32	29	16
		% retention	75	79	81
		% pass rate	100	86	69
National diploma mechanical	3	No. of starts	16	18	15
		% retention	94	89	69
		% pass rate	80	86	100
National diploma electrical	3	No. of starts	37	34	25
		% retention	70	82	48
		% pass rate	62	89	50
National certificate mechanical	3	No. of starts	21	19	34
		% retention	71	95	82
		% pass rate	67	90	52
NVQ vehicle mechanic and electrical systems	3	No. of starts	23	22	18
		% retention	82	95	100
		% pass rate	100	90	100
National certificate electrical	3	No. of starts	24	20	24
		% retention	71	95	83
		% pass rate	88	100	85

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

Quality of education and training

64. The overall quality of teaching is very good. Much of the teaching observed was good or better with the remainder being satisfactory. Tutors use a wide range of teaching methods during theory and practical sessions. Extensive use is made of individual and small group work enabling students to gain confidence in their own abilities. Theory lessons for students aged 16 to 18 often include examples from teachers' personal industrial experiences, whereas adult students are encouraged to draw from their own experiences. Most teachers show a high level of enthusiasm for their subject. Students value teachers' knowledge and their approachability. ICT is used well by most teachers. Many handouts are poorly prepared and include incorrect spellings. On overhead projector slides used in some lessons there are key symbols missing from diagrams and arrows pointing to the wrong component. On occasions the writing on the slides is too small.

65. Most resources in engineering are good. Those available include a wide range of software simulation packages, an excellent resource for teaching programmable logic control systems and a computer integrated learning centre with a range of electronic and engineering applications. In contrast, much of the motor vehicle engineering car stock is outdated.

66. Staff are well qualified, suitably experienced and all hold assessor and verifier qualifications. Many have teaching qualifications. There are also instructor technicians in some workshops who hold assessor and teaching qualifications, and provide valuable assistance. FE students benefit from the staff's skills and the equipment available through the college's HE provision. Accommodation is often poor and particularly so in the motor vehicle section, where classrooms are dull and uninspiring and large roof support columns restrict view and movement.

67. There are a wide range of progression routes. Level 1 programmes are available in all three curriculum areas and can lead through to HE. The main programmes run are national certificate and diploma ones in mechanical and electrical areas. Common core units and flexible attendance patterns allow for flexibility in student access. School classes attend for taster days or NVQ requirements and the college is a pilot for the new GCSE in engineering. Programme hours on the mechanical engineering certificate have been reduced below the awarding body recommendations but teachers strive to cover the prescribed topics and standards of attainment match those expected.

68. Excellent support is available particularly for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a strong accent on health and safety, and students work in a safe environment. A metal etching reagent, however, was not labelled and was used by students without wearing safety glasses.

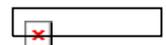
69. A good range of programmes is available for work-based learners. The courses are carefully planned and well organised. The teaching is good and both retention and pass rates within work-based learning are well above average. The interchange of information with both students and employers is effective, and student progress is well monitored. Productive partnerships exist with other training providers. However, students are only able to join courses in September, which causes delays for some students in starting their programmes.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers adopt an open and approachable style of management. Team meetings occur regularly. Priorities identified at team meetings form the first stage of the self-assessment cycle. The staff appraisal and development programme is well established, and staff are satisfied with the opportunities given to update their skills and academic knowledge. There are no part-time staff. Assessment and internal verification procedures are made sufficiently thorough. Arrangements for monitoring students' progress are effective, though not all students are sufficiently aware of their own progress.

71. Few engineering students are women or members of minority ethnic communities. There are no plans or procedures to increase their numbers.

Business administration



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

Strengths

- very good pass rates on NVQ administration and diploma in health service reception courses
- good standard of practical work

- flexible learning programmes matched to the needs of the community
- well-managed courses
- thoroughly planned teaching
- rigorous and on-going assessment
- effective use of realistic working environment.

Weaknesses

- poor levels of attendance on courses for adults
- unreliable and insufficient ICT resources
- drab and uninspiring teaching accommodation.

Scope of provision

72. The college provides a wide range of courses within business administration. The offer ranges from foundation to advanced level courses. At the time of inspection, there were 1,500 students studying at the Wigan and Leigh sites. Full-time students aged 16 to 18 predominantly study on NVQ administration courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 or a certificate course in administration. Adult update programmes include NVQ administration, the certificate in administration, a diploma in health services reception and an extensive range of single subjects. The range of programmes is comprehensive and many have been redesigned to encourage adults to return to education, to meet the needs of employers and the local community. The college has been prepared to put on courses at different times to attract students and as a result, the curriculum area has been successful in widening participation. Weekend programmes are taught at both sites and provide basic to advanced level training in the use of business software.

Achievement and standards

73. Retention and pass rates are at, or above national averages for most courses. In some cases

they are significantly higher. The pass rates on NVQ administration (levels 2 and 3) and the diploma in health service reception are well above average. In contrast, pass rates on most community word processing courses are well below average.

74. The standard of students' work is good and portfolios are well presented. Students aged 16 to 18 receive a good grounding in a wide range of administrative and secretarial skills and many progress onto further study. For example, 67% of the NVQ level 2 full-time group studying at the Leigh campus returned to study the level 3 qualification. The average attendance at the lessons observed during inspection was 74% which is just slightly below the national average for this area of learning, but the average attendance in the lessons for adult returners was only 68% which is well below average. Teachers follow up the reasons for absence and have developed a comprehensive monitoring system to check on progress against expected standards.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Audio transcription stage 1	1	No. of starts	44	39	45
		% retention	66	69	80
		% pass rate	90	70	72
Diploma in health service reception	2	No. of starts	9	18	14
		% retention	100	94	93
		% pass rate	67	71	69
Word processing stage 2	2	No. of starts	80	83	95
		% retention	88	88	93
		% pass rate	67	85	76
NVQ administration (one year)	2	No. of starts	211	171	100
		% retention	80	79	82
		% pass rate	75	84	82
NVQ administration (one year)	3	No. of starts	54	64	47
		% retention	93	77	87
		% pass rate	48	78	59
Word processing stage 3	3	No. of starts	40	32	23
		% retention	93	88	91
		% pass rate	76	82	62

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

Quality of education and training

75. Lessons are thoroughly planned and teachers use an extensive range of methods to gain and keep the interest of learners. In an NVQ lesson for adult students, a PAYE exercise was used to good effect to develop skills in replicating formulae and formatting cells. There are comprehensive schemes of work and lesson plans for all courses. Schemes of work are made available to students and are cross-referenced to the syllabuses and requirements of the respective awarding body. In many lessons, teachers ensure that students work at a pace matching their potential, and opportunities are provided for more able students to develop higher level skills. In 90% of workshop sessions teaching was very good. Students on business administration courses benefit from a well-managed placement in one of the college's two business administration centres. These placements provide a highly effective environment in which to develop competence. In some lessons involving

practical ICT demonstrations, teaching was not enhanced by the use of an interactive whiteboard.

76. Students are well supported by their teachers and issues raised are dealt with promptly by staff. Additional support needs are identified on entry to the college and many students receive good one-to-one support in class. This support was particularly effective on the NVQ level 1 programme.

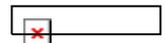
77. There is rigorous and on-going assessment of students' progress. Students are provided with assessment grids which identify where assessment activities meet awarding body requirements. Detailed progress charts are kept up to date for each student and these are used to monitor achievements in each unit of work. Consolidation and review sessions provide students with the opportunity to complete outstanding assignments or undertake additional tasks. Teachers produce detailed progress reports each term, and undertake on-going review of progress with students during tutorials.

78. Many classrooms used by business administration students on the Pagefield site are in poor decorative condition. Few classrooms display students' work. Space and layout restricts the range of teaching activities which can be undertaken. In one bookkeeping classroom the whiteboard was too small to enable the teacher to demonstrate how to enter various business transactions in the ledgers. There are shortages of computers and computer rooms on the Pagefield site and the slow response rate of the ICT technician support team has had a detrimental impact on students' learning.

Leadership and management

79. Management and leadership of the curriculum area and courses are good. Regular meetings of course teams are held and minutes detail any actions that need to be taken and those responsible for implementation. These are followed up promptly. There is a particular focus on student issues and this has led to improvements in course design, teaching and assessment. Students comment very positively on course organisation. Realistic retention and achievement targets are set and monitored by the course and curriculum leader. The self-assessment report is insufficiently rigorous in assessing the quality of teaching and learning.

Business, management professional studies



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on accounting courses
- well-planned teaching
- constructive and thorough written feedback on students' work
- exemplary standard of project work by management students

- well-designed and professionally presented course materials
- excellent accommodation and facilities at the investment centre.

Weaknesses

- lack of full-time business provision at levels 1 and 2
- low retention rates on full-time courses
- limited sharing of good practice across the business curriculum
- some unsuitable and drab classrooms.

Scope of provision

80. The college offers full-time courses in AVCE business studies and GCE AS and A-level business studies. There are 190 full-time students and 980 part-time students currently enrolled on courses. Around 95% of students on full-time courses are aged 16 to 18. Few full-time students combine AVCE programmes with GCE AS. Many AVCE students take advantage of the good opportunities provided by the college to progress to Higher National Diploma (HND) and degree courses in business studies. The range of part-time courses is extensive and includes both NVQ and professional management accounting courses, Trades Union Congress (TUC) courses, the Institute of Legal Management (ILM) certificate, Chartered Management Institute (CMI) diploma and executive diploma in management, and several programmes under the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Part-time students are almost exclusively adults and make up over 80% of total enrolments. Full-time enrolments have fallen over the three years from 2000/01 to 2002/03. The GNVQ intermediate business course did not recruit sufficient students to run in September 2002 and there is no full-time business provision below level 3.

Achievement and standards

81. In 2002, GCE AS, AVCE and GNVQ intermediate retention rates were below national averages, and at the start of the term the college introduced strategies to address identified weaknesses. Around half of the students who completed GCE AS business studies in 2000/01 progressed to GCE A level. Retention rates on NVQ level 3 and NVQ level 4 accounting courses are well above average and pass rates are above national averages for levels 2, 3 and 4. Several new first-line and supervisory management courses have been developed to meet the increasing demand from employees throughout the region. Pass rates on these courses are consistently well above average.

82. Adults on accounting and management courses show high levels of motivation, knowledge and

competence. The standard of the project work seen for many students on personnel development and management courses is very high. It includes discriminating use of the Internet and is professionally presented. Students demonstrate excellent research and reporting skills and integrate business theory with their own commercial practice.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business, management and professional studies, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
AAT NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	56	74	48
		% retention	89	93	94
		% pass rate	64	70	60
NEBSM management certificate	3	No. of starts	75	67	77
		% retention	96	97	70
		% pass rate	99	95	85
AAT NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	67	55	73
		% retention	76	84	81
		% pass rate	75	59	42
IPD certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	38	45	41
		% retention	95	98	88
		% pass rate	100	95	75
GNVQ/AVCE business	3	No. of starts	85	68	73
		% retention	68	74	59
		% pass rate	66	72	79
GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	*	*	69
		% retention	*	*	86
		% pass rate	*	*	68
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	112	92	93
		% retention	69	75	69
		% pass rate	63	72	53
AAT NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	48	31	33
		% retention	96	94	97
		% pass rate	65	83	91

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

83. Most teaching is satisfactory or better and a third is very good or excellent. The curriculum area has experienced several changes of staff over the last academic year and the enthusiasm and motivation of some new teachers has benefited students. Some staff have very recent commercial experience which they use to good effect in their teaching. All courses are well planned with pre-determined assessment strategies. Lesson plans are detailed and course materials are professionally produced. The standard of study notes and handbooks in management programmes

is exemplary. Knowledgeable and stimulating teaching of management studies motivates students to work consistently well. Teachers of management encourage students to choose challenging and relevant contexts for project and group activity; they do not present solutions but draw students' attention to potential issues and encourage them to think and act in a professional way. Teachers of accounting are adept at translating difficult technical concepts into simple terms. A minority of lessons in business studies was unimaginative and failed to maintain the interest of all students. The pace of the lesson was brisk, allowing students little time to think for themselves or consider the implications of the topic being taught, and some activities involved little subsequent analysis. Students on GCE AS and A-level courses were of differing abilities and some had studied business studies at GCSE whereas others had not. The teacher did not vary the approach or provide tasks of varying demand to meet the needs of all the students.

84. Many staff have developed very strong links with employers through regular visits to companies and membership of local business groups. These close links have helped to generate interest in business courses. All AVCE students take part in work experience and several assignments draw on local business situations. GCE AS and A-level students have no course opportunities to visit local companies and their studies rely heavily on textbook theory and case studies.

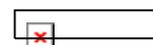
85. Students have very different experiences relating to accommodation. Many business and accounting lessons are in drab classrooms. Some lessons observed by inspectors were held in cramped conditions that restricted teaching activities. By contrast, most management courses take place in the Investment Centre, which offers excellent accommodation and good car parking. The suite of seminar and teaching rooms is modern, attractively furnished and has a welcoming, professional atmosphere.

86. The quality of assessment practice is high. Teachers mark work promptly and carefully, clearly identifying where errors have been made and marks gained, suggesting how alternative solutions to a problem might be achieved. Students are given written guidance on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

87. Leadership and management are satisfactory but there is a lack of co-ordination to ensure a consistency of practice and provision across the area. Curriculum teams meet frequently and minutes arising from the meetings are recorded and circulated. Recent initiatives to redress poor retention in some full-time courses have been rigorously monitored to check effectiveness, though many course managers are not familiar with statistical measures of course retention and achievement, or the targets to which they are working. The faculty manager and curriculum managers of AVCE, accounting and management provision ensure that provision is well organised. The GCE AS and A-level provision is separately managed in the sixth form centres. Practices and procedures relating to course standards, curriculum development and assessment differ across curriculum areas. There were many examples where expertise was not shared to benefit students. Some staff are unclear about the roles of some senior and cross-college managers.

Information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), City and Guilds and IBT2 courses

- wide range of courses which widens participation for adults
- good retention rates on most courses
- effective teaching which develops confidence in adults.

Weaknesses

- inadequate resources to support learning at the Pagefield site
- low pass rates on ECDL
- low retention rates on IBT3
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

88. The college offers a wide range of ICT courses from entry level to level 4. They are offered at the Wigan and Leigh campuses and in about 20 community-based centres in local schools, community clubs and on employers' premises. Over 2,500 part-time students study each year for ICT qualifications, including CLAIT at levels 1 and 2, the ECDL and more specialist courses such as web design and computer programming. The college offers part-time courses on Saturday mornings and through Learndirect. There are about 30 students on access to HE courses and the college offers a substantial programme of HE courses in ICT including Higher National Certificate (HNC) and HND as well as a degree in computing. The college has close links with three universities.

Achievement and standards

89. The pass rates on CLAIT courses have been above the national average for the last three years. Retention is also above average with a large proportion of the over 1,300 students each year completing their courses. The City and Guilds and OCR basic computing course shows a similarly above average level of retention and pass rates, with about 90% of students on the entry level OCR basic ICT courses achieving a pass grade and progressing to level 1 courses. The pass rates on level 2 courses vary. The pass rates on the OCR integrated technology course are well above average at over 75%, but the pass rates on the ECDL course have been below the national average for the three years to 2001. The retention rate is well above average on most part-time ICT courses except on the IBT3 course, which has been consistently 10% below the national average for the past three years. Attendance during inspection week was approximately 75%. A high proportion of

students from entry level and level 1 courses progress to level 2 and 3 courses, and there are examples of students who have successfully progressed from entry level and level 1 to level 4.

90. The standard of students' current work is good and is carefully marked, with both written and verbal feedback from teachers helping students to improve. In practical lessons, students are able to use computers and software packages with confidence and are able to explain what they are doing using correct terminology. They have developed good research skills through the use of the Internet and libraries. Few students record and review their own progress following their assessments.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communication technology, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	1,384	1,773	1,373
		% retention	87	82	89
		% pass rate	66	76	81
OCR Internet technologies	1	No. of starts	10	126	196
		% retention	90	96	80
		% pass rate	56	23	29
City and Guilds basic IT	1	No. of starts	*	355	483
		% retention	*	88	96
		% pass rate	*	83	86
European computer driving licence	2	No. of starts	171	1,262	685
		% retention	100	95	80
		% pass rate	30	12	9
IBT2	2	No. of starts	306	504	616
		% retention	87	87	89
		% pass rate	67	70	75
IBT3	3	No. of starts	30	90	199
		% retention	80	72	72
		% pass rate	38	53	56

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

*course not running

Quality of education and training

91. All of the teaching is at least satisfactory and most of the teaching and learning observed was considered good or better. The best lessons were very well planned and prepared. The range of activities was varied and the lecturers made good use of group work, discussions, research tasks, short quizzes and computer projection equipment. These lessons were effectively managed and there were constructive staff/student relationships. Students at all levels developed good research and thinking skills as well as sound knowledge of the common software packages through practical work. In one theory lesson, students worked in groups to prepare data flow diagrams and so developed good communication skills through discussions about the reasons for taking a particular action. Students argued alternatives with each other. In a practical lesson, students prepared letterhead and business cards for an imaginary company, using the Internet and art packages to identify suitable logos and preparing imaginative letter headings for the company.

92. A small number of lessons lack variety, with the teachers giving an explanation or demonstration followed by the students practising exercises which did not include more demanding work for the more able students. In some of these lessons the students do not have access to model answers or detailed learning material, so time is wasted as they wait for the teacher to check their work.

93. Teachers are suitably qualified with all having relevant ICT qualifications, about half of these at degree level. Almost all of the teachers have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. A significant number are trained in assessment and internal verification and use these skills to benefit students through clear assessment and good feedback. The teaching team understands the concerns of adults returning to learning and they show empathy with learners of all ability and ages.

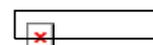
94. At the two main campuses at Wigan and at Leigh, most computers are networked and have Internet access. There is insufficient technical support to ensure that software and hardware are always serviceable. Some of the rooms are poorly equipped with either limited printing facilities, uncomfortably low temperatures or unsuitable furniture. At the local schools and other centres where adults study, there is adequate equipment. Students make good use of the range of books, CD-ROMs and on-line databases within the Wigan campus library.

Leadership and management

95. Courses in ICT are located in two different college sections and also within the community provision. There are three managers to oversee the separate sections and there is no one appointed to oversee overall provision. Teams of staff within the separate sections are effectively managed and meet regularly to discuss course needs, undertake annual reviews and prepare action plans from the annual self-assessment reporting process. There is good teamwork in the curriculum areas and staff are accessible and helpful; qualities valued by the students. Teachers present a positive attitude towards students' individual needs and the effective advice and guidance processes ensure that students are offered equality of access and opportunity. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified and specific support given, with good relations between teachers and support staff benefiting the students through carefully planned care. The college has purchased specialist software for use by sight-impaired students and a modified workstation to accommodate students in wheelchairs. Within individual sections there are good internal verification/quality assurance procedures, and some work is marked by two teachers or chosen for special scrutiny. An advanced ICT practitioner was appointed in September 2002 with a role as 'critical friend', to support teachers and encourage good practices.

96. The management structures to co-ordinate multi-site provision in ICT are not clear. The arrangements for sharing of good practice are poor and there is limited analysis of retention and achievement data to identify specific areas of underperformance. There is wide variation in the way in which teachers record student feedback, with the best showing week-by-week progress and the poorest as ticks on a spreadsheet.

Computing and information technology



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

Strengths

- much very good teaching
- strong adherence to computer industry standards and commercial practice

- comprehensive range of courses from foundation to degree level
- good individual course management.

Weaknesses

- inadequate resources in some classrooms
- insufficient sharing of curriculum expertise.

Scope of provision

97. The college offers a comprehensive range of programmes in computing and IT at GNVQ foundation and intermediate level, AVCE, GCE AS and A level, and first and national diploma courses. In-college progression is available to HND and degree courses through partnerships with universities. Students may take a BSc in computing through links with the University of Sunderland. Of students on the national diploma course, 42% progressed to the HND in 2001/02. The college has diversified its range of level 2 and 3 programmes to include the first and national diploma in IT practitioner awards; over 70 students are enrolled on these programmes. Recruitment is spread across the various levels and enrolment has increased from 545 students in 2001/02 to 596 in 2002/03. There is excellent in-college progression between levels 1 and 3 with over 50% of intermediate students progressing to the next level.

Achievement and standards

98. Pass and retention rates have improved on full-time computing courses over the last two years and were at or above the national average in 2002. Pass rates at level 1 are above the national average and pass rates on the NVQ 'using IT' course have been at 100% since 2000/01. The pass rate on GNVQ foundation ICT has improved from 35% in 1998/99, to 73% in 2001/02, which is 6% above the national average. In most lessons seen by inspectors, attainment was judged to be good or better, well exceeding the expected standard. Attendance was very good, with average attendance at 84%.

99. Students' work is of a very high standard and students demonstrate excellent practical skills which adhere closely to computer industry standards and commercial practices. In a database design lesson, students were able to normalise data to third normal form and translate these into data tables. In a C-programming lesson, students made use of the facilities of the programming language to call modules using a minimum of code. In most lessons, students are encouraged to use trial and error in determining code and rules. These techniques were seen at their most effective where a group of students had to work out the logic of nested 'if statements' to get the right conditions tested; students not only had to get the right syntax but the correct logic sequence.

A sample of retention and pass rates in computing and information technology, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
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GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	21	12	14
		% retention	81	100	64
		% pass rate	35	33	67
NVQ using IT	1	No. of starts	*	13	11
		% retention	*	85	64
		% pass rate	*	73	100
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	55	58	52
		% retention	82	86	71
		% pass rate	49	42	70
NVQ using IT	2	No. of starts	*	*	21
		% retention	*	*	71
		% pass rate	*	*	60
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	10	52	53
		% retention	80	71	60
		% pass rate	50	58	66
National diploma in computing	3	No. of starts	29	39	65
		% retention	62	74	72
		% pass rate	83	63	78

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

*course not running

Quality of education and training

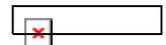
100. Teachers plan their lessons well and use a variety of activities and materials to sustain interest. Teachers know their students well and make good use of their knowledge of prior attainment in matching demands to the abilities of the group, ensuring all students are allocated activities commensurate with their potential. Practical lessons are well managed and students are highly motivated to work successfully at their own pace. Individual support for students in practical lessons is very good with teachers demonstrating excellent subject knowledge and technical competence. In a GNVQ foundation lesson, students used an IT-based program to create a presentation on a topic of personal interest. The quality of their work was far in advance of that expected of the foundation level. Students are encouraged to collaborate in level 3 practical lessons. Practical assignments link theory and practice well. In a first diploma lesson, students had to label the components of a motherboard and then produce a schematic diagram using design software. Students were highly motivated to complete this task. In another example, the tutor asked students to produce presentations on how visual display equipment worked. These presentations were collated and put onto the college intranet for future student use.

101. Most computer facilities are appropriate for the range of courses offered, but they limit students' opportunities to learn in some circumstances. For example, in some of the larger groups, there are insufficient computers for the size of the group and students have to share computers. The IT centre is often oversubscribed which prevents students using computers outside lesson time. The layout of some of the classrooms undermines effective teaching as students often have difficulty seeing the whiteboard or finding enough space in which to make notes.

Leadership and management

102. The computing and IT curriculum is spread across a number of sections. Each section and the courses they offer are well managed. There is good teamwork and the staff in each section teach across all sites. Each team has implemented successful actions to improve student retention and achievement. Staff are involved in the self-assessment and strategic planning procedures, and teachers and course managers start this process when undertaking course reviews. All staff know the targets for recruitment, retention and achievement and these targets are reviewed at regular course team and faculty meetings. There is clear line-management responsibility for the setting and communication of targets and other college imperatives. Equality of opportunity is not monitored at course team level. Uniform quality systems and documentation are used across all venues, but good practice is not shared effectively across the various sections within this area of learning.

Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism



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

Strengths

- much good teaching on travel courses
- good utilisation of specialist resources and realistic work environments in hospitality and travel
- effective learning support for level 1 students in hospitality and travel.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on many courses
- classroom accommodation is poor and is disruptive to learning
- narrow curriculum in leisure and hospitality
- inadequate internal moderation and verification procedures in hospitality
- unsatisfactory teaching and poor quality learning materials in theory classes.

Scope of provision

103. At the time of the inspection there were 275 full-time and 129 part-time students undertaking hospitality, leisure and tourism courses. Full-time provision includes vocational craft, supervisory and introductory management courses with good progression routes available from entry level to HE. The curriculum for leisure and hospitality is narrow at craft level. Short courses in food hygiene, BII licensees certificate and first aid are also taught and the college offers a preparation into employment programme at pre-entry level.

104. Since the start of this term, the college has undertaken some local industry based courses in cleaning, security and crowd stewarding, and there are some good links with local schools and national organisations to promote career opportunities and provide vocational taster courses.

Achievement and standards

105. Retention and pass rates are below the national average on many courses. Both retention and pass rates on the GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering course have been below the national average for the three years from 1999 to 2001. The GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism course also had both retention and pass rates that were significantly below the national average in 2001. In contrast, both the retention rates and pass rates on NVQ courses in catering are around or above the national average. College data for 2001/02 show some improvements in level 1 and 2 retention rates, suggesting a rate in line with that expected.

106. Absence in some observed lessons resulted in those students missing assessment opportunities. Lateness is also causing disruption in some lessons when students are sent away to complete paperwork and then return to the lesson even later. In the self-assessment report the liaison officer was identified as playing an important role in improving attendance and punctuality but nobody has been appointed to this position this academic year.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ food preparation and cookery (one year)	1	No. of starts	36	53	51
		% retention	86	79	74
		% pass rate	81	73	86
GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	9	*	10
		% retention	67	*	60
		% pass rate	83	*	67
NVQ food preparation and cookery (one year)	2	No. of starts	54	32	32
		% retention	87	84	84
		% pass rate	55	81	81
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	62	50	52
		% retention	82	82	81
		% pass rate	84	76	64
NVQ kitchen supervision	3	No. of starts	13	12	13
		% retention	77	83	69
		% pass rate	60	70	100

GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering	3	No. of starts	10	16	16
		% retention	40	56	47
		% pass rate	25	63	50
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	58	62	79
		% retention	64	52	66
		% pass rate	70	84	71

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

107. Much of the teaching and learning in travel lessons was satisfactory or better. In one lively session the teacher maintained the interest of students with a seamless mix of question and answer, group activities and references to industry experiences, which motivated the students to complete some potentially laborious procedures. Students also effectively developed their application of number skills as they worked with numerical information relating to speed, time zones and travel destinations. In the best lessons, planning is effective and a variety of learning activities, opportunities and methods to check for learning are included. Challenging activities are introduced to stretch the more able students and teachers identify individual student learning needs on their lesson plans.

108. In some of the weaker lessons, students do not understand terminology being used, the pace is too slow and learning support staff are not fully utilised. In most theory lessons insufficient use was made of IT resources. In practical sessions in hospitality, students were attentive and worked diligently under direction. However, the development of level 3 supervisory students in realistic work environments lacked direction, in particular with hazard analysis, risk assessment and the control of resources. In food preparation and food service courses, styles of catering, content in project classes, menus and food service procedures do not reflect adequately the breadth of current industry trends.

109. Classroom accommodation for students studying hospitality, leisure and tourism is poor. It provides ineffective soundproofing, obstructive features and, in most cases, is drab and uninspiring for students. Good use is made of specialist resources and realistic work environments such as the travel shop, the restaurant and the bar, which provide students with ample opportunities for assessment and skill development.

110. During induction the results of initial diagnostic assessment are used to devise individual student learning plans. Feedback on students' work is effective and highlights areas for improvement. After practical hospitality lessons, for example, students complete assessment evidence records, and participate in a comprehensive de-brief. Internal verification procedures are insufficient in hospitality. Verifiers do not systematically observe assessors, report back or provide action plans to redress identified weaknesses. There is some evidence of verification in students' portfolios but this is infrequent. The internal verification system does not include an effective or sufficient sample of assessments; this has been highlighted in external verifiers' reports.

111. Hospitality students have the opportunity to participate in a varied programme of enrichment activities including visits and excursions as well as work experience at Ascot, Aintree and external conference venues. Students in hospitality, leisure and travel are aware of the personal development opportunities available in the college but are not always encouraged to participate in activities such as sports teams or drama. Some hospitality and travel students have been involved in an ongoing European educational project over the last two years.

112. The Travel and Tourism National Training Organisation awarded the college Centre of

Excellence status in 2001. This provided the college with an opportunity to develop Ttento initiatives. One such initiative during the last academic year involved work experience with a high street travel agency. Many travel students, however, do not undertake supervised work experience outside of the college travel shop.

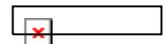
113. There is effective learning support for level 1 students in hospitality and travel lessons. Inclusive learning officers, trainer assessors and study support staff cater for individual students' needs. Records of achievement are kept and reviewed weekly. In addition, students who are considered at risk of leaving the course early are identified and closely monitored by their personal tutor. There is a comprehensive tutorial policy, student handbook, and individual learning plans have been introduced so that there is more effective use of personal tutor time.

Leadership and management

114. The leadership and management of the area are weak. There is insufficient monitoring by managers of the assessment policy and in particular the internal verification of NVQ courses. Line managers are unable to provide current timetables and do not monitor room utilisation.

115. Equal opportunities and race relations policies are monitored via student application and enrolment forms and reported to curriculum area managers. Analysis and target-setting procedures are unclear and arrangements for addressing the gender imbalance are inadequate. Course team members feel they have responsibility for the detailed and comprehensive self-assessment reviews that have led to development plans for the curriculum area.

Sports studies



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

Strengths

- well-equipped human performance laboratory and impact fitness centre
- good enrichment programme for sports students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on most advanced courses
- very low retention rates on several courses
- poor classroom accommodation and on-site practical sports facilities

- inadequate progression opportunities for students at level 1
- poor management of GCE A-level sport and physical education courses.

Scope of provision

116. Some 324 students follow a wide range of full-time courses in sport studies. Of these, 305 students are based at the Wigan campus and the remaining 19 at Leigh. Over 90% of learners are aged 16 to 18. The main courses include GCE AS and A-level physical education and sport studies; first and national diplomas in applied science (sport studies) and exercise science; diplomas and advanced diplomas in health and fitness; and NVQ level 1 sport and recreation. There is also a part-time diploma in nutrition. Students have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of representative team sports as part of the college's enrichment programme.

Achievement and standards

117. Pass rates on most advanced level courses are below the national average. For example, the pass rates on GCE A-level sport studies declined from 83% in 1999/2000 to 67% in 2000/01, which is 6% below the national average. A similar pattern can be seen in physical education; in 1999/2000 the pass rate was 73% but fell to 67% in 2000/01, which is 7% below the national average. This trend has continued with the introduction of the GCE AS and A-level courses. In contrast the first diploma in sport studies has maintained a very high pass rate of 96% for the last two years (2000/01 and 2001/02), compared to the national average of 78%.

118. Retention rates on several courses are significantly below national averages. The retention rate on the diploma in health and fitness was 36% in 2000/01 and this improved to 46% in 2001/02, but this is still 24% below the national average. The retention rate on the NVQ sport and recreation course has fallen steadily from 75% in 1999/2000 to 65% in 2001/02, some 16% below the national average.

119. The standard of work in some lessons is very good. Students on the advanced diploma in health and fitness demonstrate a good level of technical knowledge and confidence when making group presentations on specific sport injuries. Other students show good levels of practical skill and the ability to analyse accurately the key components of specific passing and shooting techniques. Assignment work demonstrates good research skills. Key skills are fully integrated into vocational assessment. NVQ level 1 sport and recreation students are making particularly good progress in IT.

A sample of retention and pass rates in sports studies, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First diploma sport studies	1	No. of starts	49	53	39
		% retention	73	85	67
		% pass rate	83	78	96
National diploma applied science (sport studies)	2	No. of starts	61	69	96
		% retention	70	70	53
		% pass rate	74	85	71
Advanced diploma	2	No. of starts	*	12	16

health and fitness studies		% retention	*	75	63
		% pass rate	*	100	90
NVQ sport and recreation	2	No. of starts	*	12	10
		% retention	*	75	70
		% pass rate	*	100	86
Diploma in health and fitness	2	No. of starts	*	8	14
		% retention	*	88	36
		% pass rate	*	57	100
GCSE sports games and recreation	2	No. of starts	68	79	26
		% retention	97	82	85
		% pass rate	72	15	9
GCE A-level sport studies	3	No. of starts	14	25	15
		% retention	50	72	67
		% pass rate	67	83	67
GCE A-level physical education	3	No. of starts	*	53	65
		% retention	*	66	68
		% pass rate	*	73	67

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

120. The overall standard of teaching is significantly lower than national college averages. Similarly, the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was significantly higher than the sector average. Much teaching is undemanding and is uninspiring. Questioning techniques often demand little more than monosyllabic responses. Students are not encouraged to extend their thinking, apply their knowledge or provide examples to illustrate points. Little opportunity is provided for students to share ideas between themselves. Teachers fail to check understanding thoroughly or frequently enough in lessons. Student involvement is often minimal. In one unproductive lesson, the teacher read from a handout for a significant part of the time available. Too many handouts are of poor quality. Overhead projector transparencies in several lessons were handwritten and difficult to read.

121. In the better lessons, teachers encouraged students to be fully involved and used a variety of learning methods. A practical netball session brought together first diploma and GCE A-level students to maximise opportunities for movement analysis during a game. Tutors handled both groups effectively and developed students' learning and attainment. In a fitness-testing lesson, students were completely motivated as a result of the tutor's enthusiasm and energy for the subject. Advanced diploma students studying joints made excellent use of digital photography and video to analyse the range of movement in a variety of joints. The sequences were put onto CD-ROM for more detailed analysis.

122. The human performance laboratory and impact fitness centre provide industry standard facilities for the sport studies courses. In contrast, classroom accommodation is unsatisfactory with poor ventilation and no natural light in most classrooms. College physical education facilities for practical work are inadequate. The college sports hall and gymnasium are in a poor state of repair. The department makes use of high quality facilities available in Wigan. However, transport has to be used to reach all external venues, which restricts the time available for teaching. Staff are well qualified and have a broad range of experience.

123. The quality of assignments is good, a variety of assessment methods are used and most assessment criteria are demanding. All students have an assessment calendar. Internal verification is thorough and work is internally verified twice a year on all courses. Initial assessment is effective, additional learning needs for sports studies students are identified and support is provided. This is particularly the case with the NVQ level 1 students. A permanent inclusive learning officer works closely with individual students. The results of initial assessment clearly influence the development of individual learning plans. Progress is monitored on a regular basis through the tutorial system, although target setting is insufficiently precise.

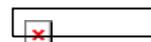
124. There is a good range of enrichment opportunities for sports students with an extensive fixture list for football, rugby, netball and hockey. In addition, a recreational programme includes football, swimming, squash, badminton, and health and fitness. College teams enter the regional college events. Ladies and men's football teams compete in the European college soccer championships. Sports students also help with community-based projects. Two college students have represented Great Britain in the Commonwealth Games 2002 in Manchester, and one won the silver medal in the high jump.

125. Progression routes for NVQ level 1 students who may wish to specialise in sports coaching, activity leadership or operational services are inadequate. The only courses offered are diploma in health studies and first diploma in sport studies, which demand a level of scientific knowledge and understanding which is not appropriate for most learners at this level.

Leadership and management

126. Management of GCE A-level sport and physical education programmes is poor. There is an insufficient attention paid to the standard of teaching and learning, and their impact on students' achievement. High staff turnover on the Leigh site has resulted in a lack of continuity over an extended period of time. Roles and responsibilities have been unclear and consequently there has been a lack of direction. Course reviews have not taken place. The provision has not featured in self-assessment reports. In 2001/02, students at Leigh were initially taught using the wrong syllabus and had to be withdrawn from part of the GCE AS examination. Subject tutors have not met as a course team to review the programmes, share good practice, standardise assessment and review achievement or retention. However, at the start of this term the college appointed a manager with specific responsibility for the GCE A-level sport and physical education provision, and a full-time member of staff has been appointed to teach at the Leigh campus.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- excellent resources of a high commercial standard
- broad and appropriate range of programmes
- good individual support for learners

- key skills successfully embedded into hair and beauty programmes.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates
- insufficient work experience for some students
- individual learning plans lack rigour.

Scope of provision

127. The college offers a broad range of courses leading to NVQ hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are courses at levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and from entry level to level 3 in beauty therapy. The entry level programme in beauty therapy has been introduced to provide learners with lower abilities to build a sound basis from which to progress. The range of complementary therapy and related courses includes aromatherapy for carers, reflexology, Indian head massage, nail extensions and nail art. There are also courses designed specifically for adults who wish to update their skills. These are flexible and modular in order to meet individual needs. Currently there are 268 students aged 16 to 18 and 13 adults on full-time college courses. Some 74% of the 593 part-time and evening students are adults.

128. At the time of the inspection there were around 30 modern apprentices in hairdressing and beauty therapy, but the work-based provision was not inspected.

Achievement and standards

129. The retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing are below national averages and show a downward trend. The pass rate for NVQ level 2 beauty therapy is also below the national average and falling. The national diploma in beauty therapy has both retention and pass rates that are 20% below the national average.

130. The standard of work observed in lessons and in students' portfolios is mostly satisfactory or better. Most students' written work is good and most assignments are word processed. Students' achievements are systematically recorded in their assessment logbooks and on staff monitoring sheets. Internal verification is good with well-documented procedures. Assessors are given evaluative written feedback by the verifiers and they are helped to formulate action plans to remedy identified weaknesses. The effectiveness of the process is monitored regularly.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	*	9	10
		% retention	*	78	56

		% pass rate	*	100	60
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	88	108	129
		% retention	57	66	57
		% pass rate	70	66	60
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	18	50	87
		% retention	89	74	89
		% pass rate	63	89	68
National diploma in beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	15	14	26
		% retention	60	67	52
		% pass rate	89	88	58
Aromatherapy for carers	3	No. of starts	57	72	69
		% retention	91	94	90
		% pass rate	69	78	81
NVQ hairdressing	3	No. of starts	*	11	11
		% retention	*	45	91
		% pass rate	*	20	70

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

131. Some 60% of the teaching observed was good or better, 33% was satisfactory and none was unsatisfactory. Schemes of work and lesson plans follow a common framework. Teachers show enthusiasm for their subject and they engage students in lively and meaningful discussion. Individual learning plans are completed at the start of each academic year and they are reviewed twice each term. They lack the necessary rigour and do not drive the learning process at a satisfactory pace.

132. In the best lessons, teachers employ effective questioning techniques to check students' understanding regularly. They use a range of teaching styles to successfully capture their students' attention and maintain their interest. In a science lesson on the circulatory system, students measured pulse rates and blood pressures, watched a video and discussed case studies of patients with heart disease. In the better lessons, teachers use their own industrial experience to make topics more relevant for the students. An enthusiastic teacher was able to use her own industrial experience and her sense of humour to actively engage students in a lesson on electrical epilation which they all clearly enjoyed. In the weaker lessons, although deemed satisfactory, the pace of learning was slow and some students lost interest. Teachers talk for long periods of time without checking the students' understanding and the students respond very slowly when they are asked to work together in groups.

133. All full-time students complete a diagnostic screening test and good support is provided where required. Learners who are at risk of not completing their programmes are identified early so that their tutors can monitor their progress very carefully and offer any necessary support quickly. There is also a full-time student liaison officer who monitors attendance, punctuality and students who are identified as being at risk. All students have a personal tutor who they meet regularly and who is available to offer help and guidance. A senior tutor co-ordinates the tutorial process and meetings of the tutorial team take place on a regular basis. In order to ensure consistency across the provision, standardised schemes of work and lesson plans are used for the tutorial sessions. Teachers have welcomed the use of the student late slip system that was introduced last academic year. When

arriving late, students have to obtain a late slip form the liaison officer at reception. If a student receives more than three late slips this triggers disciplinary action. In order to improve students' punctuality and commitment, the area has introduced a reliability award for students who demonstrate 100% attendance and commitment. Award winners receive a prize donated by a national company.

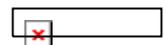
134. There is a wide range of enrichment activities available for the students, including exercise to music, sign language and participating in modelling for a bridal fashion house. The hair and beauty section has a partnership with a training school in Greece and they have produced shows together in Wigan and in Greece. These have involved the staff and students and are very motivational for those who take part. At the start of the programme all full-time learners have the opportunity to take part in a tenpin bowling team-building exercise and use the experience as evidence for their key skills portfolios. Teachers ensure that key skills are developed within respective programmes. They are referred to often during the course of the lesson and the opportunities to collect evidence are used frequently. Key skills are identified in most lesson plans. This academic year, after only being on the programme for six weeks, the students put on a hair and beauty show that provided further evidence for their key skills portfolios. For example, two national diploma students designed and produced the tickets and were able to use these as evidence for their IT course. For some students, work experience is not introduced until after October in the second year, which limits their experience of the type of pressure under which they will have to work when they join the industry.

135. The salons at the Image Centre are excellent and of a high commercial standard. The building was purpose built five years ago and is maintained to high professional standards. Students have an excellent range of high quality products available to use in order to complete the range of the NVQ requirements. Theory rooms are bright and offer a good learning environment. The college has added a second building adjacent to the Image Centre which houses a crèche for the students' use. There are also additional practical and theory rooms in this building.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership and management are good and course teams work well together. There are clear lines of accountability and all members of the team have documented job roles. Meetings are held weekly to address issues such as action planning, student retention and achievement. Staff feel valued as they contribute to the planning of area provision. They were involved in the self-assessment process and they were consulted on the design of the new lesson plan format.

Health, social and childcare



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

Strengths

- good support for students with specific learning needs
- good teaching and learning on entry and foundation courses
- effective monitoring of attendance and punctuality.

Weaknesses

- poor accommodation which limits the range of learning activities for students
- schemes of work lack detail
- little provision to meet the needs of adult learners.

Scope of provision

137. The college offers a satisfactory range of full-time and part-time care and early years courses from entry level to level 4. There are currently 430 full-time students and 107 students studying part time in this area. The full-time students are largely aged 16 to 18 and the part-time students are adults. Approximately 120 of the full-time students are studying at entry or foundation levels, and are following either an entry level life skills programme or a GNVQ foundation in health and social care. This is an area of significant growth. In health and social care, the college offers the BTEC first diploma in care at level 2 and the AVCE in health and social care at level 3. The Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate in childcare and education is offered at level 2, and both the CACHE diploma and the BTEC national diploma in early years are offered at level 3. The counselling provision allows progression from introductory programmes at level 1 to the advanced diploma in counselling which is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. There are currently 86 part-time students enrolled on counselling courses. Most courses are delivered at the Wigan Centre with some counselling provision in community settings. The diploma and certificate in childcare and education are offered at both the Wigan and Leigh centres.

Achievement and standards

138. The retention and pass rates have been variable on most courses; sometimes above and sometimes below the national average over the period. Retention and achievement on level 2 full-time programmes have improved to above the national average. At level 3 retention rates are below, but pass rates are above the national average. At level 1, retention and pass rates show consistent improvement. Counselling courses maintain high pass rates across all programmes.

139. The standard of work observed in lessons varied across courses. The class work of the entry and foundation students is good and often above that associated with the level of award. The students' working files are well organised; their notes are clear and accurate. Contributions to class discussion are thoughtful. Their classroom displays are to a high standard and the students clearly take pride in their work. The standard of work across the full-time advanced level courses varies. The current second-year students in health and care are not working at a level normally expected at this stage in their course. In a sociology lesson, the students did not have a grasp of the basic vocabulary associated with family units. A second-year discussion on images of disability was superficial. The level at which the first-year students are working, however, is noticeably higher. Their contribution to class discussion indicates a strong commitment to their area of work. They show a sensitive understanding of vocational issues and a good ability to relate theory to their workplace experience. The early years students had prepared very thoughtful and attractive displays on child development as part of their assignment work. Attendance and punctuality are good and average attendance at 82% is above the national average and above the college target.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social and childcare, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	37	43	40
		% retention	68	79	80
		% pass rate	64	65	69
BTEC first diploma in care	2	No. of starts	*	30	26
		% retention	*	73	88
		% pass rate	*	64	87
CACHE childcare and education	2	No. of starts	19	23	33
		% retention	89	87	91
		% pass rate	76	85	83
Certificate in counselling skills	2	No. of starts	*	34	35
		% retention	*	100	97
		% pass rate	*	91	97
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	56	48	39
		% retention	59	52	67
		% pass rate	73	64	92
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	93	77	85
		% retention	72	80	63
		% pass rate	81	85	94

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

140. Inspectors observed good teaching at foundation and entry level, which is addressing individual learning needs. Most lessons at this level included brief lectures, quizzes, guided note taking and practical craft activities. In contrast, some level 3 lessons lacked variety in the methods employed. There was less participation by students. Schemes of work lacked detail, but lesson plans were informative, identifying the specific needs of individual learners in the group. There was no reference to key skills in any vocational lessons and no highlighting of key skills on assignments. There was no reference to ICT in most vocational teaching. ICT was used as a teaching aid in one class only. Assignments are well structured and well matched to awarding body requirements; they clearly link theory to practice. Written feedback varies in quality and detail. Students' achievements are carefully monitored but target setting, introduced at induction, is not sustained throughout the course.

141. Work experience is an integral part of the full-time vocational provision. The work-placement team arranges and monitors placement provision. Assessment of students in the workplace is currently the responsibility of the workplace provider; little work-based assessment is carried out by the vocational teaching staff. This arrangement is being reviewed in the light of changes to the curriculum.

142. Specific learning needs are identified during induction through the basic skills screening process. Sensitive support is provided according to students' needs. The inclusive learning officers work closely with teachers to provide in-class or discreet support as appropriate. Students speak highly of the support they receive from their tutors. Teachers know their students well and aim to

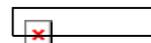
meet their pastoral and academic needs. All students benefit from regular group and individual tutorials.

143. Accommodation is poor and inhibits the range of teaching and learning opportunities. Few classrooms are suited to small group work. A practical food preparation lesson was taught and presented in a small art and craft room, with no specialist kitchen equipment. The practical care skills room has no running water. This room is often used for theory classes and the specialist equipment is therefore not always available to support related learning. There are well-stocked libraries with journals and texts suited to the needs of learners. Teachers hold appropriate qualifications in the specialism taught. They have relevant academic and vocational experience, thoughtfully relating their own professional knowledge and experience to the college-based learning. There are no planned opportunities for staff to update their professional practice.

Leadership and management

144. There are clearly identified course teams in health and social care and early years, with roles and responsibilities defined and understood. Committed course teams work well together. They have maintained effective provision in the context of a prolonged vacancy for a curriculum manager in early years. The newly appointed advanced practitioner is systematically and successfully addressing weaknesses in teaching and learning identified through self-assessment. The weaknesses include the quality of lesson plans, schemes of work and the mentoring of part-time staff. Records of team meetings are incomplete and some lack detail. Internal verification does not take place on a systematic basis and there are insufficient internal verifiers to meet the needs of the curriculum. The development plan arising from the self-assessment process lacks detail and there is little evidence of monitoring progress towards the identified action points.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- good teaching by vocationally experienced staff
- very good specialist resources
- enthusiastic and well-motivated students
- very good standards of practical and theoretical work
- good pass rates on many courses

- wide range of courses catering for all levels of ability.

Weaknesses

- fragmented curriculum management and a lack of sharing of good practice
- insufficient resources to support learning at Parsons Walk
- limited range of teaching and learning methods in art and design
- key skills is not integrated within art and design.

Scope of provision

145. There is a good range of part-time programmes for adults in art and design and craft-related subjects. There are 200 part-time enrolments on national diploma, GNVQ and GCE A-level programmes. Courses are offered at levels 1 to 4 for full-time students. There are full-time GCE AS and A-level courses in art, media, music, drama and dance, and there are almost 300 full-time enrolments. Visual and performing arts and media also offer GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses plus the AVCE in art and design. National diplomas are also available in photography, graphic design, fashion design, popular music, performing arts and media. A pre-degree foundation, access courses to FE and HE, and an HND graphic design and illustration are also offered.

Achievement and standards

146. Pass rates are well above the national average for many courses. For example, in 2000/01 the pass rate on GCE A-level media was 15% above the national average; the pass rate on GNVQ intermediate performing arts was 31% above the national average, and the pass rate on GNVQ advanced art and design was 12% higher than the national average. The proportion of high grades (A-C) is also above the national average on many courses. Retention rates are around the national average on most courses.

147. The average attendance at the lessons observed during inspection was 90% which is well above the national average for this area of learning. The department has identified punctuality as an issue and recently introduced a monitoring system to address this at the beginning of term. There has been some success with this new system although there has not yet been time to ascertain its full impact. Students' work is of good quality and demonstrates a high level of technical competence. For example, media students showed considerable expertise in producing their own documentaries on video, and art and design students' portfolios are varied showing experiment, exploration and good presentation skills. Students are very well motivated.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts and media, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NCFE practical crafts	1	No. of starts	201	159	206
		% retention	76	70	87
		% pass rate	76	89	84
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	34	22	20
		% retention	77	84	70
		% pass rate	97	81	71
GCSE dance	2	No. of starts	13	15	31
		% retention	77	93	74
		% pass rate	70	43	55
GCE A-level media (general)	3	No. of starts	51	*	30
		% retention	67	*	76
		% pass rate	85	*	86
GCE A-level fine arts	3	No. of starts	50	55	55
		% retention	77	77	69
		% pass rate	97	83	97
National diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	54	44	41
		% retention	31	61	68
		% pass rate	88	75	93

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

148. In the lessons observed, 71% were good or better, 25% were satisfactory, and only 4% of teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching of practical and theory sessions is equally successful in performing arts, media, and art and design. There are good schemes of work and lesson plans in performing arts and media, but those for art and design lack detail. Most lessons are well organised and provide thorough curriculum coverage. Students are aware of course requirements and deadlines, and are enthusiastic about their studies and their teachers. Teachers use a range of strategies to engage and motivate students in performing arts and media, although there was a limited variety of teaching styles in art and design. Teachers involve performance and theatre students in all technical and practical aspects of production in their courses. There is evidence of confident performance and students develop good quality portfolios and project work. There is a real effort by teachers to provide the same commitment and skills to part-time adult students as to full-time students aged 16 to 19 and there is good evidence of encouraging adult students onto full-time day classes.

149. Resources are good. Classrooms, studios and rehearsal spaces are well equipped with appropriate specialist equipment, except at Parsons Walk. Specialist new technology is provided for media, including digital sound recording and editing suites. The performing arts and media students also use a television recording studio. The music section has discrete teaching rooms and practice and sound recording facilities. Art and design have very good facilities for ceramics, print making and general drawing facilities and for textile and print. Staff hold qualifications in their specialist area, many with additional and ongoing professional experience. The media and performing arts sections benefit from good specialist technical support.

150. There are effective and supportive assessment and verification procedures across the curriculum. Students who may be in difficulty are identified early in their course through the use of diagnostic assessment and are offered support. Inclusive learning officers support learners in lessons, working with groups and individuals. Marking and assessment of students' work are satisfactory but comments do not always help students to understand how they can improve their work. There are weekly group tutorials to discuss progress and share concerns; these are valued by the students.

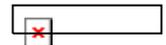
151. There is a range of enrichment activities in media and performing arts. For example, students regularly give performance and presentation evenings. There is a showcase performance. Art and design students are able to take trips to museums and galleries and to go on some residential courses in the UK and abroad.

152. Support and guidance are very good. College open days and visits, interviews and induction are designed to ensure students have realistic expectations of their courses and opportunities for future progression.

Leadership and management

153. Leadership and management of visual and performing arts and media lack cohesion and are unsatisfactory. The different management arrangements across the curriculum area inhibit the sharing of good practice. Students feel that their views are important. Teachers were involved in the self-assessment process and development planning. However, self-assessment reports were of variable quality across the area and action points were not sufficiently specific. Most resources are well deployed, however, media students at Parsons Walk do not benefit from the high specification equipment available to students at Railway Road and the Media Centre. Equal opportunities and the ethos of valuing all students equally as individuals is successfully embedded within the attitudes of teaching staff.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good support for individual students
- well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers
- regular, accurate and helpful assessment.

Weaknesses

- low pass rate in GCE AS psychology

- insufficient development of independent study skills in the classroom and outside
- lack of integration of ICT in teaching.

Scope of provision

154. The college offers a wide range of courses at GCE AS/A level in geography, history, general studies, law, psychology, religious studies, and philosophy and sociology; there are social science courses at GCSE and access programmes in social sciences. Take up is high for several of the advanced level courses, especially psychology, which has over 200 students taking the subject at GCE AS. There are approximately 70 students following GCSE psychology and 14 taking GCSE sociology. The social science access to HE programme has 11 students.

Achievement and standards

155. Pass rates overall match the national average, though GCE AS psychology, the largest course in the area, remains well below the national average. After a downward trend in results in the previous two years, (1999/2000, 2000/01), examination board results show a marked improvement in the pass rates for GCE AS and A-level courses in 2001/02. The college's own value added data suggest that in most subjects, students now achieve at least in line with their prior attainment. Students with learning difficulties are well supported so that they progress successfully within mainstream classes.

156. In lessons, most students demonstrate a sound basic understanding of subject matter, though many struggle with the more conceptually difficult aspects of courses. Some display confidence in making lengthy oral contributions. For example, in a sociology lesson, students were articulate in explaining the features of contemporary subcultures. Nearly all students in the lessons observed, concentrated on the task in hand; in a geography lesson, students worked with application on the evolution of the Dorset coastline while using Internet pictures and interactive diagrams.

157. The best examples of students' written work are well constructed and presented, they are detailed and use precise terminology. There are examples of poor work which are superficial and lacking attention to presentation. Students are not developing higher level skills such as independent note taking and research, and are over-reliant on being given information by the teacher. This situation is allowed to continue since, on the whole, teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on the development of these skills.

A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	81	117	49
		% retention	52	62	73
		% pass rate	90	57	42
GCE AS geography	3	No. of starts	*	*	43
		% retention	*	*	86
		% pass rate	*	*	65
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	94	45	51

		% retention	77	80	80
		% pass rate	78	53	68
GCE AS humanities/general studies	3	No. of starts	*	*	26
		% retention	*	*	88
		% pass rate	*	*	58
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	234	262	133
		% retention	66	68	58
		% pass rate	63	62	80
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	*	*	238
		% retention	*	*	80
		% pass rate	*	*	59
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	74	48	48
		% retention	70	70	77
		% pass rate	75	75	66
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	153	103	70
		% retention	71	74	63
		% pass rate	63	51	70
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	*	*	118
		% retention	*	*	75
		% pass rate	*	*	56

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

158. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. For example, history teachers are up to date with recent historical interpretations and make their students aware of these. Teachers give clear explanations. Teachers and students enjoy good relationships, with active support being given to individual students in and outside the classroom. In a minority of lessons, students were successfully challenged and given opportunities to develop and explore ideas. In a sociology lesson, students working together in small groups were asked to produce explanations of the increase in household diversity by applying their sociological knowledge. Students' explanations showed a good appreciation of historical and cultural factors.

159. In many lessons, there is insufficient demand in the tasks, nor are students given the chance to reinforce their learning through activity. Too much time is spent copying from either overhead projector slides or the board or taking down dictation. Similarly, handouts are too often used in an uncreative way, purely to convey information. The less successful teaching is not sufficiently demanding or topics are not covered in enough depth to enable more able students to reach their full potential. Some handouts and overhead projector slides contain errors in spelling or punctuation.

160. Teachers are well qualified and many have extensive experience as examiners. The majority of lessons take place in subject-dedicated rooms of sufficient size. These rooms are decorated with interesting subject displays which enhance learning. In a psychology lesson, students made reference to the picture gallery of leading psychologists, and there is a display of students' work on a 'psychologist of the week' board. Students are not provided with textbooks and this deficiency,

coupled with the inadequacy of library and ICT resources in many subjects, hinders the encouragement of personal study skills. Work has started on developing an intranet site for geography but this development is not general to the area.

161. Assessment of students' work is good. Assessment in all subjects is frequent, accurate and provides informative feedback with constructive comments and guidance on how to improve. Social science subjects use an essay feedback form which has been welcomed by students. There is an inconsistent approach to the correction of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students' progress is carefully monitored against target minimum grades, and individual learning plans exist, though these lack sufficiently detailed academic guidance. Target minimum grades are not compared with up-to-date national data, and some students expressed dissatisfaction that their own target minimum grades did not acknowledge previous qualifications or potential.

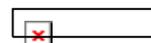
162. Course provision largely meets the requirements of students aged 16 to 18 and adult learners. The area provides courses at levels 2 and 3 and guides students successfully onto these levels according to prior attainment. There are clear progression routes from level 2 to 3 in the social sciences. Access courses for adult learners lead into HE courses provided by the college. In a number of courses, students are given the opportunity to reflect on personal, social, political and moral issues. Students measured 'self-concept' in a psychology lesson, and in sociology, teachers link theory to examples from the local area and students' own experiences.

163. There is good support for learners with a wide range of needs. In a law lesson, staff employed successful support strategies for a student with dyspraxia. Teachers are given advice on how to prepare materials for dyslexic students. Students spoke warmly of the support provided by teachers; this support is provided both informally and through timetabled workshops in some subjects. Students have little faith in the value of college tutorial sessions other than at specific times, such as when they are applying to university.

Leadership and management

164. Leadership and management of the area are good. There is considerable interchange of information between staff on students' needs and performance; this is facilitated by course managers working between the two sites. Team meetings are held regularly. The self-assessment report, while frank and self-critical in addressing retention and achievement, is insufficiently rigorous and self-analytical on other aspects, such as teaching and learning. There is currently insufficient dissemination of good practice within the area. While teachers are committed to the ethos of equal opportunities, there is no analysis of the comparative retention and pass rates of different groups of learners on the same courses.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- good teaching in English which motivates students to learn
- rigorous assessment and feedback to students

- effective guidance and support for individual students.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates in GCE AS and A-level French
- insufficient use of ICT
- dull, unattractive classroom accommodation.

Scope of provision

165. The college offers a wide range of courses in English and modern foreign languages from entry level to advanced level, with the possibility of progressing to HE courses. There is both day and evening provision which is offered on a full-time or part-time basis at Wigan and at Leigh. In addition there is extensive provision within the community. On the main sites, 464 full-time students are enrolled on GCSE, GCE AS and A-level English and 57 full-time students are enrolled on GCSE, GCE AS and A-level modern foreign languages. The majority of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18. In addition, there are 163 part-time students, mainly adults, in English and 131 in modern foreign languages. The college in the community has a total of 632 enrolments on accredited and non-accredited courses in Italian, Greek, Spanish, French, Japanese, German and Turkish.

Achievement and standards

166. Pass rates in GCE A-level English language and GCE A-level English language and literature were below the national average in 2000/01, but the pass rate in GCE A-level English literature was around the national average. At GCE AS, the pass rate in English language was in line with the national average, and that for English language and literature was below, but the pass rate in English literature was well above average at 100%, with a significant number of high grades. Results in GCSE English language were around the national average.

167. Pass rates in GCE AS and A-level French are well below national average. The number of students on GCE AS and A-level German, Spanish and Italian courses is very small but results are at or below the national average. The vast majority of part-time adult students were successful in the bronze and silver goals award, in a wide range of modern foreign languages. Retention is generally at or near the national average on all courses.

168. Standards achieved in the vast majority of lessons observed, in students' files and in their marked work and coursework are satisfactory or better. Students in English engage in lively discussion and express their opinions clearly and enthusiastically. Many volunteer answers, initiate debate and ask questions at the appropriate level expected for the course. Students in GCE AS and A-level French, however, have difficulty in speaking and writing at the required level.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English and modern foreign languages, 1999 to 2001

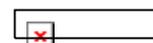
Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
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GOALS bronze award in Spanish	1	No. of starts	*	157	206
		% retention	*	62	69
		% pass rate	*	73	64
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	388	322	244
		% retention	73	73	68
		% pass rate	39	44	56
GCE AS English language and literature	3	No. of starts	*	*	153
		% retention	*	*	88
		% pass rate	*	*	76
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	*	*	61
		% retention	*	*	87
		% pass rate	*	*	85
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	26	30	27
		% retention	73	62	65
		% pass rate	81	53	59
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	64	51	66
		% retention	73	67	67
		% pass rate	98	88	90

Source: ISR 1999 to 2001

*course did not run

Quality of education and training



169. Most of the teaching in English is good or better. Lessons are well planned. They form part of detailed and comprehensive schemes of work. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Most motivate students by making the lessons interesting and by providing positive feedback on their progress. Students are encouraged to think critically and to express their views clearly both orally and in writing. For example, students studying GCE A-level English language and literature were able to identify and describe the contrasting moods being evoked in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. They were beginning to capture the essence of literary criticism and to combine this with linguistic analysis.

170. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that all students are actively engaged and concentrate on the allocated task. They use question and answer techniques effectively to check on understanding and to extend the knowledge of the students. In the most effective lessons, teachers build on the experience and prior knowledge of the students.

171. For example, in a foundation level English lesson, students watched a video about a teenage girl and compared this to the text version of the same story. There were many features in the story with which they could identify and although their language skills were not highly developed, they were able to express opinions and make judgements about the relationships and the emotions of the characters. In some lessons, however, a small number of students are not actively involved and they are not sufficiently challenged by the teacher. Learning in these lessons is less effective.

172. In modern foreign languages, most teaching is satisfactory. There is, however, some

unsatisfactory teaching and learning at advanced level. Where teaching is satisfactory lessons are carefully planned and competently taught using the target language. They cover all four skill areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and they are underpinned by schemes of work which identify learning objectives and assessment opportunities. Where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory there is insufficient use of the target language and the range of activities is too narrow to develop the appropriate skills. There is some inadequate planning and a lack of effective schemes of work at GCE A level. There is, however, effective learning taking place in GCE A-level Spanish and good progress being made in a part-time preliminary Italian class. In both Spanish lessons, students benefit from being taught by native speakers.

173. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Many are examiners and their expertise enables them to prepare students effectively for the examinations. Book resources in English and modern foreign languages are adequate. There are course handbooks in English which support learning. There is, however, insufficient use of ICT by both teachers and students. Its use is not identified in the schemes of work or lesson plans. Accommodation is poor.

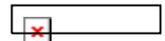
174. There is good, effective academic and personal support for individuals. Staff value students as individuals and a student with cerebral palsy was taught alongside other pupils. With the help of additional aids, a laptop computer and teacher support she was able to complete her course and progress to teacher training college.

175. Students express satisfaction with their courses. Enrichment activities extend learning beyond the classroom. For example, in English there are theatre trips, National Poetry Day events, public speaking opportunities and the production of a student magazine.

Leadership and management

176. English is effectively led and well managed. There are regular departmental meetings that focus on raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is effective self-assessment and course review which accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses. Strategies are put in place to bring about improvement. Targets are set and monitored. There are effective procedures and practices to validate the quality assurance of teaching and learning through lesson observation and the monitoring of examination results. Modern language provision on the two main sites is managed as part of the humanities faculty area. This provides management on an administrative level, but there is no leadership from a specialist perspective. Demand for full-time advanced level courses is falling yet there is no strategic plan to govern the future direction of modern foreign languages.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- effective and prompt implementation of new curricula
- extensive professional development keeps the teaching team well informed of national developments

- very good pass and retention rates maintained following adoption of new curricula in 2001/02
- wide range of literacy and numeracy provision promotes widening participation
- good literacy and numeracy support for full-time students.

Weaknesses

- insufficient availability and use of ICT to enhance learning
- some cramped and unsuitable accommodation that hampers learning.

Scope of provision

177. The diverse range of literacy and numeracy provision that is offered is designed to widen participation and meet the requirements of the government's Skills for Life agenda. Primary literacy and numeracy are offered on a variety of college sites and in community venues throughout the borough in response to local need. The different approaches adopted by teachers encourage traditionally reluctant learners to take up a literacy or numeracy programme. In 2001/02, there were 442 family learning students on courses provided jointly between the college and the local education authority. This programme is continuing in the current year and includes family literacy and numeracy programmes.

178. The college is currently liaising with several employers and related trades unions to provide literacy and numeracy programmes on employers' premises. There are three courses running and more are planned. The college is involved in an Association of College Managers' pilot to develop the skills of the cleaners and porters employed within the college and in two catalogue distribution firms in the local area. There are also links with the Probation Service in Wigan, Atherton and Bolton, and with the local prison. In the year 2001/02 all of the New Start community students had a basic skills assessment and were offered basic skills courses in their own community centres.

179. Students on discrete programmes at entry level are offered units of literacy and numeracy under the LCCI skills for working life programme. Students on main programmes at entry level and level 1 are offered the new City and Guilds 3792 qualification as an alternative to key skills programmes.

180. Extensive literacy and numeracy support is offered to full-time students.

Achievement and standards

181. Retention rates are well above average on literacy and numeracy programmes. Pass rates are also well above average and this level of success has continued in 2001/02, when the new curricula for literacy and numeracy and the corresponding new qualifications were introduced.

182. Adult students make good progress in achieving curriculum-linked targets and are motivated and enthusiastic in lessons. Many complete further work at home and display an increase in confidence in taking charge of their own learning, in helping their children, or in their skills at work.

183. Students on full-time programmes are provided with literacy and numeracy support, with targets linked to the new curricula. Students displayed a high level of motivation in working towards the individual targets set and felt that their skills had increased and their competence on their main programme had developed. There is insufficient monitoring of support to measure effectiveness.

Quality of education and training

184. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed. The needs of individuals are effectively met, often in sessions where ability ranges from entry to level 1 or sometimes level 2. Lesson plans are of a consistently high standard and mirror the requirements of the new curriculum. Plans detail opportunities for group and individual work. The adoption of the new curricula and the new related qualifications have been used to enhance the content and coverage of courses and to develop individual learning plans with clear long and short-term targets. Learners make good progress towards individual targets and many adult learners are keen to take external qualifications. Short-term targets rarely prescribe timescales for attainment

185. In sessions intended to offer basic skills through various channels, for example, work-based learning and family learning, activities are designed which allow learners to improve their basic skills in a context suited to their own needs and experience. Otherwise reluctant learners are thus encouraged to develop skills which they have associated with failure or difficulty in the past. Learners in a family learning session were able to discuss the concepts of children's play by linking these to experience with their own children.

186. In sessions observed offering literacy and numeracy support for full-time learners, there is evidence of joint lesson planning and joint preparation of materials by the support tutor and the vocational tutor. This collaboration leads to a coherent approach which plans tasks for key skills or the main curriculum, while offering individuals support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This method of teaching motivates students aged 16 to 18 to make good progress towards improving their skills. There is evidence that they are able to apply these skills in key skills sessions linked to their vocational programme. In one session, a business studies tutor introduced students on a GNVQ programme to report writing for key skills. The support tutor had produced a glossary of terms related to report writing which was given to students as a guide to keep in their files. The support tutor then helped individuals with writing difficulties to plan and draft the report.

187. There is effective diagnosis of students' individual needs, both on primary and secondary programmes, such as support and work-based learning. Most individual learning needs are well catered for and inclusive learning officers work alongside basic skills tutors to provide extra support in lessons. Arrangements for study-skills support for part-time students are less well established and lack opportunities to address individual problems. The acquisition of new on-line initial assessment instruments may facilitate the provision of initial assessment and support. Currently, many part-time students who seek or are referred for support, join primary basic skills sessions where they are assessed and have individual programmes. There is insufficient monitoring of the size and need of part-time students.

188. The teaching team, which is made up of full-time and permanent part-time staff, has a wide range of experience and qualifications to meet the diverse needs of the students in this programme area. Paper resources in study skills centres at Wigan and Leigh sites are well organised and consistent. In community and other venues there is a general lack of resources. Tutors teaching in these centres have to carry their materials with them which limits the introduction of varying teaching strategies in some cases. Paper materials that were purchased at the start of term are well used and suitable for adult learners. There was insufficient use of ICT in lessons observed. In most sessions where computers were available they were not utilised at all, or used in a limited fashion, for word processing only.

189. There is some cramped accommodation in community venues and some very cold, drab and uninspiring rooms on the main site which are used for individual tuition. In the majority of cases there were no computers available to allow the students to develop their reading, writing and numerical skills.

Leadership and management

190. There is evidence of strong leadership and the new developments are being effectively managed. A co-ordinating team has been appointed to manage the various strands of the programme. There is a clear structure within the area and meetings with specific agendas and subsequent clear action points are held at faculty, programme and team level. The introduction of the curriculum has been effectively used to promote consistency of approach across this diverse area. Some tutors teach across more than one team, and tutors describe a growing understanding of the different types of learning required and taking place in different teams. There is a well-planned system of liaison for literacy and numeracy support across the college. Effective planning has resulted in the introduction of a cross-college system for initial assessment adopted in vocational areas. There is a clear action plan for basic skills development and all staff, including part-time staff have attended the national curriculum training. A mentoring system operates within the area to guide and support staff.

Part D: College data

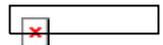
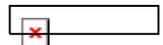


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	21	18
2	37	20
3	25	14
4/5	0	5
Other	18	42
Total	101	99

Source: Provided by the college in 2002

Note: Percentages have been rounded so do not total 100

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %

Science and mathematics	2,286	1,469	9
Land-based provision	11	224	1
Construction	339	531	2
Engineering, technology and manufacture	421	908	3
Business administration, management and professional	711	4,593	12
Information and communications technology	2,136	7,454	23
Retailing, customer service and transportation	23	142	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	841	597	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	416	858	3
Health, social care and public services	740	1,956	6
Visual and performing arts and media	885	1,218	5
Humanities	3,070	1,695	11
English, languages and communication	2,253	1,216	8
Foundation programmes	3,038	2,565	13
Total	17,170	25,426	100

Source: Provided by the college in 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	866	757	657	2,051	2,238	1,627
	Retention rate (%)	81	84	84	84	77	79
	National average (%)	81	80	79	79	79	77
	Pass rate (%)	66	69	77	64	72	76
	National average (%)	60	65	69	61	65	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	2,668	2,510	2,656	2,263	2,541	2,337
	Retention rate (%)	77	82	76	75	80	81
	National average (%)	76	77	76	80	79	78

	Pass rate (%)	63	41	51	69	66	67
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	70
3	Starters excluding transfers	4,483	3,102	4,807	2,017	2,127	1,860
	Retention rate (%)	67	73	74	74	81	77
	National average (%)	75	76	78	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	59	63	68	66	69	70
	National average (%)	73	75	77	63	66	70
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	41	23	9	778	592	349
	Retention rate (%)	73	74	78	81	83	85
	National average (%)	84	80	83	84	80	84
	Pass rate (%)	71	46	67	60	66	58
	National average (%)	65	65	57	58	57	54

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 1997/8 - 1998/9: 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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	56	37	7	124
Level 2 (intermediate)	69	26	5	69
Level 1 (foundation)	76	19	5	42
Other sessions	57	43	0	21
Totals	63	32	5	256

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