

South Leicestershire College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

[Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[How well is the college led and managed?](#)

[To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?](#)

[How well are students and trainees guided and supported?](#)

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

[Part B: The college as a whole](#)

[Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors](#)

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[Business and administration](#)

[Management and professional](#)

[Information and communication technology](#)

[Complementary therapies](#)

[Health and social care including childcare](#)

[English, English as a foreign language and languages](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

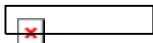
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

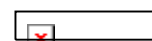
Basic information about the college

		
<hr/>		
Name of college:	South Leicestershire College	
Type of college:	General Further Education College	
Principal:	Lowell Williams	
Address of college:	Station Road	
	Wigston	
	Leicestershire	
	LE18 2DW	
Telephone number:	0116 288 5051	
Fax number:	0116 288 0823	
Chair of governors:	Dr Roger Chappell	
Unique reference number:	130750	
Name of reporting inspector:	Nigel Flood	
Dates of inspection:	4-8 November 2002	

Part A: Summary


<hr/>

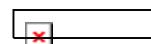
Information about the college



South Leicestershire College is a general further education (FE) college located to the south of Leicester in the district of Oadby and Wigston. The college's main site is in Wigston. A new centre has been opened recently in Market Harborough, around 15 miles to the south-east of Wigston. The college also uses a number of community venues in south Leicestershire. It recruits most of its students from the south-east of the city of Leicester and the county of Leicestershire. The college provides programmes in all fourteen areas of learning identified by the LSC. In some of these areas, the college has substantial provision, for example, business administration, management and professional studies, and information and communication technology (ICT). In other areas, such as land-based studies and construction the number of students is very low. The college provides learning in the community and has a small work-based learning programme.

The college's mission is 'to help learners from all backgrounds realise their potential and to provide excellent and innovative learning which meets individual needs'.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of provision to be outstanding in one curriculum area, good in two areas, satisfactory in three areas and unsatisfactory in one area. Most of the college's students are adults. The quality of teaching and learning for this group is generally good. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was higher for students aged 16 to 18 than for adults. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

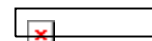
- high retention rates on courses for adult students at levels 1 and 2
- high pass rates on courses for adult students
- good teaching and learning on courses for adult students
- very good information technology (IT) facilities
- good range of learning support
- good range of provision for adult students.

What should be improved

- retention and pass rates on courses for student aged 16 to 18 at level 3
- pass rates for work-based learners
- monitoring of the progress of work-based learners
- quality of teaching of part-time agency staff
- uptake of additional literacy and numeracy support.

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

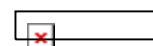


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Business and administration	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are good on most office skills courses, but pass rates on advanced level courses are low. Adult students make good progress and benefit from better teaching than that provided for students aged 16 to 18. No modern apprentices have achieved all aspects of the apprenticeship framework.
Management and professional	Good. Pass and retention rates are high. Teaching and learning are effective. The standard of assignment work is good. Part-time students make good use of their work experience. Few modern apprentices achieve the award.
Information and communication technology	Good. Pass rates are high on most courses. Retention rates are high on part-time courses and are improving on full-time courses, although on the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) course they are still below the national average. Most teaching is good or better. Staff are well qualified and students have good access to ICT resources. Courses are well managed and strategies to recruit adult students have been successful.

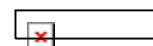
Complementary therapies	Outstanding. Pass rates are high. Teaching and learning are outstanding and students' work is very good. The quality of resources is very good and the management of the curriculum is very effective. The retention rate on the diploma in aromatherapy course is declining.
Health and social care including childcare	Satisfactory. The management, teaching and learning, monitoring of students' progress and assessment arrangements on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses are good. Retention and pass rates on level 2 full-time courses are good. Retention rates on NVQ, access to nursing and the national diploma in care courses are unsatisfactory and there are no clear strategies to improve them.
English, English as a foreign language and languages	Unsatisfactory. Retention rates are high on all English as a foreign language (EFL) programmes and on the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English course. The retention rate is poor in GCSE Italian and Spanish and pass rates are poor on the General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) course and in the preliminary English test. Too much teaching is unsatisfactory, feedback to students on their written work is inadequate and managers have failed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Insufficient use is made of ICT and the specialist language resources.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. The development of most students' literacy and numeracy skills is effective. There is a wide range of literacy and numeracy support programmes. Some teaching is poor and some accommodation is unsuitable.

How well is the college led and managed?



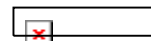
Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Managers have been effective in ensuring good teaching and high retention and pass rates on courses for adult students. However, they have not succeeded in ensuring that part-time agency staff provide adequate teaching. The management information system is effective. There is good promotion of equality of opportunity. Staff development for employed staff is extensive and effective.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



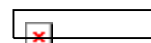
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college has effective arrangements to help students from a variety of backgrounds to achieve their potential. Provision is made for people from disadvantaged groups such as asylum seekers and pupils who have been excluded from school. Over 34% of the college's students are from areas of high deprivation. Many courses have been designed specifically to attract adult students into education and training. The college provides courses away from its main site, in community venues across the urban and rural areas of south Leicestershire. A new centre was established recently in Market Harborough; an area where there was previously a lack of FE provision.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Publicity materials giving information on the range of programmes on offer and the services available at the college are good. The quality of initial advice and guidance is inconsistent. Some full-time students are not sufficiently well informed about their chosen courses. Students of all ages are well supported by their teachers and their personal tutors. Their progress is monitored carefully in most tutorials. Arrangements for identifying and supporting students with a wide range of additional needs are good, although a significant minority of students do not take up the offer of support. Young students at risk of leaving college receive particularly thorough support. The provision of literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Most students who receive this support complete their programme of study successfully. The help available for students with personal or financial difficulties is satisfactory. Insufficient specialist careers advice is available to students.

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

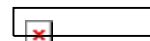
- friendly and welcoming college
- good teaching
- good support from teachers, tutors and staff
- treated equally
- good ICT resources.

What they feel could be improved

- timetabling of lessons
- quality and variety of food in refectory

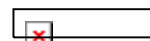
- transport links for rural students.

Other information



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback to the college. 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 (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



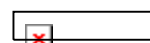
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	54	28	18
19+ and WBL*	75	19	6
Learning 16-18	54	32	14
19+ and WBL*	74	20	6

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. Overall, retention and pass rates for adult students are high; those for students aged 16 to 18 at level 3 are low. Between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, retention rates on around three quarters of courses were close to or above the national averages for general FE and tertiary colleges. Retention

difference has narrowed. In the last three years, retention rates have improved on most courses. Between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, the pass rates on around two thirds of courses were above the national averages. Pass rates were better for adult students than for students aged 16 to 18. Between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, pass rates on just over four-fifths of courses improved. The pass and retention rates for the small number of work-based learners are poor. Out of 194 learners who started modern apprenticeship programmes between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, only 6 have completed all aspects of the apprenticeship framework successfully. NVQ pass rates for work-based learners are satisfactory.

2. Overall, the standard of students' work, the extent to which they make progress beyond their prior attainments, and the development of learning skills are better for adult students than for students aged 16 to 18. These attainments are least satisfactory amongst students aged 16 to 18 in business and administration, and health and social care and adult students in English, and EFL. Although the overall pass rates on work-based learning programmes are poor, the standard of learners' written and practical work is satisfactory. For example, most work-based learners collect evidence of their competence in well-kept portfolios. They make adequate progress beyond their prior levels of attainment and develop appropriate personal and learning skills.

16 to 18 year olds

3. Between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, the retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 were similar to the national average on nearly 60% of courses. On 80% of courses, the rates have increased over the last three years. Despite this increase, retention rates on level 3 courses remained below national averages by between 8% and 12%. Pass rates have improved over the last three years on most courses. At level 1, pass rates increased by 21% between 1999/2000 and 2001/02 to 14% above the national average. Level 3 pass rates increased slightly between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, but were still below national averages by between 8% and 12%.

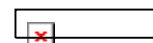
4. The proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who achieve five GCSEs at grade A* to C is similar to the national average in the county of Leicestershire, but well below this average in the city of Leicester. The college recruits many of its students aged 16 to 18 from areas where the proportion of students achieving five GCSEs at grade A* to C is below the national average. Most of the students on programmes at levels 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress beyond their previous levels of attainment and the standard of their work is good. On the intermediate level General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) course in ICT, students demonstrated programming skills beyond the required level. At level 3, students' progress is not so good. For example, in business and administration, students have difficulty in applying themselves in lessons and the written work of students on the GCE AS courses in English and French is below the required standard.

Adult learners

5. Between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, the retention rates for adult students were around or above the national averages on just over 85% of courses. Over the last three years, retention rates have been constant or have increased on most courses. The overall retention rates for courses at levels 1 and 2 were consistently above the national averages and varied little from year to year. Over the last three years, the pass rates for adult students on nearly three-quarters of courses were 10% or more above the national averages.

6. The college recruits adult students from a wide range of backgrounds. Many of these students come from groups who traditionally have been under-represented in FE. In most curriculum areas, students improve on their prior levels of attainment and develop appropriate personal and learning skills. The standard of adults' practical and written work is generally high, particularly so in complementary therapies. Students on these courses show exceptional enthusiasm and interest in the subject and sensitivity towards clients.

Quality of education and training



7. Most teaching and training is good and enables students and trainees to learn effectively. The of teaching of adults is better than the teaching of students aged 16 to 18. Some 75% of the teaching for adult students was judged to be good or better, and only 6% was judged to be unsatisfactory, compared with 54% good or better and 18% unsatisfactory teaching for students aged 16 to 18. There was a marked difference in the quality of teaching done by full-time and part-time staff. Over 85% of the teaching done by full-time staff was judged to be good or better and very little was unsatisfactory. In comparison, only 56% of the teaching done by part-time teachers was judged to be good or better and 14% was unsatisfactory. Over a quarter of the teaching done by part-time staff supplied by a teaching agency was unsatisfactory. According to data supplied by the college, part-time teachers were responsible for 46% of taught hours in 2001/02. The college self-assessment report recognises the weaker teaching skills of part-time staff and managers plan to increase the proportion of teaching undertaken by teachers on full-time and fractional contracts in 2002/03.

8. In many of the lessons observed, the planning of teaching and learning was good. Schemes of work and lesson plans took into account the full ability range of students and teaching methods were chosen carefully to ensure that all students made progress. The best teaching was in complementary therapies, where the teachers have up-to-date specialist occupational experience and students enjoy their studies and make outstanding progress. Teaching was also generally good on ICT, management and professional courses. Adult students gain confidence and make good progress on ICT courses where they work on modern software packages with skilled one-to-one support. On management and professional courses, part-time students draw on their work experience in assignment work. They are able to relate theoretical management concepts to the management practices experienced at work. The teaching of many groups of full-time students aged 16 to 18 in business studies, health and childcare did not take sufficient account of the different abilities of students in the group. In English, modern foreign languages and EFL lessons insufficient use was made of IT and specialist resources.

9. Most practical teaching is good and students develop appropriate vocational skills. In complementary therapies, students develop professional expertise and good social skills in dealing with clients. On courses in literacy and numeracy, students benefit from the help they get in workshop sessions and outreach centres. Most work-based learners undertake appropriate work placements, where they develop a wide range of job-related skills and knowledge. However, as the college acknowledges in its self-assessment report, insufficient attention has been given to setting clear targets for work-based learners, as the basis for monitoring their progress. The college has restructured the teaching of key skills for the academic year 2002/03 and now has a team of specialist staff who concentrate on this work. The teaching of key skills observed by inspectors was generally good. It was based on a careful initial diagnosis of students' key skills and the integration of key skills with other elements of vocational work.

10. Teaching accommodation is good. Most classrooms are well equipped and suitably decorated. The poor quality mobile classrooms identified in the previous inspection report have been replaced. Teaching rooms at the college's new centre in Market Harborough are particularly good. All of the college's buildings are accessible to students with mobility difficulties. The college is particularly well equipped with modern computing facilities. The quality of computer facilities at the Market Harborough centre is very good. Most of the computers are located in designated learning areas. The college has recently started to install computers in classrooms, but progress has been slow. The lack of computers in accountancy classrooms means that students cannot use accountancy software packages during lessons. There is a college intranet that contains learning materials to help students with their studies, but staff in some curriculum areas have not taken advantage of this facility. The learning resource centre is well stocked with books, periodicals, videos, audiocassettes and computers. A survey of student views indicated that most are satisfied with the college's facilities and resources.

11. Most of the teachers employed directly by the college have an appropriate teaching qualification. However, only 32% of the 118 part-time agency staff teaching at the college have a teaching qualification. All teaching staff, including agency staff, are encouraged to undertake relevant training and staff development activities. Part-time agency staff are less likely to undertake training and

development. Staff development is linked clearly to the aims and objectives in the college's strategic plan and in 2001/02 the take-up rate amongst college staff was high. The college has a comprehensive health and safety policy that takes account of the relevant legislation. Risk assessments and safety inspections are carried out regularly to ensure that staff and students are safe.

12. Assessment and internal verification are rigorous and meet awarding body requirements. The standard of marking is high in most curriculum area. Grades awarded to students' work are generally fair. Internal verification is particularly effective in complementary therapies and management and professional studies. External verifiers' and moderators' reports generally confirm the validity of internal verification. Courses on which there is no requirement for internal verification have procedures for moderating the assessment of students' work, but the procedures are not implemented in some curriculum areas.

13. Initial assessment practices are good. All full-time and substantial part-time students undertake an initial assessment. The results of the initial assessment are used to identify any learning support needs and to plan appropriate programmes of learning. The quality of written feedback on students' work varies between curriculum areas. It is good in complementary therapies, but unsatisfactory in modern languages, where it is insufficient to help students improve. Most college-based students are kept informed about the progress they are making towards their learning goals. However, the monitoring of work-based learners' progress is inadequate. Learners in business and administration are not given their targets to help them improve their performance. Most employers of work-based learners are given regular reports on their progress. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are invited to open evenings twice a year.

14. The college is socially inclusive. It welcomes students from all backgrounds and encourages enrolments from under-represented groups. Most students at the college follow part-time vocational programmes. There is a good range of courses for adults from basic education to advanced level studies. On many courses, the attendance requirements are designed to suit the needs of adult students. The range of courses in management and professional, ICT and complementary therapies is particularly good. Most programmes provide progression routes within the college. Provision for students aged 16 to 18 at GCSE and GCE Advanced level (GCE A level) is limited, as there are several other local providers of such courses. Many students come from areas of high deprivation. In order to increase participation, entry criteria on some courses have been set at a low level, but this has led to the inappropriate enrolment of some students on courses that they find too difficult. The recent opening of the new centre at Market Harborough has improved the learning opportunities of students in rural locations. There is appropriate help for students who need additional learning support. Many students take additional qualifications alongside their main programme of study, but there are few opportunities to take part in broader enrichment activities. A student liaison officer has recently had her role extended to develop and promote more enrichment activities.

15. The college has many productive links with community groups, voluntary organisations and other education providers, but its links with employers are less effective. In partnership with other providers, the college is part of a project to attract new students into education and training. A small number of school students attend the college to gain vocational qualifications. The college has recently carried out research into the needs of potential students and employers and has identified target groups that it intends to encourage into learning.

16. Prospective students are provided with good pre-enrolment information about the college. A central guidance team interviews prospective full-time and substantial part-time students before they enrol. Some students who are not interviewed by specialist tutors are not sufficiently well informed about their chosen course. Some are enrolled on to courses at an inappropriate level. Induction is thorough and effective. Students learn about the range of services and resources available at the college and are given a detailed introduction to their course. A careers guidance programme is provided in tutorials with the assistance of external speakers and careers advisers. The advice and guidance team also provides advice on progression. However, the provision of careers advice to individual students is insufficient.

17. Most students value the support they receive from their tutors. The central tutorial framework is

adapted to meet the needs of students on different courses. Tutorials involve a mixture of individual interviews and group sessions. Responsibilities for overseeing the tutorial arrangements are unclear. Students' progress is monitored through individual progress reviews that are held at least once a term. All full-time students and many part-time students are assessed at the beginning of their course in order to determine whether they need any literacy or numeracy support. Students needing additional support are invited to an interview to discuss how their needs can best be met. Help is available in the student development centre, during lessons and in individual support sessions. Nearly 40% of students identified as requiring additional support for literacy and numeracy do not take up the offer of help. Specialist support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The college employs workers from external agencies, such as the National Autism Society, to provide support to students in lessons.

18. A small team of support workers provides mentoring to full-time students aged 16 to 18 who are identified as being at risk of leaving their course early. This support is particularly effective. The support workers build up good relationships with the students through personal interviews and the use of e-mail and text messaging. The college's management information system provides accurate and timely information on patterns of students' attendance. Tutors and teachers follow up students' absences effectively. There are college procedures for keeping the parents or carers of full-time students aged 16 to 18 informed of their progress but these are not always implemented. Students with personal problems can contact a college counsellor.

Leadership and management

19. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal has been in post just over a year. Since the last inspection in November 1999, the college has made a number of improvements. It has a clearer strategic direction, improved retention and pass rates, widened participation among groups previously under-represented in FE, increased enrolments and developed a more effective college information system.

20. The college underwent an extensive reorganisation just before inspection and it is too early to assess its impact. The management structure is now flatter. More responsibilities have been devolved to middle managers and teachers. A new post of learning champion has been created to take the lead on improving teaching and learning. Most staff understand their roles within the new structure. Internal communications are generally effective. There are regular meetings of various teams and groups and a college newsletter. Communications with part-time agency teachers are not as effective as those with staff employed directly by the college. Senior managers are supportive and accessible to staff.

21. The detailed strategic plan for 2002 to 2005 covers all the key functions of the college. The plan's five, carefully chosen strategic objectives are concerned with learning and curriculum developments, quality improvements, areas for growth, new strategic partnerships and financial viability. There are useful sections on needs analysis and risk assessment. The college development plan for 2002/03 is carefully linked to the strategic plan and sets out the targets for the current academic year. Some of the targets are not prioritised. Each of the college's five curriculum centres and the cross-college functions of widening participation, teaching and learning and learner support have development plans linked to the strategic plan.

22. Curriculum management is good on management and professional, ICT and, complementary therapies programmes and on NVQ programmes in health and social care. In these curriculum areas there is effective management of teaching and learning, good communications, and extensive staff development which benefits staff and students. Curriculum management is unsatisfactory in English, EFL and languages and for full-time provision for health and social care. On these programmes, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning, insufficient support for part-time agency teachers, ineffective course administration, too few staff meetings, insufficient analysis of students' achievement and progress, and ineffective course reviews and action planning. Target setting is weak in most curriculum areas.

23. The college's information system provides accurate and timely management information reports on a range of matters including retention and pass rates. Reports are produced to help the college

assess its success in widening participation and improving social inclusion. Managers and teachers find the system useful and easy to use. Data produced by the system are used in the planning of new courses and to identify potential student groups.

24. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. There are clear aims, standards and strategies for promoting equality. There is a strong commitment to social inclusion and a substantial amount of provision for disadvantaged groups including asylum seekers and pupils who have been excluded from school. Over 30% of students are from minority ethnic groups and 34% are from areas of high deprivation. The college has a race equality policy. It has started to develop and procedures to monitor the extent to which the policy are being implemented, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. Enrolment and achievement data are analysed by ethnicity, gender, and age and there is some monitoring of progression into employment for students from minority ethnic groups.

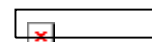
25. The college has well-established quality assurance procedures. There have been improvements in teaching, and in retention and pass rates, in some, but not all, curriculum areas. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. It consists of a summary report of key findings and nine more detailed reports dealing with curriculum and support areas. All staff participated in the self-assessment process. The reports are clearly written, provide a realistic assessment of the quality of provision and contain appropriate data on students' achievements. Some reports contain insufficient or unclear evidence to support the judgements. Some of the strengths are overstated or understated and insufficient attention is paid to teaching and learning. The views of parents and employers are rarely reported. The college acknowledges that the lesson observation programme, in use until recently, has not led to widespread improvements in teaching and learning. New arrangements have now been introduced. The guide to the new arrangements is clear and informative. Lesson observations using both the old and the new arrangements produced a grade profile that was more generous than that produced by inspectors. The internal observation programme agreed with the inspectors' findings that part-time agency teachers are less effective than teachers employed directly by the college.

26. The extensive and useful staff development undertaken by all directly employed teachers is helping many of them to update their knowledge and improve their teaching skills. Training for support staff is enabling them to be more effective and efficient in their jobs. A new staff appraisal system has been introduced recently. Early indications are that staff find the appraisal process useful in clarifying their job role, and identifying their training needs.

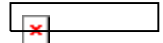
27. Governors and senior managers give a clear direction to the college. Staff understand the college's new mission, values and strategic priorities. Governors are well informed about the college's finances and management and are appropriately involved in strategic planning. Minutes of governors' meetings are clear and informative. The governors' self-assessment report was evaluative and critical. For example, governors acknowledge that they need to be better informed about students' achievements and progression, the quality of teaching and learning, and the use made of college resources such as teachers and accommodation.

28. The college provides satisfactory value for money. It has a small financial deficit resulting from the cost for the recent management restructuring and some classroom refurbishment. Financial management is effective. Budgeting is sound and meets the teaching and learning needs of the college. Budget holders receive regular and accurate information on income and expenditure. Staffing costs are high. Teachers' productivity is low in comparison with the national average. Teachers' workloads are monitored and steps have been taken to improve their productivity.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Business and administration



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on office skills courses
- wide range of additional qualifications available to students on administration courses
- good teaching of adult students
- good resources.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on advanced level business courses
- poor teaching on full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18
- very poor completion rate for modern apprentices.

Scope of provision

29. The college provides full-time and part-time courses for students aged 16 to 18 and adults in business and business administration. Part-time students work towards NVQs in administration at levels 2 and 3 and a range of office skills qualifications. Full-time courses include a GNVQ at intermediate level; the AVCE; a combined diploma for GNVQ foundation level students with business options and the certificates for medical secretaries and legal secretaries. At the time of the inspection, there were 65 part-time and 25 full-time adult students on administration and secretarial courses, 39 students aged 16 to 18, mainly on business courses, and 23 modern apprentices. The modern apprentices are employed in local companies and attend the college on a day-release basis for off-the-job training in administration and key skills. Full-time and part-time students can study for office skill qualifications in addition to their main qualifications. These include: word processing and text processing at three levels; mail merge; business presentation; document presentation; audio at levels 2 and 3; medical word processing; medical audio; keyboarding; and shorthand skills. These courses are available during the day or evening to suit students' requirements.

Achievement and standards

30. Retention and pass rates on most office skills courses have been high over the last three years. For example, retention and pass rates on word processing have been well above the national average. Other office skills courses such as text processing, mail merge and shorthand skills have also had generally high retention and pass rates. On business studies courses, retention and pass rates have been similar to or above national averages at intermediate level but below average at advanced level. On the AVCE business single award for students aged 16 to 18, pass rates have been poor. The national certificate in business and finance has had pass rates in the range 50% to 60%, compared with a national average of 80%. Although the majority of modern apprentices achieve an NVQ, none have completed the modern apprenticeship framework and only one has achieved the key skills elements of the programme.

31. The standard of adult students' work is generally high. Many have returned to study after some years out of the labour market and quickly develop self-confidence and IT skills. The standard of work of students aged 16 to 18 is lower. That seen in lessons was below the required standard, particularly at advanced level. The work of many students on level 3 courses shows insufficient evidence of independent thinking and is too reliant on material provided by the teacher. In some lessons, students have difficulty applying themselves to the tasks set by the teacher and make insufficient progress.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Text processing stage 1	1	No. of starts	91	129	88
		% retention	81	78	88
		% pass rate	69	74	94
Word processing stage 1	1	No. of starts	116	141	189
		% retention	77	78	88
		% pass rate	74	77	72
Text processing stage 2	2	No. of starts	85	77	68
		% retention	97	97	91
		% pass rate	89	83	81
Word processing stage 2	2	No. of starts	93	79	82
		% retention	100	95	94
		% pass rate	82	75	84
NVQ business administration	2	No. of starts	20	13	20
		% retention	65	77	50
		% pass rate	62	80	70
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	11	*	9
		% retention	64	*	78
		% pass rate	86	*	100
Legal secretaries certificate	2	No. of starts	19	10	9
		% retention	84	90	89
		% pass rate	94	78	75
AVCE business single award	3	No. of starts	*	20	11
		% retention	*	70	82

		% pass rate	*	21	33
--	--	-------------	---	----	----

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

32. Adult students make good progress on administration and office skills courses. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They provide students with help and support during lessons and outside the classroom. Lessons are well planned. Teachers draw on students' occupational experience to illustrate learning points and encourage discussions in which students can learn from each other. They provide good one-to-one coaching in workshop sessions. Many handouts are well produced. They are written in language that the students can understand and contain topical and relevant information. They are used effectively to stimulate discussion, reinforce learning and as the basis for individual and group activities. In office skills lessons, task sheets are used to enable students to work on computers at their own pace. They contain clear, detailed and easy to follow instructions.

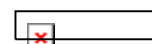
33. Compared with the teaching of adults, the teaching on business courses for full-time students aged 16 to 18 is less effective and some is unsatisfactory. Common weaknesses included inadequate lesson planning and insufficient attention to the different levels of ability and learning styles of students. Some of the learning activities organised by the teachers are too difficult for the students and often some group discussions are not controlled effectively to enable students to learn from each other.

34. The computer suites are well equipped with new computers and office furniture. Teaching materials are available on the college intranet so that students can refer to them without relying on the teacher. All the modern apprentices have good on-the-job work environments. They undertake a range of tasks in their employers' offices, which provide the evidence of competence required for the achievement of the NVQ. Colleagues and supervisors provide good role models. The employers are very supportive of the learners and are keen to help them achieve their qualification.

Leadership and management

35. There has been a recent reorganisation in this curriculum area. The present curriculum manager had been in post for two months at the time of the inspection. Many of the weaknesses in provision for students aged 16 to 18 had been identified through self-assessment and a comprehensive development plan has been produced to remedy them. However, many of the planned improvements have yet to be implemented. Team meetings are held regularly, and there is an appropriate emphasis on the standardisation of assessments and the raising of standards.

Management and professional



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on most courses

- high standard of students' work
- much effective teaching and learning
- wide range of courses at a variety of levels.

Weaknesses

- poor completion rate for modern apprentices
- lack of work experience for full-time accountancy students.

Scope of provision

36. There is a range of full-time and part-time management and professional courses that meets the needs of the local community. Of the 344 students on these courses, 311 are part time, 319 are aged 19 or over, 252 are female and 92 male. Accountancy is the largest subject area. Full-time students can take the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) award at NVQ levels 2 and 3 over one year. This has proved a popular option. There are substantial numbers of students on management, marketing, personnel and other specialist courses, and a course for women in management. There are opportunities for progression. For example, accounting students can progress from entry level book-keeping to NVQ level 4 in accounting. Over 30 modern apprentices attend the college for off-the-job training.

Achievement and standards

37. Achievement is good on AAT programmes. Pass rates were well above the national average on the level 2 programme in the last two years. Programmes at levels 3 and 4 have had above average pass rates in two of the last three years. The certificate in management and the certificate in marketing courses had pass rates above the national averages in the last two years. The certificate in personnel practice achieved a 100% pass rate in the last year with a 98% retention rate. The pass rate for the small number of students on the advanced certificate in marketing has declined over the last three years to well below the national average. NVQ pass rates for modern apprentices have improved over the last three years, but few have achieved all aspects of the apprenticeship framework. Retention rates are good. Over the last two years they have been above average on AAT courses at levels 2, 3 and 4 and on the courses leading to the certificate and advanced certificate in marketing. The quality of assignment work is good. Students make effective use of the business and management concepts they learn at college to analyse and understand their workplace experiences.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
---------------	-------	------------------	------	------	------

NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	68	38	46
		% retention	87	74	80
		% pass rate	64	82	83
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	72	58	40
		% retention	82	84	83
		% pass rate	61	47	61
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	60	43	44
		% retention	95	91	98
		% pass rate	91	87	100
Certificate in marketing	3	No. of starts	12	10	7
		% retention	83	90	100
		% pass rate	30	67	57
Certificate in management	3	No. of starts	39	17	37
		% retention	82	94	76
		% pass rate	78	94	100
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	33	43	44
		% retention	90	95	95
		% pass rate	45	60	48
Advanced certificate in marketing	4	No. of starts	7	13	10
		% retention	71	92	90
		% pass rate	40	33	10

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

Quality of education and training

38. Most teaching is good or better. Teachers draw on their own and their students' experience and use up-to-date business examples. For example in one lesson, students gave presentations to fellow students. They gave excellent evaluative accounts of appraisals, absenteeism, staff retention and the uses of job specifications in their own organisations. This approach to learning proved to be interesting and enjoyable for all concerned. The students learned from producing their own presentations and from listening to and discussing the work of others. A particularly successful lesson in management used role-play to illustrate difficulties that can occur in communications. The students enjoyed the activity. They gave sensitive and realistic reflections on their own performance that the tutor drew together skilfully. At all times, the activity was placed in the context of communication theory and appropriate language was used. The lack of work experience for full-time AAT students limits their opportunity to acquire job skills and slows their progress towards the achievement of the NVQ.

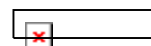
39. Staff are generally well qualified and suitably experienced. Several are practising professionals in their own field and provide up-to-date examples in lessons drawn from their own recent experience. Students have access to good ICT equipment outside lessons. The classrooms used for teaching computerised accounts do not have computer screens to enable teachers to demonstrate software applications to the whole class. Teachers' feedback on assignments is constructive and work is returned promptly. Part-time students make extensive use of their work experience in projects and in their answers to examination questions. Employers who sponsor students are kept informed of their progress.

40. Students speak highly of the support provided by teachers. Many tutors on part-time programmes use e-mail to keep in touch with students and to provide them with outline lesson notes prior to lessons. However, some students do not attend tutorials.

Leadership and management

41. Management and professional courses are well managed and effectively marketed. Schemes of work are comprehensive and are effectively linked to lesson plans. Course reviews are thorough and very detailed. However, where action plans have been developed to remedy weaknesses they often lack clear targets or deadlines. The self-assessment report acknowledges that the management of work-based learning has been inadequate over the last three years. There has been insufficient monitoring of modern apprentices' progress. Most do not complete the modern apprenticeship framework successfully because they have not gained the necessary key skills qualifications. New management systems are now in place and the monitoring of apprentices' progress is improving.

Information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on part-time courses
- good pass rates on most courses
- very good teaching and effective learning
- particularly effective strategies to widen participation.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on AVCE course
- ineffective target setting for students aged 16 to 18.

Scope of provision

42. Students on ICT programmes made up 20% of the college's enrolments in 2001/02. A wide range of programmes for students aged 16 to 18 and adults is available from entry level to level 3. Most students are aged 19 or over. Full-time students work towards GNVQs or City and Guilds qualifications. Short and part-time courses for adults include Open College Network (OCN) introductory computing modules and City and Guilds certificates and diplomas in IT applications including word processing, spreadsheets, databases, Internet technologies, computer-aided design and visual basic programming. Students are encouraged to take additional ICT modules to improve their skills. There are good progression routes for both adults and students aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

43. Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and foundation courses are high and significantly above national averages. On the foundation course, at least 75% of students have achieved high grades in the past two years, compared with the national average of 25%. Pass rates are also good on short and one-year, part-time courses for adults. However, the proportion of AVCE and GNVQ intermediate students gaining high grades is well below the national average. Retention rates are above the national average on short and day-release courses for adult part-time students, but below the national average on the AVCE course. Retention rates have improved significantly on GNVQ intermediate and AVCE courses in the last year. The progression rate from AVCE courses is high; 73% go on to HE to study ICT.

44. The standard of students' work is good. Some students have vocational skills beyond those required for the course they are on. For example, cell referencing in spreadsheets for foundation students and level 3 visual basic programming for intermediate students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	*	11	14
		% retention	*	73	69
		% pass rate	*	88	89
OCN computing for the terrified	1	No. of starts	772	718	672
		% retention	97	98	96
		% pass rate	85	82	91
Computer literacy and information technology (one year)	1	No. of starts	367	309	225
		% retention	90	91	94
		% pass rate	69	83	80
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	19	12	21
		% retention	61	67	81
		% pass rate	36	25	94
European computer driving licence	2	No. of starts	*	38	98
		% retention	*	95	92
		% pass rate	*	94	93
City and Guilds diploma in IT applications (one year)	2	No. of starts	20	25	19
		% retention	100	100	84
		% pass rate	95	100	69

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

**course did not run*

Quality of education and training

45. Most teaching is good or better. Many students produce good quality project work. For example, in a GNVQ lesson at intermediate level, students produced advertising literature and entrance tickets as part of a project concerned with a theme park. The quality of their designs exceeded the planned learning objectives of the project. Teachers make good use of ICT resources. For example, a digital projector was used to demonstrate Internet searches and students were able to compare the results of their searches immediately against those of the teacher. Good use is made of the college intranet for displaying learning materials and showing students' web designs. Skilful questioning encourages students' responses and appropriate praise of their contributions builds their confidence. Questions are used effectively to check that students have understood previous work and to stimulate their thinking about current tasks. There is good class management of groups, many of which include students with a wide range of ages and abilities. Some schemes of work lack detail, but most lesson plans are thorough.

46. The college has a high ratio of computers to students located in a central learning resource centre and a smaller drop-in centre in the ICT area. The level and quality of technical support is good across all sites. E-mail is used widely and effectively between tutors and students to facilitate good communications across the sites and with the large number of part-time tutors. Course teams recognise that the quality of resources in some outreach centres does not match those on the main sites, and have taken this into account in their schemes of work. Seating at some outreach centres in schools is not suitable for adults.

47. Assignment briefs are clear and include information on grading criteria. Assignments are suitably challenging and there are useful checklists to improve the consistency of marking. Students receive detailed feedback on their work, although this rarely includes advice on how they might improve their grades. Students' achievements are not compared with their entry qualifications in order to assess their progress compared with their potential. Insufficient attention is given to setting targets for full-time students aged 16 to 18 and monitoring progress towards them.

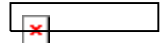
48. The college has effective strategies to recruit adult students, many of whom have been out of education for many years, on to the part-time courses at its main site and those held at outreach centres. Times of attendance are organised to suit students who have family responsibilities or other commitments. College staff also work in drop-in centres for the homeless and an over sixties centre in a local library. There is a twilight course for teaching assistants in schools.

49. Full-time students undertake an initial assessment and additional support is offered to those with identified learning needs. Initial assessment for some part-time students is inadequate. All students have group and individual tutorials. Tutors are given a profile of their tutees' needs and take responsibility for monitoring their progress and agreeing action plans with them. A mentoring system provides additional support for any full-time students who are considered at risk of falling behind with their work and extra teaching is arranged as required. Mentors have worked with some students during the summer break to help them to complete their assignments. Good support is provided for students with disabilities. In one lesson, a partially sighted student used a computer programmed to enable her to identify the whereabouts of the cursor on the screen through a set of headphones. This allowed her, with the assistance of a support worker, to participate in the course fully.

Leadership and management

50. Courses are well managed. Clear targets are set for retention and pass rates, and progress towards them is monitored at termly meetings. All staff are involved in self-assessment and development planning. There are examples of improvements that are clearly attributable to these processes. Good practice is shared at staff development workshops, on the intranet, and through the recently appointed 'learning champions'.

Complementary therapies



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- very good teaching and effective learning
- students' outstanding written and practical work
- very good resources
- comprehensive range of courses
- particularly effective support for students
- very good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- declining retention rate on the diploma course in aromatherapy.

Scope of provision

51. The comprehensive range of courses at levels 1 to 3 in complementary therapies includes: aromatherapy, reflexology, Indian head massage, body massage, sports massage, infant massage, reiki, crystal therapy, colour therapy, chemistry of oils, counselling, stress management and nutrition. There are 254 students on these courses, of which 223 are part time and the remainder are full time. Only three are aged 16 to 18. Full-time students study for the diploma in holistic therapies over 18 months. They can achieve additional qualifications in the following six months to allow them entry onto the advanced holistic therapies course.

Achievement and standards

52. In 2001/02, pass rates on all courses were very high. Most had improved on the previous year or were maintained at a high level. Most pass rates have been very good for the past three years and many have been well above national averages. In 2001/02, pass rates on the crystal therapy and chemistry of oils courses were 100%, compared with national averages of 78%. Over the last three years, retention rates have been well above national averages on most courses, but the retention rates on the diploma in aromatherapy and the diploma in reflexology declined between 2000/01 and 2001/02. The retention rate for the diploma in aromatherapy is 17% below the national average.

53. Students' practical and written work are outstanding. Students are enthusiastic and take a keen interest in their studies. They make very good progress during their time at college. Students' practical skills are very good and they are particularly sensitive to the needs of the clients who use the college's therapy rooms. The advanced holistic therapy students have produced their own branded aromatherapy products, which are currently the subject of market research within the college. Students' written work is good and demonstrates that they have a sound understanding of the supporting theory for complementary therapies. Students' portfolios contain evidence of their competence from a wide range of sources. Students have produced detailed information about complementary therapies for the college web site. One advanced reflexology student has won the student of the year award in a national holistic therapist competition.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Crystal therapy short course	1	No. of starts	53	51	13
		% retention	100	96	100
		% pass rate	83	96	100
Chemistry of oils short course	1	No. of starts	24	8	18
		% retention	88	100	94
		% pass rate	95	100	100
Diploma in Indian head massage	2	No. of starts	43	46	53
		% retention	79	80	89
		% pass rate	97	84	94
Diploma in aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	42	44	46
		% retention	81	77	67
		% pass rate	97	91	94
Diploma in reflexology	3	No. of starts	19	30	24
		% retention	84	97	79
		% pass rate	100	79	95
Diploma in holistic therapies	3	No. of starts	11	9	13
		% retention	73	56	92
		% pass rate	75	100	92

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

Quality of education and training

54. Teaching is generally very good and learning is effective. Teachers are very enthusiastic, highly motivated and passionate about their subjects. Lessons are stimulating and help students to be

creative and to develop good personal and learning skills. Careful class management enables teachers to maintain students' interest and to take particularly effective account of their individual learning requirements. The teaching is based on good commercial practice and provides students with up-to-date practical skills. The range of teaching methods used is wide and imaginative. In one lesson, about the hygienic production of non-synthetic aromatherapy creams and lip balms, students devised recipes for use in their individual clinical case studies. In another lesson, the teacher made very effective use of microscopes and various visual aids to explain cell division. In counselling lessons, good use is made of role-play to develop students' empathy and their understanding of clients' behaviour and needs.

55. Students have a very clear understanding of course requirements and the stage they are at with assessments and assignments. Teachers assess fairly and accurately according to the requirements of the awarding bodies. They return marked written work promptly with constructive comments that provide students with useful information on their progress. Students' progress is monitored closely at tutorials. Tutors receive reports from teachers on their tutees' current work and attendance and use this to provide effective guidance. The internal verification system is thorough.

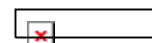
56. Personal support for students is particularly good. Staff are flexible with their own time and provide additional individual tutorials if requested to do so. A range of modes of attendance helps to meet the different needs of different groups of students. Students speak highly of the staff's support and friendly attitude.

57. Students benefit from very good resources. Specialist accommodation and equipment at the Wigston site and at the new Market Harborough site are excellent. The therapy rooms are light, spacious and attractively decorated and provide an appropriate environment for treatments. Staff have extensive clinical and commercial experience and have good links with professional bodies and health-related organisations. In some theory rooms, there are plastic seats which students find uncomfortable.

Leadership and management

58. Curriculum management is very good. Managers are very effective at improving and maintaining standards of teaching, learning and student achievement. They are proficient at identifying weaknesses and implementing actions to rectify them. The programme area has clear lines of responsibility. There are regular team meetings scheduled to ensure the attendance of all staff. Staff are well informed about college issues. Communications between staff are good. They work well as teams, particularly when developing new courses.

Health and social care including childcare



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on the first diploma in care
- particularly effective teaching and learning on part-time courses

- good recruitment to NVQ programmes
- effective management of NVQ programmes.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on NVQ and access to nursing courses
- poor retention and pass rates on the national diploma in care
- ineffective teaching on some full-time courses
- weak management of the full-time care courses.

Scope of provision

59. Enrolments have increased on all courses in this programme area in 2002/03. Particularly large increases have taken place on the college-based and work-based NVQ programmes in care and early years at levels 2 and 3. Enrolments on NVQ programmes at level 2 increased from 14 in 2001/02 to 61 in 2002/03 and at level 3 from 8 in 2001/02 to 85 in 2002/03. There is a small range of full-time courses. Numbers on the first diploma in care have increased this year to 23. The two national diploma courses, in care and early years, have recruited 17 and 37 students, respectively. In addition, the college provides a range of first aid and other short courses that are often followed by full-time students in order to gain additional qualifications.

Achievement and standards

60. Apart from 2000/01, pass rates on the first diploma course in care have been above the national average. The retention rate on this course has increased over the last three years to 100% in 2001/02. Pass and retention rates on the national diploma course in childhood studies declined between 1999/2000 and 2000/01, but increased again in 2001/02. In this year, the retention rate was above the national average, but the pass rate was 11% below the national average and no student achieved a high grade. On the national diploma in early years course, pass and retention rates were high in 2001/02. Pass rates on NVQ and access to nursing programmes are very high, but the retention rates have been low. Pass and retention rates are very low for the small number of students on the national diploma course in care. The standard of most students' work on NVQ programmes is good. Their portfolios are well kept, and the evidence of competence in them is well documented and appropriate.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care including childcare, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First diploma in care	2	No. of starts	16	14	15
		% retention	75	79	100
		% pass rate	100	82	93
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	26	9	14
		% retention	15	33	43
		% pass rate	100	100	100
NVQ care	3	No. of starts	15	*	8
		% retention	7	*	63
		% pass rate	0	*	100
National diploma in childhood studies	3	No. of starts	24	21	13
		% retention	79	67	85
		% pass rate	74	64	78
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	*	*	23
		% retention	*	*	91
		% pass rate	*	*	86
Access to nursing	3	No. of starts	14	12	15
		% retention	79	56	60
		% pass rate	82	100	100

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

61. Teaching and learning on part-time courses are particularly effective. Lessons are well planned and well taught. Clear links are made frequently between theory and practice. Teachers and students make appropriate references to workplace practices. Teachers manage lessons effectively, using whole class, small group or individual learning activities as appropriate. Work-based learners are not sufficiently encouraged to share good practice during their off-the-job lessons in college. Most of the students on full-time courses are aged 16 to 18. Overall, the teaching on these courses is not as good as that on part-time courses. Questioning of students, although frequent, is ineffective in checking students' understanding. Lessons focus mainly on the acquisition of knowledge and do not give students sufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge, and develop the skills of analysis and evaluation. More able students are not provided with additional work to extend their skills and knowledge. In one lesson, students moved slowly through a sequence of uninteresting worksheets. They became bored and unresponsive and made little progress.

62. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress on NVQ programmes and childcare courses are good. Students receive frequent helpful oral and written feedback on the quality of their work and their portfolios and guidance on how to improve them. All have clear long-term targets leading to assessments and shorter-term targets for the completion of specific learning activities. Most students are working well and are achieving their targets. There are appropriate arrangements for preparing full-time students for work placements and for monitoring their progress during placements.

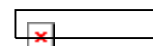
63. Most students are well supported. All full-time students have a weekly group tutorial with a designated tutor. They find the topics dealt with in these tutorials helpful. They also have an individual progress review at least once a term. Full-time students have mentors to whom they can

turn for help and guidance. Part-time students on NVQ programmes have a tutor who also teaches them. They have regular individual meetings and progress reviews with this tutor. Work-based learners have weekly or fortnightly meetings with their tutor. These usually take place at a college centre and learners have the opportunity to meet and share ideas and experiences with others employed in care settings similar to their own. Students who have been identified as needing help with basic skills receive support in learning skills workshops or in lessons.

Leadership and management

64. Management of NVQ programmes is good. Targets are set for recruitment, attendance, the completion of assessments and retention and pass rates. Teachers and assessors work well together. Assessment procedures and supporting documents are clear. Communications across the team are good. Recent team meetings have focused on improving the arrangements for tuition and assessment. There is productive liaison with employers. The NVQ provision is responsive to learners' and employers' needs. Full-time childcare courses are well managed. Course leaders keep up to date and communicate effectively with the course teams. The first diploma course has particularly strong leadership. Management of the full-time care course is weak. Until this year, recruitment has been low and retention and pass rates have been poor. Some part-time teachers on this course have insufficient experience in dealing with students aged 16 to 18 and managers have not taken steps to remedy this deficiency.

English, English as a foreign language and languages



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

Strengths

- good retention rates on EFL programmes
- good retention and pass rates on GCSE English course.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on GCSE Italian course
- poor pass rates on GCE AS English course and in preliminary English test
- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- inadequate feedback to students on their written work

- insufficient use of ICT and specialist language resources
- managers failure to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

65. At the time of the inspection, there were 341 students enrolled on a range of English, EFL and modern foreign language courses. Of these, 55 were aged 16 to 18, and the rest were aged 19 or over. There are 64 students following English courses including full-time and part-time GCSE English and GCE AS/A-level English literature. English literature is also offered as an option within the access to HE programme. Some 147 mainly part-time students are following modern foreign language courses. Courses leading to GCSE and OCN qualifications are offered in French, Spanish, German and Italian. French is also offered at GCE AS/A level. Arabic was studied by a large group of students in 2001/02 as part of a local community-based franchise agreement. The 130 EFL students are all following full-time certificated courses at various levels from elementary to proficiency. Of these, 42 are international students paying full cost fees, and therefore outside the scope of the inspection.

Achievement and standards

66. Although there are some strengths in students' achievements in this programme area, there are also many weaknesses. Retention and pass rates have been falling on many courses over the last three years, and many are below the national averages. Pass rates on the OCN courses in Arabic, French and Spanish were all 100% in 2001/02. However, no students passed OCN level 1 Spanish in 2000/01, and the retention rate has been consistently low. Whilst the pass rate in GCSE Italian has improved in each of the last three years, reaching 100% in 2001/02, the retention rate has been declining and was poor at 43% in 2002. Retention rates have been improving in GCSE Spanish and exceeded the national average in 2001/02, but the pass rate has been falling each year and was close to the national average in 2001/02. Pass rates in GCE AS French, English language and English literature are all below national averages and there were no high grades in these subjects in 2001/02. Retention and pass rates on GCSE English language have been consistently better than the national average, although both fell in 2001/02.

67. Retention rates on all the EFL programmes are good and consistently above national averages. However, the pass rate in the preliminary English test was low in both 2000/01 and 2001/02. The pass rate on the first certificate in English course has been falling over the past three years and was close to the national average in 2002.

68. Most students are attentive in lessons, and work well in small groups or on their own. Much of the written work produced by students across the curriculum area is of a low standard, although there is some excellent work in GCSE and GCE A-level English. In language lessons, students often lack confidence in speaking the target language. Attendance is poor in some lessons.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, English as a foreign language and languages, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Preliminary English test	1	No. of starts	33	30	23
		% retention	94	93	85

		% pass rate	87	36	43
OCN Spanish	1	No. of starts	12	9	31
		% retention	58	22	48
		% pass rate	86	0	100
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	48	43	44
		% retention	71	79	75
		% pass rate	59	59	52
GCSE Italian	2	No. of starts	11	18	23
		% retention	18	56	43
		% pass rate	57	70	100
First certificate in English	2	No. of starts	34	49	27
		% retention	97	100	100
		% pass rate	91	71	52

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

Quality of education and training

69. Some of the teaching in all the subjects in the curriculum area is good or better. However, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching. Part-time agency teachers were generally less effective than teachers employed directly by the college. Two full-time teachers of EFL were absent on long-term sick leave at the time of the inspection and the actions taken by the college to deal with this were not fully effective. Many of the schemes of work for the various courses are well developed and appropriately detailed. Some teachers have high expectations of their students. They use the time available to good effect to maximise students' learning through well-managed and structured activities. For example, in a well-prepared GCSE English lesson, students watched a film extract before working together in small groups to complete a structured worksheet which required them to write about the cinematic use of lighting and weather in the film. However, in many lessons teachers do not take into account the different abilities or prior learning of their students in planning or setting tasks. As a result, some students are insufficiently stretched while others struggle and lose confidence. In some EFL lessons, teachers rely excessively on the course books. Apart from some work in English, students' written work is inadequately marked. Teachers do not provide sufficient comments to help students improve and some errors are not corrected.

70. Students studying EFL receive good tutorial support, including regular reviews of progress, but the implementation of a tutorial programme for full-time GCE AS and A-level students has been slow. All students receive good support on personal matters from their tutors or teachers and from the college support services.

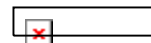
71. Most of the teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. There are very good resources for languages and EFL including a well-equipped language laboratory with a good collection of CD-ROMs, videocassettes and audiotapes. However, these resources are under-used both during lessons and by students working on their own. The library book stock for English is adequate. Teachers make insufficient use of ICT and there are no learning materials for English, EFL or languages on the college intranet. Classroom accommodation is adequate.

Leadership and management

72. Managers are ineffective at improving teaching and learning and retention and pass rates on most courses. The self-assessment report lacks rigour. Some strengths are overstated and there has been too little progress in remedying the weaknesses identified in the previous report. Staff are able to attend external courses and college events about teaching and learning, but the teachers

within the curriculum area do not meet regularly in order to discuss issues relating to teaching and learning or student progress.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- successful improvement of the literacy and numeracy skills of many students
- wide range of literacy and numeracy support programmes
- thorough initial assessment and reviews of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- some poor teaching
- some inappropriate classrooms
- inadequate collection and use of management information.

Scope of provision

73. The college provides a wide range of literacy and numeracy support programmes. This help comprises literacy and numeracy support for students during lessons, literacy and numeracy courses for adults, and additional support workshops in the college's student development centre. Literacy and numeracy support is an integral part of the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are currently 429 students receiving literacy and numeracy support. Of these, 120 attend workshops, 53 have support in lessons, 62 attend adult basic education courses and 194 receive support as part of their course.

Achievement and standards

74. Most students receiving literacy and numeracy support and attending basic education lessons develop and improve their learning and personal skills well. During their time at the college, students

improve on their prior levels of attainment and become better at speaking and listening, reading and writing and calculating and using mathematical information. In 2001/02, of those students receiving literacy and/or numeracy support, 91% completed their work and 74% went on to achieve their primary learning goal. In the same year, 80% of students completed the programmes of work agreed in their individual learning plans. On City and Guilds programmes, 85% achieved stage 1, 100% achieved stage 2 and 100% achieved stage 3.

Quality of education and training

75. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory or better. Most lessons are well planned. Schemes of work and lesson plans are sufficiently detailed and have clear objectives. Teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods. They are supportive and encouraging and maintain an atmosphere in which students feel sufficiently confident to participate effectively. Relationships between staff and students are good. In a few lessons, teachers use learning materials that do not reflect the students' main area of learning or interests. They rely too heavily on written exercises from textbooks and handouts and do not organise enough practical activities. Students are given an initial assessment to identify their individual learning needs, but the results are not always reflected in the exercises given to students. For example, in some lessons all students worked through the same textbook exercises. They were not given learning materials that focused on their particular needs.

76. The range of ways in which literacy and numeracy support is given is good. There is support during lessons, individual and groups support sessions and help is available to all students in the student development centre. There are literacy, numeracy and dyslexia support sessions in the evening. The college works with partners including the local education authority to provide support to those students using community venues.

77. Initial assessment and the subsequent review of students' progress are both thorough. The literacy and numeracy skills of all full-time and substantive part-time students are assessed at the start of their courses. Initial assessment includes diagnostic tests, and observations and discussions in the first few weeks of study. A comprehensive and detailed individual learning plan is then agreed between teacher and student, which clearly identifies learning goals and realistic targets. The individual learning plan takes account of the basic skills curriculum. Most students' progress is reviewed frequently and individual learning plans are updated to reflect changes in targets or learning goals. Some individual learning plans take insufficient account of the students' primary learning goal.

78. Most teachers are experienced and well qualified. Much of the accommodation used for literacy and numeracy work is well decorated, appropriately furnished and suitable for whole class teaching or individual learning. A number of rooms are equipped with specialist equipment and learning materials. At the Market Harborough centre, there are excellent ICT facilities. Some of the accommodation is unsuitable. In one room, there are constant interruptions from students collecting work from a printer. One lesson was taught in an engineering workshop. In another room, students had difficulty reading from the whiteboard due to the layout of the room. There is insufficient display of students' work. Part-time staff have not been given anywhere to store their teaching resources securely between lessons.

Leadership and management

79. The management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. The recent provision of staff rooms for course teams has led to better communication within the teams, but wider communication between all those providing literacy and numeracy support and with other curriculum areas remains poor. There is little sharing of good practice between the different course teams. Most, but not all, staff have completed basic skills training. There is insufficient use of management information to monitor the progress of students receiving literacy and numeracy support or to quantify the value of such support. There are no details about the destinations of students with learning difficulties and/or difficulties who progress on to mainstream courses or into employment.

Part D: College data

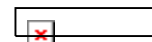
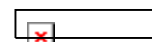


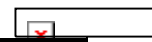
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	19	28
2	51	34
3	16	17
4/5	0	2
Other	14	19
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	264	1,241	16
Land-based provision	3	25	0
Construction	10	26	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	40	223	3
Business administration, management and professional	192	2,128	26
Information and communication technology	326	1,550	20
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	30	2
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	130	69	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	1	240	3
Health, social care and public services	171	724	10
Visual and performing arts and media	17	54	1

Humanities	93	285	4
English, languages and communication	217	330	6
Foundation programmes	170	675	9
Total	1,634	7,600	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	300	373	255	807	1,076	1,063
	Retention rate (%)	83	71	80	83	86	85
	National average (%)	81	80	79	79	79	77
	Pass rate (%)	48	61	83	79	78	79
	National average (%)	60	65	69	62	65	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	395	417	432	1,046	1,244	1,236
	Retention rate (%)	78	74	77	87	86	85
	National average (%)	76	77	76	80	79	78
	Pass rate (%)	66	69	72	79	81	79
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	70
3	Starters excluding transfers	230	230	228	615	831	763
	Retention rate (%)	78	64	68	82	76	83
	National average (%)	75	76	78	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	59	63	60	74	78	80
	National average (%)	73	75	77	63	66	70
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	3	3	4	112	129	113
	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	90	81	86
	National average (%)	84	80	83	84	80	84
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	*	60	63	47
	National average (%)	65	65	57	58	57	54

colleges or sixth form colleges).

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England*, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 1999 to 2001: *College ISR*.

* numbers too low to provide a valid calculation

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	68	26	6	35
Level 2 (intermediate)	71	20	9	35
Level 1 (foundation)	73	13	14	22
Other sessions	65	25	10	20
Totals	70	21	9	112

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2003. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Office for
Standards
in Education

