



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Henley College Coventry

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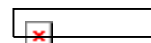
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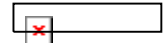
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Basic information about the college

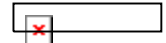


Name of college:	Henley College Coventry
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Ray Goy
Address of college:	Henley Road Bell Green Coventry CV2 1ED
Telephone number:	024 7662 6300
Fax number:	024 7661 1837
Chair of governors:	Val Davis
Unique reference number:	130472
Name of reporting inspector:	Annella Mochan HMI
Dates of inspection:	11-15 November 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



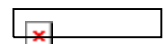
Henley College Coventry is a general further education (FE) college in the north east part of Coventry. The college is based on one main site at Bell Green but it also provides education in over 30 centres across the city. The college offers education and training in 12 of the 14 Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) areas of learning. Programmes in agriculture and construction are not offered. The college collaborates with partners through the Education Action Zone in the north east of the city and the New Deal for Communities initiative. In 2002, the college became a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for computing and e-skills technology. In Coventry there is one other general FE college and one specialist residential college for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Across the city, 19 schools have sixth forms.

Coventry is ranked as the 50th most deprived district in England, placing the city in the 15% of English districts which are most deprived. The college has a very high widening participation factor and recruits a high proportion of students from the most disadvantaged postcode areas. Approximately 24% of students are from minority ethnic groups. About 12% of the Coventry population are from minority ethnic groups which is much higher than the national average of about 5.5%. Coventry has an unemployment rate of around 3.9% which is higher than the national average of about 3.1%. There has been significant growth in the service sector which accounts for about 52% of employment in Coventry. There is a major reliance on manufacturing, particularly automotive and aerospace, which accounts for about 26% of employment.

The college has a senior management team of five, which includes the principal, deputy principal and three vice-principals. The college has four academic departments: adult, social and continuing education; hospitality and creative studies; leisure and professional studies; and business and technology studies. The college has approximately 320 full-time and part-time staff, including sessional lecturers.

In 2001/02, there were 16,668 enrolments, which equates to 7,444 students. Some 82% of students were aged 19 or over and about 5% of students in this age group were full time. Approximately 24% of enrolments were at level 1, 33% at level 2 and 23% at level 3. The college's mission is to make a difference to people's lives and to give them the skills and knowledge they need to reach their full potential.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of education and training to be good in engineering, hospitality and catering, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Provision is satisfactory in 6 of the 11 curriculum areas inspected, and unsatisfactory in social sciences and literacy and numeracy. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- good governance and strong financial management

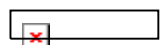
- good support for students
- involvement in partnerships to widen participation and promote social inclusion
- promotion of equal opportunities
- wide range of activities to encourage young people to continue in education.

What should be improved

- quality of teaching and learning
- curriculum management
- quality assurance arrangements
- use of management information
- provision of learning support
- social sciences and literacy and numeracy provision.

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

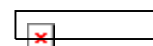


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Engineering	Good. Pass rates are high on computer-aided design (CAD) and computer numerical control (CNC) courses. Teaching is good on CAD and courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students' progress to further study or work is good. Retention and pass rates are low on some level 2 courses. Some equipment in mechanical workshops is out of date.
Business	Satisfactory. Retention is high on level 2 courses. There is much good teaching. Support for students is good. Assessment is rigorous. Students' written work is of a good standard. Retention and pass rates on some courses are below the national average.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates are very good on computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), integrated business technology stage 2 (IBT2) and IBT3. Adults are taught well. Specialist facilities are good. Retention and pass rates are poor on some full-time courses. There is some poor planning of assessments.
Leisure, tourism, travel and sports studies	Satisfactory. Teaching is good and pass rates are high on most sports courses. Partnerships with local sports organisations are effective. Tutorials are effective. There are good enrichment activities. There is some poor teaching and low retention and pass rates in travel and tourism.
Hospitality and catering	Good. Retention and pass rates are good on level 1 and 2 courses. Teaching is effective in practical lessons. Students develop good occupational skills. Theory lessons are often poorly planned. Some kitchen equipment is poor and dated. Links with industry are productive.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Teaching is good in beauty therapy and pass rates are high on most courses. There is a wide range of courses providing progression routes. Specialist resources are good but there are not enough clients for students. Retention rates are low on holistic and complementary therapy and hairdressing courses.
Health and social care and early years	Satisfactory. Some pass rates are above and others below the national averages. Pass rates on counselling and first aid courses are good. Students' progression to further study or employment is good. Teaching is insufficiently challenging in many lessons. Students' work is not marked rigorously enough.
Art and design and media	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are good on General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate courses. Drawing and visual studies work is good. Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities. Pass rates are poor on Advanced Vocational Certificate Education (AVCE) art and design and national diploma graphics. Some studio and workshop accommodation is inadequate.
Social sciences	Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates are good on GCE A-level psychology but poor on GCE A-level sociology. Access students produce good work and many progress to higher education (HE). Too

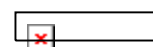
	much teaching is unsatisfactory and fails to challenge or engage students. Attendance is poor and students often unpunctual.
English for speakers of other languages	Good. Pass rates are good on accredited courses. Teaching is well planned with learning activities to meet individual needs. Students are well supported and make good progress. Retention is poor on some courses. Accommodation is unsuitable and learning resources inadequate.
Literacy and numeracy	Unsatisfactory. Achievement is good in some classes for students aged 16 to 18. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed but too much teaching is less than satisfactory. Insufficient attention is given to the identification of individual learners' needs and the monitoring of their progress. Slow progress has been made in addressing the national basic skills initiative.

How well is the college led and managed?



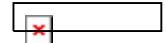
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has made some progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection in 1998 carried out by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). The college is well served by its hard working and capable governing body, and there is a clear strategic direction, particularly to widen participation. The financial management of the college is very good. In 2001/02, pass rates improved and many are now above the national average for general FE colleges. Student retention rates rose significantly in 2001/02 after a decline in 2000/01. The management of work-based learning is satisfactory. The number of full-time students recruited has grown but not as rapidly as predicted for the current academic year. There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the curriculum. Quality assurance is not yet fully effective. There is some poor teaching which contributes to less than satisfactory learning and attainment. More work needs to be done to monitor students' performance by comparison with their previous attainment, and to make target setting and review procedures across the college more effective. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



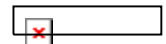
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college is strongly committed to inclusiveness. There are effective arrangements to widen participation and promote social equality. Many students with modest prior achievements and from areas of high deprivation are recruited to full-time and part-time courses. The college works with numerous partners on a wide range of initiatives to raise educational aspirations in the community it serves. Through collaboration with community partners the college is successfully attracting people from groups that have not usually taken part in FE. Programmes for disaffected young people and an alternative curriculum are offered to young people who are at risk of leaving education. The Prince's Trust Volunteer scheme successfully encourages unemployed young people to work on projects which benefit the community. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good in both the college and in learning facilities in the community. The college is sensitive to the diverse needs of students from different cultural backgrounds. Courses are provided for asylum seekers and other vulnerable groups in the community to enable them to progress to FE or employment.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students is good. The college provides impartial advice and a good range of information for prospective students. Clear guidelines cover the recruitment process from the initial application to enrolment. Good specialist support services are provided for students, including advice on finance, accommodation, health, counselling and childcare. A learner support fund provides useful financial support for those in need. There is good support and a wide range of specialist equipment for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support for part-time students has improved. Student services are open in the evenings and most part-time students receive at least an initial individual tutorial. Tutorial support for full-time students is good. Full-time students have a comprehensive initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy support needs. Most of the learning support provided is effective but only 50% of those students identified with learning support needs in numeracy are receiving support. Approximately 66% of those identified with support needs in literacy are receiving it. College data show improvements in retention amongst those students receiving support.

Students' views of the college



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

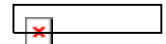
What students like about the college

- friendly and approachable staff
- welcoming and caring environment
- supportive tutorials
- standard and accessibility of information technology (IT)
- good sports facilities
- good resource centre and library.

What they feel could be improved

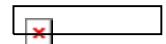
- value for money in the canteen
- timetabling to avoid long gaps between lessons
- car parking and transport to the college.

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 (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



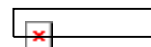
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	47	44	9
19+ and WBL*	72	15	13
Learning 16-18	44	44	12
19+ and WBL	65	26	9

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. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses. There is a small amount of work-based learning. Courses are offered in 12 of the LSC areas of learning. The college does not offer provision in construction or agriculture. The inspection covered nine areas of learning. Nearly 60% of students are following courses leading to qualifications at level 1 or level 2. The overall attendance rate in lessons was slightly below the national average at 73%. It was high in hospitality and catering, at 86%, but low in social sciences, at 67%. Most students make good progress relative to their prior achievements on entry to the college. The standard of work in lessons was mostly satisfactory or good. However, attainment was judged to be good or better in only 49% of lessons and less than satisfactory in 12%. There is a good range of enrichment activities which is offered in response to requests from students, but few students take advantage of them. Options include games and sports, as well as more specialist programmes such as British sign language and driving test theory. The sports academies for football, basketball and athletics are highly valued by students.

2. The overall pass rates are good. In 2000/01, the pass rate for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 and 2 courses was above the national average, and at level 3 it was in line with the national average for FE colleges. For adult students, the pass rate on level 2 and 3 courses was above the national average, but at level 1 it was below. In 2000/01, the retention rate at all levels and for students of all ages was below the national average. It was low for adult students on level 1 programmes. The college's data for 2001/02 show that it has been successful in improving retention to above the national average on programmes at level 1, 2 and 3 for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults. The overall pass rates indicate an improvement for students of all ages with the exception of students aged 16 to 18, where it has fallen to slightly below the national average at level 3.

3. In 2000/01, 74% of entrants for GCE A level passed their examinations. This compares favourably with the national average. However, only 54% completed their course and 22% gained high grades. The proportion of students completing their course fell in 2001/02 but the percentage of students gaining high grades rose to 48%. In 2000/01, on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) just over half the students enrolled completed their course, with 43% gaining high grades which was below the national average. For 2001/02, although the retention and pass rates have both improved they are still below the national average.

4. At the time of the inspection there were 90 students on work-based learning, of whom 65 were foundation modern apprentices. Over half of the students on work-based learning are aged 16 to 18. The work-based provision covers six areas of learning, but most of the students are in three areas: business administration; management and professional; sport and leisure and care.

5. Retention rates have been poor but they have improved over the last two years. During this time the college has increased the frequency of reviews and students' progress is more carefully monitored. Although National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) pass rates are satisfactory in some areas, the overall rates for successful completion of the full framework remain low. In some areas the failure to achieve key skills is a barrier to success.

16-18 year olds

6. Approximately 78% of full-time students and 6% of part-time students are aged 16 to 18. In 2000/01, the overall pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were 77%, 70% and 69%, respectively. These compare favourably with national averages and, at level 1, place the college in the upper quartile for general FE and tertiary colleges. Retention, however, was at the national average at level 1 and 2, and in line with the national average at level 3. College data for 2001/02 show an upward trend on retention to above the national average at level 1, 2 and 3. Pass rates have risen at level 1 and 2 to above the national average but have fallen to below at level 3.

7. In 2000/01, 76% of students aged 16 to 18 who completed their GCE-A level course passed the examination which is slightly above the national average, but the number gaining high grades was low at 15%. The percentage of students completing their GCE A-level course was about the same in 2001/02, but students gaining high grades improved to 27%. For 2001/02, examination results on GCE AS courses were similar to those on GCE A-level courses. The retention rate on AVCE and precursor qualifications is generally good. In 2001/02, however, only 40% of students who completed AVCE courses were successful, compared to 76% on precursor qualifications such as national diplomas. The pass rate for students completing NVQ level 3 courses in 2001/02 was well above the national average.

8. The pass rates on GCSE courses are low. In 2000/01, the proportion of students obtaining passes at the higher grades was unacceptably low at 26%. The proportion of high grades rose to 34% in 2001/02 but this is still well below the national average. The overall pass rates on NVQ level 2 courses are well above the national average but the retention rate fell in 2001/02 to 72%. Students on GNVQ intermediate courses are less successful. Over the last two years, only around 60% of students who completed their course gained the qualification.

9. Young people on courses leading to NVQ level 1 are particularly successful. The retention and pass rates in 2000/01 were very high at 82% and 97%, respectively. Although retention fell slightly in 2001/02 the high pass rate was maintained. Most students who complete their GNVQ foundation courses also do well.

Adult learners

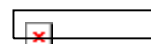
10. The majority of adult students study part time at the college. In 1999/2000 and 2000/01 the retention rates for adults on level 1, 2 and 3 long courses were below the national average. In 2000/01, retention on level 1 programmes was unacceptably low. Over the two years 1999/2000 and 2000/01 the pass rates on level 2 and 3 programmes were above the national average. However, the pass rates on level 1 courses have fluctuated, and although the pass rate improved between 1999/2000 and 2000/01, it is still below the national average. For 2001/02, college data show that on level 1, 2 and 3 courses the retention and pass rates have risen to above the national average.

11. About one third of GCE A-level students are adults. Overall, they are marginally less successful than students aged 16 to 18 at passing the examination. In 2000/01, the retention rate was 58% and the pass rate 70%. Some 33%, however, gained high grades which is a much higher proportion than for younger students. College data for 2001/02 show a marked improvement, with retention rising to 76%, and that of the 83% who completed their course 48% achieved high grades. Achievements are good for the small number of adults on AVCE/GNVQ programmes. The overall pass rate at 47% for adults completing their NVQ level 3 course in 2001/02 was below the national average for FE colleges.

12. About 40% of students on GCSE courses in 2001 were adults. The retention rate was low at 60%, but 64% gained high grades which is above the national average. In 2002 retention rose to 69%, and 80% of students who completed their course gained high grades which is significantly better than the national average. Around 75% of adults are retained on NVQ level 1 and level 2 programmes which is about the same as for younger students. Adult students do not achieve as well as students aged 16 to 18 on these courses, although the pass rates are well above the national average.

13. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about students' achievement and standards of work on particular courses.

Quality of education and training



14. The standard of teaching across the curriculum areas is uneven. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 187 sessions. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 57% of the lessons observed. The corresponding figures for learning and attainment were 53% and 49% respectively. Teaching was most effective in hospitality and catering, English for speakers of other languages, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Few lessons, however, were good or better in health and social care, ICT, social science, and literacy and numeracy. In the last two of these areas, the incidence of ineffective teaching was very high, with more than a quarter of all lessons being judged to be less than satisfactory. Overall, 11% of lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory. The grades awarded for learning were broadly similar to those for teaching, although there were fewer lessons in which learning was judged to be good or better.

15. Nearly 40% of the lessons observed were for adults. There is a marked difference in the quality of teaching and learning in lessons for adults when compared with lessons for 16 to 18 year olds. Just under 50% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18 were good or better in terms of teaching. The comparable figure for adults is 72%. However, 13% of the teaching of adults was less than satisfactory. The difference in the quality of teaching between 16 to 18 year olds and adults is most marked in engineering, ICT and social sciences. The proportion of learning that was judged good or better in terms of its effectiveness was 65% for adults, but only 44% for students aged 16 to 18. The standards achieved by students overall were also significantly lower for 16 to 18 year olds than for adults.

16. Nearly two-thirds of lessons at level 1 were judged to be good or better, whereas only 54% of lessons at level 3 were of this quality. This difference is also reflected in the quality of teaching for particular types of qualification. The better teaching was more often found on GNVQ foundation. Students are much less well taught on vocational advanced level, GNVQ advanced and Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national courses. All of the tutorials were at least satisfactory, and two-thirds of them were judged to be good or better.

17. About one-third of the lessons were taught by part-time teachers. Overall, lessons taught by full-time teachers were better than those taught by part-time teachers. The proportion of lessons taught by full-time teachers that were judged to be good or better was 59%, compared to 53% for part-time teachers. However, the corresponding proportions for unsatisfactory teaching show a more marked difference in performance, with the respective figures being 7% for full-time teachers and 19% for part-time teachers.

18. Teaching is well planned in most curriculum areas. In some areas there is an appropriate emphasis upon planning lessons with regard to the needs of students of differing abilities. In these areas, students' preferred learning styles are analysed at the beginning of the course and some use is made of this information. The more effective lesson plans ensure that the students' own experience is utilised and links with the local community are explored. Careful planning is not, however, resulting in sufficient good teaching. Not all plans make adequate provision for the differing needs of students. Some lack sufficient detail, particularly in relation to how students will learn and be assessed.

19. In the lessons which are good or better, teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching methods. Where relevant, modern technology and equipment are used to good effect to stimulate students' interest. Teachers link theory and practice carefully to heighten students' understanding of concepts. A good rapport between students and teachers, skilful use of questions by teachers and regular checking of students' understanding create a positive attitude to learning in some lessons, but in many lessons this is not the case.

20. In some of the less than satisfactory lessons, teachers give students insufficiently challenging work to do. Some teaching is dull with the result that many students are inattentive for long periods during the lesson. Teachers don't make frequent checks on students' learning. In some of the weaker lessons, the teacher talked too much, with the result that students were unable to contribute their own ideas or learn from others. The lack of punctuality by students had an adverse effect on teaching and learning in some lessons, as did poor attendance. Some teachers did not routinely question the late arrival to the lesson by some students.

21. The college has recently improved its arrangements for the management and teaching of key skills. The cross-college key skills team, managed by the director of curriculum and quality assurance, has been strengthened and their roles and responsibilities clarified. Three specialist key skills managers for IT, application of number and communication work with advanced practitioners from each department to provide support, advice and guidance to teachers. The college's approach is to integrate key skills where possible with students' main course of study. Staff are encouraged to participate in staff development to improve the teaching and assessment of key skills. However, the teaching of key skills is not sufficiently effective across all curriculum areas. In lessons, some teachers do not always make the best use of ICT for teaching and learning.

22. In most curriculum areas, teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced and they know their subjects well. Of full-time and permanent part-time staff, 98% have a teaching qualification and 17% are working towards one. In engineering, teachers convey their enthusiasm for the subject to their students. In business, knowledge of modern commercial and industrial practice is put to good use. In some other areas, and in a minority of cases, teachers lack appropriate experience and display insufficient knowledge of the subject matter. Staff development is good and well thought of by staff. However, its effect on improving teaching and learning has not been measured.

23. Accommodation and resources are good. Access for students and staff with restricted mobility is good. An effective development programme has improved facilities significantly since the last inspection. This includes expansion of the college nursery and more study spaces in the resource centre. A newly built ICT facility has enabled the college to remove the last of its temporary classrooms. Student communal areas have been upgraded to include a games room, a common room and coffee lounge.

24. Most classrooms are pleasant and well furnished. Some have good wall displays to reinforce learning and exhibit students' work. In social sciences and ESOL some classrooms are too small for the number of students in the class. Studio and workshop accommodation is unsatisfactory in art and design and media. Specialist resources are good in ICT, health and care, hairdressing and beauty, and in engineering for CAD. Some of the equipment in catering is old. The spacious and well-used resource centre includes 'drop-in' computing facilities, a library and quiet study areas. A good range of audio-visual materials and equipment are available to help students learn. There are sufficient up-to-date computers for students. The college has recently developed a very good on-line library service accessible through its web site. The service is particularly useful for part-time students and those who study at centres in the community. It includes resources for all curriculum areas. It is well developed for sports science, and hospitality and catering. The college has a clear policy for the assessment of students' work. Assessment is well planned on some courses, for example, access programmes and hospitality and catering, where students have a clear idea of how and when they will be assessed. On other courses the assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory, for example, in ICT. The marking of students' work is generally thorough and fair, and comments from teachers help students to improve their work. In some areas, however, the feedback from teachers gives insufficient detail to enable students to be clear about how they can improve their performance and written comments are too brief to be helpful. In social care, poor spelling and grammatical errors are rarely corrected and in sports studies there is a lack of marking criteria. The process of setting and monitoring appropriately demanding targets to help students to improve is not well established. There is little use of data on students' previous attainments to aid target setting. New procedures have recently been introduced and each full-time student now has an individual learning plan. Teachers have been allocated time to meet students individually to review the plan and to set targets. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these new arrangements. In most areas the arrangements for internal verification are appropriate and in some, for example, business studies, they are good.

25. The college offers a broad range of courses from entry to HE which are appropriate for the needs of young people and adults in the local area. A notable feature of the provision is the good range of courses at level 1. Programmes are provided in most of the LSC areas of learning. Access to HE courses are offered in six of these areas. A satisfactory range of cross-college enrichment activities is on offer to students. This includes a variety of sports, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, British sign language and driving test theory. However, the take-up of some of the activities is poor.

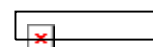
26. The college has a strong commitment to widening participation. It is actively involved in a series of partnerships which seek to provide education and training for people living in areas of deprivation. For example, the college led a project resulting in the setting up of Riley's, a UK Online centre based in a shopping precinct. Several projects involve working with school pupils. Examples include an introduction to modern apprenticeships and working with a major hotel chain to raise awareness of careers in hospitality. The college provides several courses in a vocational training centre for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college's provision for asylum seekers and refugees has grown significantly in the last year. Productive links with employers exist in several curriculum areas, notably sport, ICT, hospitality and catering, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. For example, the college has an active involvement in sports academies in partnership with a local football club and other sports associations.

27. Guidance and support for students are good. A well-presented prospectus gives detailed information on the range of courses and the application process. This is supplemented by open evenings and 'taster' days. Links with schools are effective. The college provides advice and a good range of information for prospective students. Clear guidelines cover the process from the initial application to enrolment. Induction is purposeful and informative. Good specialist support services are available to students, including advice on finances, accommodation, health, counselling, childcare and careers. Two Connexions advisers based at the college effectively extend the range of support available. A learner support fund provides useful financial support for those in need. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can use a good range of specialist equipment and support. Support for part-time students has improved and services are available on four evenings a week. Most part-time students have an induction and an initial individual tutorial to check the suitability of their course and any specific needs.

28. There are well-established and comprehensive arrangements for the initial assessment of the literacy and numeracy support needs of full-time students. Tutors and students receive the results promptly. Good support is provided through one-to-one help, work in small groups in the study centre, or in-class support from a learning support tutor. However, half of those students identified with learning support needs in numeracy are not yet receiving support. About two-thirds of those identified with support needs in literacy are receiving help. In-class support in literacy and numeracy will be extended to all curriculum areas by January 2003, but this is very late after the initial assessment of need has been identified. College data indicate improvements in retention of those receiving support. Flexible study support sessions are available for part-time students on two evenings a week.

29. Tutorial support for full-time students is good. All full-time and substantial part-time students have a personal tutor and follow a well-structured tutorial programme. Students have a weekly group tutorial covering topics such as course work, career and HE options, disability awareness, student finance, personal safety, alcohol and drug awareness, and stress management. In addition, students have a minimum of two individual tutorials each term. One focuses on personal issues and the other is used to monitor students' progress towards achieving agreed goals and targets. Students speak very highly of the tutorial support. Most parents of younger students are kept well informed about progress through termly reports and an invitation to attend parents' evenings. Although most personal tutors regularly monitor attendance there is sometimes a delay before an absence is followed up. Inspection coincided with the Muslim month of fasting, Ramadan. Attendance during the inspection was 73%, which is below the college target of 80%. Overall, attendance for the college from the start of the current academic year to the end of October 2002 was good at 87%.

Leadership and management



30. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has made some progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection carried out by the FEFC in 1998.

average for FE colleges. The number of full-time students recruited has grown, though not as rapidly as predicted for the current year. The management of work-based learning is satisfactory. There are some significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the curriculum. Inspectors identified two unsatisfactory curriculum areas, in social sciences and in literacy and numeracy. The difference between the best and worst performing curriculum areas is unacceptably wide. There is too much less than satisfactory teaching which contributes to the low achievements of a significant minority of learners.

31. An open and supportive management style has been practised and has seen the college through a period of significant change. Communications are good and staff are well informed on most cross-college matters. Staff development is taken seriously and most staff value and make good use of the opportunities provided.

32. Governors have a clear view of the college's mission in the local community. They are well informed and committed to the college's success, and are aware of the key issues which the college faces. However, although governors understand quality assurance issues, they do not monitor closely the variations in student retention and pass rates and the reasons for them. The governing body has had a significant involvement in the development of the college's mission statement and its strategic objectives. The strategic plan includes measurable targets which provide the basis for performance monitoring. Financial management is strong, and monitoring and review of the annual accounts is thorough.

33. Most students can progress smoothly onto more advanced work or change course easily. They are well supported and, although there are significant exceptions, most are studying at the right level and are on the right course. A number of collaborative partnership arrangements have either made promising starts or been successful over a number of years. Links with business are good and the contribution to partnership within the Education Action Zone is greatly valued. The provision of support for disaffected 14 to 16 year old learners, particularly in 2002/03, is having a positive impact. There has been some growth in adult community education and the college is providing more courses in more community venues to attract adults to study.

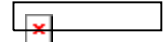
34. The commitment to promoting equal opportunities is strong and for the most part effective. Policies and procedures have been thoughtfully developed and adjusted over time to reflect changing circumstances. Many have been successful. Almost all learners reported the college to be a comfortable, safe and supportive place to study. There are many instances of the college acting consistently within the principles outlined in the policy statements to support learners with a wide range of needs and disabilities. There remain, however, areas for improvement. The self-assessment reviews make little explicit reference to equal opportunities issues and how they are being addressed, particularly in relation to differences in achievement.

35. There is sufficient accurate management information to allow the college to retain an informed view of students' achievements. However, this information is not being used effectively. For example, self-assessment reviews in some curriculum areas are complacent and optimistic. Target setting at course level is not sharp enough. The use of data on students' prior attainments in target setting is not well established, and the monitoring and review of students' progress towards achieving targets is not effective. The college has not compared its data on students' results with their respective starting points to see how well it is performing. While plans at a curriculum area level are clearly linked to the college's strategic objectives, many lack specificity as to how far the performance achieved meets requirements.

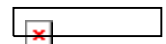
36. The framework for quality assurance has been regularly updated and revised but its implementation is not yet effective enough to improve areas of known weakness or to identify priorities for improvement. There was a significant mismatch in some areas between the college's self-assessed strengths and weaknesses and those identified by inspectors. Curriculum leadership is unsatisfactory in some areas and indifferent in others. While some curriculum areas have action plans which are detailed and the action points link well to the self-assessment report, others do not. For example, in humanities and literacy and numeracy, action points are unspecific and subsequent improvements in teaching the curriculum cannot be identified. The programme of internal lesson observations is not always effective in improving the quality of teaching and effectiveness of

learning. While there are examples of teachers adapting and modifying their teaching to take account of the different needs of the students in the class, there are others where this is not the case. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Engineering



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on CAD and CNC courses
- good student progression into work or HE
- much good teaching on CAD courses and for students with learning difficulties
- good resources for CAD and CNC programmes
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on the City and Guilds 201 programme
- low retention and pass rate on NVQ level 2
- some out-of-date equipment

- lack of rigour in course reviews.

Scope of provision

37. The college has developed a wide range of engineering courses that meets the needs of local students of all ages and ability. It provides full-time and part-time courses, including NVQ level 2 in performing engineering operations, City and Guilds 201, national certificate in engineering, and a programme of evening courses in two-dimensional and three-dimensional CAD, three-dimensional solid modelling and graphics, and CNC programming. There is considerable enrolment on the three-dimensional software courses from people working in sectors other than engineering. On basic engineering courses there are well-established progression routes for students from entry level to level 4. Adult craft skills courses are provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, both at the college and off-site at a specialised day centre. There is also a programme for disaffected Year 10 and Year 11 students from local schools. At the time of the inspection there were 52 full-time and 196 part-time students.

Achievement and standards

38. There are high pass rates on CAD and CNC programming courses. Students on the computer-aided engineering courses develop skills that enable them to progress to higher levels and to improve their employment chances. Students who attend these courses take pride in demonstrating their newly acquired skills by producing imaginative solutions to assignments. Students on the basic engineering programmes are prepared well for progression to employment or more advanced studies. They acquire a sound understanding of basic principles and develop their practical skills. The pass rate on the City and Guilds 201 course is well below the national average. The pass rate for the NVQ level 2 was low in 2000/01. This was the first year of a new level 2 qualification, performing engineering operations. Many students on the basic courses progress to modern apprenticeships and higher level courses. Retention rates are below the national averages for the City and Guilds 201 and NVQ level 2 courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ level 2	2	No. of starts	30	26	23
		% retention	80	85	61
		% pass rate	96	86	43
City and Guilds 201	2	No. of starts	13	15	9
		% retention	62	73	77
		% pass rate	75	55	44
City and Guilds 4351 three-dimensional CAD	2	No. of starts	55	24	24
		% retention	55	80	83
		% pass rate	67	88	85
City and Guilds 4351 three-dimensional studio max	2	No. of starts	*	15	20
		% retention	*	87	95
		% pass rate	*	77	89
City and Guilds 4351	2	No. of starts	*	13	18

three-dimensional solid modelling		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	100	75
CNC programming setting/operating	2	No. of starts	58	53	17
		% retention	81	76	82
		% pass rate	72	90	87

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

* data unavailable

Quality of education and training

39. Overall, the standard of teaching is satisfactory. There is, however, much good teaching on computer-aided engineering and programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In all areas, teachers are well qualified and are enthusiastic about their subject. They make effective use of a variety of teaching methods to meet the needs of different groups of students. Modern technology is used appropriately to make lessons more relevant to local industry and to stimulate the interest of the students in modern engineering. Course material is up to date and relevant to current systems in use commercially. There are good schemes of work and lesson plans for all courses. In basic engineering, practical lessons are carefully planned to enable students to link their theoretical knowledge to practical applications. Students' understanding of engineering applications is enhanced by the close links which teachers have with local industry. These links ensure that teaching and learning are related to current engineering practice. Teachers closely monitor the quality of students' practical work. Well-prepared practical exercises provide students with the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence at an appropriate pace. Students have a good awareness of safety requirements and procedures. All students wear appropriate personal protective equipment during their practical workshop lessons. Teachers regularly emphasise the importance of following the correct procedures when working with engineering tools.

40. Teachers and students work well together. Students are encouraged to discuss their progress with the teachers at any time. There is a very sensitive approach to teaching students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These students attending courses at entry level, in adult basic skills, receive careful one-to-one support and they learn new skills and develop their self-esteem effectively. There is good teaching for a group of disaffected young people who attend an alternative curriculum in vocational education for one day a week. The pupils have developed a genuine enthusiasm for practical mechanical work by learning basic skills and working together as a team on a project to restore a go-kart. The inspection took place during a period of fasting for some students from a minority ethnic group. Teachers were especially sensitive to the needs of this group and carefully adjusted their individual assignments to ensure that the students did not fall behind schedule and were able to meet their religious obligations. Teachers maintain their awareness of current and future developments in technology by attending appropriate external training courses and trade exhibitions by developing close links with employers.

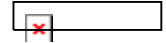
41. Resources for teaching are good in some areas and satisfactory in others. Up-to-date graphical software is used for CAD and CNC. It enables students to develop their skills and knowledge using modern systems. Classrooms for computer-aided engineering courses are well equipped with sufficient terminals and modern audio-visual equipment that enables the teacher to project active screen displays to the whole class. The mechanical workshops have a wide range of equipment, much of which is satisfactory, but some equipment is out of date and does not reflect current industrial practice. The appearance of the mechanical workshops does not provide a positive image for young people starting careers in engineering. Well-trained and skilled workshop technicians maintain the equipment in a serviceable and safe condition.

Leadership and management

42. The engineering provision is well managed. There is a clear organisational structure and well-

defined roles and responsibilities. There are good internal communications and to this end, increasingly effective use is being made of the college web site. Staff development has a high priority. Staff benefit from external and internal training that enables them to keep abreast of changes in technology and to take on increasing responsibility. Course reviews are part of the process through which targets for retention, achievement and attendance are considered. These reviews are not sufficiently rigorous. The extent to which previous actions have been successfully implemented is not carefully assessed.

Business



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on level 2 courses
- much good teaching
- good standard of students' written work
- good subject and pastoral support
- regular and rigorous assessment.

Weaknesses

- some low pass rates
- low retention rates on level 3 courses

Scope of provision

43. The curriculum offer ranges from level 1 to higher level programmes. The AVCE is provided as both a full-time and a part-time course. The provision also includes the GNVQ intermediate course, the introductory certificate in first line management, training and development awards, and the City

and Guilds teaching certificates. Courses leading to NVQ level 2 and 3 in administration and OCR level 1, 2 and 3 in administrative and secretarial procedures are also offered. Courses at certificate level in management and personnel practice are offered on a franchised basis. The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) awards and the introduction to professional accounts courses provide a route from introductory to technician level. At the lower levels these courses are for full-time students and at the higher levels they are part-time courses. There is no GNVQ foundation course in business. Currently 409 students are enrolled on business and professional courses and 239 on business administration and office technology courses. There are 133 full-time students.

Achievement and standards

44. Retention rates on level 2 courses are consistently high. Retention on NVQ level 2 accounting and the certificate in administrative and secretarial procedures courses have been at, or above, the national average for the last three years, and for the GNVQ intermediate course, it has been above the national average for the last two years. However, at level 3, despite a significant improvement on the NVQ level 3 administration course between 2001 and 2002, retention is below the national average. Pass rates are low on a number of courses, for example, GNVQ intermediate, City and Guilds teaching certificate courses, AAT level 3, NVQ level 3 administration, and AVCE are all below national averages. There are poor pass rates on the main qualifications taken by modern apprentices and the completion rate for the full framework is low.

45. In their written work, students demonstrate good levels of attainment. They show confidence in their growing ability to understand concepts and to apply their learning to real-life business contexts. Part-time students demonstrate a good understanding of the business environment in which they work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	39	52	32
		% retention	87	79	81
		% pass rate	41	49	70
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	12	13	11
		% retention	75	100	91
		% pass rate	100	62	60
Certificate in administrative procedures	2	No. of starts	10	23	21
		% retention	90	76	90
		% pass rate	56	28	59
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	48	44	52
		% retention	85	86	77
		% pass rate	27	32	36
GNVQ/AVCE	3	No. of starts	43	34	25
		% retention	74	76	68
		% pass rate	94	96	58
NVQ administration	3	No. of starts	38	11	23
		% retention	87	64	78
		% pass rate	75	78	65

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

Quality of education and training

46. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned to meet the learning needs of individual students. Teachers use an appropriate variety of learning activities which take account of students' preferred learning styles. Teachers make effective use of part-time students' own employment experience to add relevance to lessons. Guest speakers and visits to local businesses are used to good effect. Teachers successfully involve students in lessons through discussions and group activities, and students respond well. However, some teaching although satisfactory, is less effective. It is dull and it fails to create challenging and motivating learning opportunities for all students. In some of these lessons, teachers fail to engage the more reticent students in the work or to check their understanding of it. The lack of relevant work experience on full-time accounting and AVCE courses limits the opportunities available to students to apply their learning in real work environments. The lack of punctuality of students on some courses has a detrimental effect on lessons.

47. Teachers are well qualified. They have relevant professional and vocational qualifications. Their up-to-date knowledge of business practice is used to good effect in making the lesson relevant to students. Some teachers have taken the opportunity to update their practical experience in local organisations. Course materials produced by teachers are good. They are designed to take account of the needs of specific student groups. In most cases, accommodation and resources are good, including students' access to IT. However, some rooms are too small and this places restrictions on the type of learning activities used.

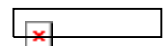
48. The assessment of students' work is well planned. Assignments are clearly written, interesting, and relevant to the programme of study. Students are informed of the assessment criteria and know what is expected of them to achieve specific grades. Teachers' written feedback on students' work is comprehensive and particularly helpful in promoting learning, by identifying clearly what students need to do to raise their level of attainment. On most courses there is rigorous internal verification.

49. There is good academic and pastoral support for students. Group tutorials are well planned and managed. There are effective systems for monitoring individual students' progress. Individual student tutorials are held regularly, are well documented, and involve agreed action plans. Induction is effective but some students are placed on courses inappropriate to their abilities and needs. In particular, there are GNVQ intermediate students who would have been more appropriately placed on a foundation programme, and some AVCE students have low entry grades.

Leadership and management

50. Students' and employers' needs have been taken into account in the planning of most courses. Course teams regularly review their courses and contribute to the self-assessment report and action plans. These reviews place much weight on evidence from surveys of students' views. This process has identified key areas for improvement, and although action on most has been planned and in some cases implemented, there are still outstanding issues. There is little comparison of students' results with what might be predicted from their previous attainments in the review of performance. The management of work-based learning has improved over the last two years. There is now much better monitoring of students' achievements and of the progress made towards completion of the modern apprenticeship frameworks.

Information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on CLAIT and IBT courses
- high retention rate on GNVQ advanced IT
- good teaching of adults
- wide range of courses with good progression opportunities
- well-resourced IT facilities.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on full-time level 2 courses
- poor attendance on most courses
- some poor assessment planning and verification
- inadequate arrangements for additional learning support.

Scope of provision

51. A wide range of ICT courses is offered. Full-time provision includes GNVQ foundation and intermediate and AVCE courses, first diploma, national certificate and diploma in IT practitioners, and a higher national certificate and diploma in computing. There is also a full-time City and Guilds course which enables adult students to retrain in IT. There are 126 students on full-time courses and 478 on part-time courses. Courses specifically for adults are available at the main site and in the local community. These courses include word processing, CLAIT, IBT2, European computer driving licence (ECDL) and other specialist qualifications. Community provision successfully widens participation, attracting adults who have no other means of gaining IT skills. Riley's UK Online Centre, established in April 2002, has received a regional award from UK Online.

Achievement and standards

52. Pass rates for CLAIT, IBT2 and IBT3 courses have improved significantly over the last three

years and, in 2001/02, were well above the national average. Over the same period the number of students starting these courses has fallen by 50%. On short CLAIT courses, retention is comparable to the national average but it is poor on one-year courses. There are low retention and pass rates on the first diploma and GCSE IT courses. Retention on most full-time vocational courses fell in 2001/02, although it rose to well above the national average on the AVCE IT course.

53. Students work well together, sharing knowledge and challenging each other's ideas. They particularly enjoy demonstrating software skills to their fellow students. Many adult students gain a new level of confidence in using IT and they are able to use their skills to help their children or grandchildren with schoolwork. Students use the Internet confidently and value being able to connect to the college web site from home.

54. Progression by students to higher level courses is good. Over half of the students who completed the first diploma in 2002 progressed to the national diploma. In the same year, 38% of the students who completed the AVCE course progressed to the higher national diploma computing course, and 33% gained a place at university. Currently, in the second year of the higher national diploma course there are five students who initially entered the college at foundation level, and one who started at intermediate level. There is good monitoring of students' attendance, but attendance at lessons was low at 68%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	13	16	16
		% retention	69	94	38
		% pass rate	89	93	0
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	558	*	139
		% retention	87	*	89
		% pass rate	62	*	90
CLAIT (1 year)	1	No. of starts	523	*	304
		% retention	70	*	73
		% pass rate	52	*	99
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	31	16	29**
		% retention	81	69	66
		% pass rate	56	91	53
GCSE IT	2	No. of starts	12	13	18
		% retention	92	69	44
		% pass rate	55	89	33
IBT2 (one year)	2	No. of starts	189	164	114
		% retention	83	83	82
		% pass rate	60	68	89
GNVQ/AVCE IT	3	No. of starts	22	38	36
		% retention	68	47	*
		% pass rate	60	88	*
IBT3 (one year)	3	No. of starts	26	35	37
		% retention	69	60	76

		% pass rate	50	57	71
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Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

* data not reliable or not available

** qualification changed to BTEC first diploma

Quality of education and training

55. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and the teaching of adults is good. Teachers are appropriately qualified and lessons are well planned. In the most effective lessons, teachers vary the work to suit the needs of students with different levels of ability and learning styles. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not enable students to make the best use of their time. Students are left without work to do, while files are copied onto disks or equipment is set up, and the more able students have to wait while others catch up. Some students are not given sufficiently demanding work at an appropriate level to enable them to make progress. For example, in a lesson on image manipulation there were no extension exercises for a group of students who already possessed considerable skills in this area.

56. Teachers effectively identify students' needs and give good individual support in lessons. Students work co-operatively in groups. In a lesson where computers were being built from components, students questioned each other's ideas about how best to connect the components. Teachers on a practical networking course made good use of the recent move into a new laboratory to provide students with real experience of building a network.

57. Teachers usually provide detailed and helpful comments on marked work. However, on a number of vocational courses, some students do not receive sufficient written and oral feedback to enable them to improve. Poor assessment planning resulted in students on the GNVQ foundation and City and Guilds courses not achieving their qualification by the expected completion date in July 2002. Incorrect interpretation of the specification for two units of the AVCE course meant that national standards were not met. Internal verification systems are not sufficiently rigorous.

58. Resources are good. Accommodation at all centres is good and conducive to learning. Computer hardware and software have been up-dated to meet industrial standards. There is a very good stock of up-to-date ICT books in the resource centre. Students have access to teaching and learning resources on the college intranet. Students on vocational courses have good contact with local industry and business. The regional IT association gives students guidance on employment opportunities and skill requirements in local industries. The college is designated as a Centre of Vocational Excellence for computing and e-skills technology.

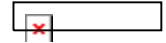
59. Good support and guidance are provided for students. Students enjoy their induction to the college. During induction, students are assessed to identify their additional learning support needs. Teachers are aware of these needs, but so far, in the 2002/03 academic year, no student has received support in literacy and numeracy. Students identified as being at risk of leaving the course early are given additional tutorial support. There is a very good range of specialist ICT equipment and support available for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Adults applying for part-time ICT courses are carefully guided onto courses which are appropriate to their needs. Students applying to HE receive good support and advice.

Leadership and management

60. Two college departments have responsibility for managing the ICT provision. Where appropriate, programme managers meet regularly to share good practice. The views of students are taken into account and this influences curriculum planning. For example, the first diploma replaced the GNVQ intermediate course following consultation with students. There are examples of effective self-assessment and course development. Poor results on the GNVQ foundation course led to the

course being restructured. This good practice does not extend to all areas of the provision. The self-assessment report identified many of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision, but insufficient weight was given to the quality of teaching and learning.

Leisure, tourism, travel and sports studies



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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning in sports lessons
- high pass rates on most sports courses
- effective partnerships with local sports organisations
- wide range of additional programmes and enrichment activities
- effective tutorial programme.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on most full-time leisure and tourism courses
- poor teaching and learning in some AVCE travel and tourism lessons
- poor internal verification practice for work-based learning
- some weak curriculum management.

Scope of provision

61. A wide range of full-time and part-time courses is offered in leisure, tourism, travel and sports studies at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are good opportunities for full-time students to gain additional qualifications such as first aid, sports leaders and coaching awards, cabin crew, resort representative and travel agency certificates. A good number of students study sign language and a modern foreign language. At the time of the inspection there were 132 full-time students on sports-related courses, 80 on leisure and tourism courses, and 30 sport and recreation modern apprentices. Effective partnerships have been established with many local organisations in sport and this has led to the development of new off-site learning locations to attract additional students and to increase the numbers of work-based learners in sport.

Achievement and standards

62. There are high pass rates on most sports courses such as NVQ level 1 sport and recreation, the national diploma in science (sports studies) and short courses. Pass rates are low on GNVQ leisure and tourism, AVCE leisure and recreation, and travel and tourism courses. In 2001/02, the pass rates improved to above the national average on the Association of British Travel Agents Certificate (ABTAC) and the national diploma in science (sports studies), and NVQ level 1 sport and recreation. The retention rates are below the national average on NVQ level 1 sport and recreation, GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism and AVCE travel and tourism courses. On the national diploma in science (sports studies), retention has risen in each of the last three years and in 2002 was well above the national average. The standard of sports students' written work is good, but the written work of travel and tourism students shows attainment at, or below, a satisfactory standard. Sports academy practical activities develop individual performance techniques from elite performers to beginners in basketball, endurance running and football. Sports studies students effectively develop their practical skills and techniques during coaching sessions in football, basketball, netball and rugby.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	10	10	12
		% retention	70	60	75
		% pass rate	57	83	67
NVQ sport and recreation	1	No. of starts	*	13	16
		% retention	*	92	69
		% pass rate	*	92	100
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	17	19	19
		% retention	88	68	63
		% pass rate	73	23	25
National aquatic rescue standards (NARS)	2	No. of starts	*	180	160
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	89	82
ABTAC primary	3	No. of starts	*	19	26
		% retention	*	100	80
		% pass rate	*	63	89
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	13	22	24

science (sports studies)	% retention	54	77	92
	% pass rate	100	75	95

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

63. Teaching and learning in practical sports lessons are good. In the best lessons, students are set challenging tasks and they achieve good levels of attainment. Teachers use practical activities effectively to explain basic principles, terminology and to develop students' understanding. Teachers pay good attention to equal opportunities. For example, a mixed gender group of students were engaged in developing their football skills by practising other sports. National diploma students used real examples and experience to demonstrate a full understanding of exercise physiology. The Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) youth team of professional footballers confidently related theoretical terminology and understanding to exercise and stretching techniques in a body in action session. Some travel and tourism lessons were less successful. Teachers did not give students sufficient time to develop their answers and students' previous learning was not used effectively to build on their experiences. In other lessons, teachers gave full explanation of topics even though students had handouts with space to complete the work on their own. In some weak theory lessons, teachers failed to motivate the students or check whether or not they had learned anything.

64. Most teachers are well qualified and experienced. Practical sports teachers hold coaching qualifications. The sports hall and fitness suite are well used and there are good outdoor sports facilities on the college campus. Travel students use the travel shop for travel agency work experience. Teaching and learning resources are inadequate for the cabin crew programme. Teachers have no experience of the job role and teaching is pitched at too low a level for advanced students. There is good access to computers in the resources centre enabling students to use the developing college web site for interactive learning materials in sport, leisure and travel. There is a good range of books, journals and magazines for students to use.

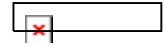
65. Teachers provide good, supportive and developmental feedback on students' coursework, highlighting and correcting grammatical as well as subject-specific errors. There is some poor internal verification practice for work-based learning. The verification of modern apprentice's portfolios normally takes place only at the end of their programme when they have gathered enough evidence to complete their vocational programme. Assessment practice has not yet been standardised and there is inconsistent assessor support for trainees. Modern apprentices' portfolios are generally of a good standard and most apprentices make good progress.

66. The tutorial programme is effective. Students discuss issues such as race, drugs and bullying in group tutorials. In one tutorial, travel students were introduced to study skills using appropriate research activities in the resource centre. Students worked enthusiastically in teams developing independent learning skills and completed a challenging travel-related quiz. Students value the support and guidance they receive from teachers as well as the specific advice on careers.

Leadership and management

67. There is some weak curriculum management. Teachers do not have a good understanding of the data on students' achievements or of the college's target-setting process. The curriculum manager is not formally involved in observing teaching. Course team self-assessment reports are validated through the college's quality assurance arrangements. There is, however, an over-reliance on surveys of students' views as a basis for some course self-assessment reports.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on NVQ level 1 and 2
- good development of students' occupational skills
- good teaching in practical lessons
- effective and productive links with industry
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- poor planning for assessment in the workplace
- some out-of-date and poor equipment in kitchens
- poor planning of theory lessons.

Scope of provision

68. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time NVQ courses in food preparation and cookery, and food service at levels 1, 2 and 3. Cake decoration and international cuisine is also available and cookery at an elementary level for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Constructive links have been developed with local schools and pupils regularly come to the college to learn cooking skills and to be introduced to the hospitality and catering industry.

Achievement and standards

69. Overall, students' achievements are high. In 2001/02, on NVQ level 1 and 2 programmes the retention and pass rates were at, or above, the national average. Retention and pass rates on NVQ level 3 courses are satisfactory. The retention rate on cake decorating courses for adults is very high but the examination pass rate is low. The standard of students' work on cake decorating courses is often outstanding and many students compete successfully in local and national competitions for sugar craft. Students develop good practical skills in the kitchens and restaurant, which prepares them well for employment. The standard of food prepared and served by students is good. Students working in the college training restaurant demonstrate good customer service skills and work well as part of a team. Students take pride in their work and develop good professional attitudes. Students are punctual and attendance at lessons is high at 86%. Students' portfolios are generally satisfactory. Most students go on to gain relevant employment in the industry.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
MENCAP essential skills award	E	No. of starts	*	*	19
		% retention	*	*	89
		% pass rate	*	*	80
NVQ food preparation and cooking	1	No. of starts	19	36	25
		% retention	84	75	97
		% pass rate	84	69	95
NVQ serving food and drink (bar and restaurant)	2	No. of starts	39	32	24
		% retention	90	91	92
		% pass rate	46	78	92
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	42	25	20
		% retention	76	84	80
		% pass rate	64	72	80

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

70. Practical teaching is well planned and taught by highly qualified and experienced teaching staff. Teachers regularly spend time in the industry to update their skills. They also attend exhibitions and compete and judge at catering and hospitality competitions. Teaching in practical lessons incorporates clearly written handouts and in one restaurant class, the practical session incorporated effective use of a powerpoint presentation. In practical lessons all students have clearly defined job roles. Students work productively and keep to tight time schedules when preparing, cooking and serving food in the production kitchen and restaurant. Theory teaching is often poorly planned. Some theory classes have large numbers of students and teachers do not take adequate account of the learning needs of individual students. Some students in theory lessons are not fully engaged in the work and they lose interest. Learning materials for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well designed and help students to learn. NVQ level 3 students gather evidence from the workplace to cover some aspects of their course. However, the quality and authenticity of this work is not adequately checked. Procedures are not in place to enable students' practical competence to be assessed in the workplace when they are on placements. Full-time students are not sufficiently monitored during their time in industry.

71. Good links with industry help to enrich the curriculum. Competitions are sponsored by local and well-known national employers. Celebrity chefs visit the college to judge competitions and to

demonstrate their skills. This helps to inspire and motivate students. Students are frequently taken out on well-planned visits to give them a wider understanding of the industry.

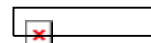
72. The training restaurant is well resourced but decoration is dated. In the kitchens, some large equipment such as grills and steamers are old and in need of repair, and some large cooking equipment does not work. Although the kitchens have a large amount of small equipment such as pots, pans and bowls, many of these are old and of very poor quality. The type of equipment does not always reflect that which students will encounter in industry. In some kitchens the wooden chopping boards used are heavily scored and are a potential health hazard. Some books in the college resource centre are out of date and there is a lack of modern cookery books to enthuse learners.

73. Induction is well planned and includes an early introduction to practical skills. Good support is given to all students to help them pass their qualifying examinations and to develop the skills needed to find successful employment in the industry. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given a lot of sensitive support in both practical and theory lessons by qualified support staff. Financial support is provided to help students who find it difficult to purchase the protective clothing and knives required for the courses. The tutorial programme is effective. Equality of opportunity and health and safety are effectively promoted. Good careers advice and guidance help students to make appropriate decisions about their careers.

Leadership and management

74. Communications across the department are good. A weekly newsletter keeps staff informed of activities and special events. Regular curriculum team meetings are held and curriculum managers meet weekly with the head of department. The department has a good strategic overview of the needs of the industries it serves both locally and nationally. There is a clear departmental policy for the development and teaching of key skills.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses
- good teaching in beauty therapy
- good specialist facilities
- wide range of courses

- effective tutorial programme.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on holistic and complementary therapy courses
- insufficient clients for hairdressing and beauty therapy
- low retention and pass rates on hairdressing courses
- some poor internal verification practice.

Scope of provision

75. The college offers a wide range of qualifications in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Full-time and part-time courses are available in hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapies from level 1 to 3. Schools 'taster' sessions enable pupils to gain an insight into hairdressing and beauty therapy as a potential career option. The college has successfully encouraged students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to follow a beauty therapy course. At the time of the inspection there were 164 beauty therapy and 62 hairdressing students. There are a small number of work-based learners.

Achievement and standards

76. In 2000/01 and 2001/02, all students who completed the NVQ level 3 hairdressing, holistic therapies and reflexology diplomas achieved the qualification. The pass rates on NVQ beauty therapy courses have risen to above the national average. There are consistently high retention and pass rates on the Indian head massage course, which exceed the national average. Retention and pass rates on most hairdressing courses are unsatisfactory. In 2001/02, the retention and pass rates on NVQ level 1 and 2 hairdressing fell to well below the national average. Retention rates are low on most holistic and complementary therapy courses. Since 1999, retention has fallen each year on reflexology and aromatherapy courses. The quality of students' portfolios is satisfactory. There is good feedback on students' marked work, which recognises achievements and gives clear direction on what students' need to do to improve their performance.

77. Trophies and medals, sponsored by industry, are awarded annually to students to reward progress and achievements. Two beauty therapy students won first and second place in a regional skills competition with one going forward to compete in the national final. Most students progress to employment in either hairdressing or beauty therapy.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	14	25	36

		% retention	50	60	58
		% pass rate	86	93	71
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	*	19	24
		% retention	*	63	63
		% pass rate	*	100	53
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	56	42	53
		% retention	68	76	79
		% pass rate	79	88	95
Indian head massage diploma	2	No. of starts	27	17	20
		% retention	100	100	90
		% pass rate	85	82	89
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	28	21	18
		% retention	86	81	89
		% pass rate	83	76	88
Diploma in aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	34	35	38
		% retention	85	74	68
		% pass rate	93	96	88
Diploma in reflexology	3	No. of starts	36	53	16
		% retention	92	85	69
		% pass rate	94	87	100
Body massage certificate	3	No. of starts	54	38	59
		% retention	70	82	81
		% pass rate	92	94	96

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

78. Most teaching is good or better. The best teaching is in beauty therapy, where most lessons are very good. In one holistic therapy session the teacher and students effectively used a CD-ROM to develop a detailed knowledge and understanding of aromatherapy blends. Students developed a high level of skill. Schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive, and teachers are well prepared for all lessons. In the best lessons, teachers give clear introductions, pace the work well and make regular checks on students' learning. Group work in lessons is well managed. Learning materials including handouts, and learning packages are of a high quality and well used. Some teaching and learning methods do not challenge and inspire students. This is particularly evident in practical sessions when there are not enough clients for the number of students. Students often work on each other in practical sessions. There is limited promotion of the services available outside the college to attract new clients. Students can study barbering but there is no African Caribbean hairdressing to broaden the range of students' skills.

79. Practical assessments form most of the evidence in students' portfolios but most of the internal verification checks are carried out on paper-based evidence. The college has recognised that there are inadequate checks made of practical assessment and a plan is in place to address this issue.

80. The staff development programme is comprehensive. This helps to keep teachers' occupational skills up to date and ensures that teaching is relevant to current industrial practice. The three large beauty therapy salons and the large hairdressing salon are well equipped. There is a good range of professional products and a computerised till in the large beauty therapy reception area. There is a small amount of books in the library for student loan and few trade journals. There is, however, electronic access to a wide range of textbooks. There is innovative use of beauty and holistic therapy learning materials which are on the college's web site.

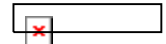
81. The tutorial programme is well planned and comprehensive. Students set realistic targets at individual tutorials which encourages them to make good progress. Regular reviews are built into the programme. Tutors effectively use the college's student support services unit to help students who are at risk of leaving their course. Tutorial records indicate that a number of students were encouraged to stay at college after being referred for support.

82. For students who attend during the day there is good additional learning support from learning support staff and teachers. Students who attend evening classes are offered support in the study centre but few take advantage of it. In one evening lesson, students would have benefited from study skills support to assist in the development of their assignments. Recording of students' progress is good. Staff and students have detailed records in the portfolio of what has been achieved and what needs to be done to gain the qualification.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory. The programme managers have a good understanding of the data on retention and achievement. There are regular team meetings and a weekly departmental news letter which contribute to effective communication. There is an inclusive ethos that provides learning for many disaffected and disadvantaged young people.

Health and social care and early years



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

Strengths

- high pass rate on the certificate in childcare and education in 2001/02
- high retention and pass rate on the first aid at work course
- good progression to further study or relevant employment
- effective individual support for students and modern apprentices.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rate on the diploma in childcare and education
- insufficient challenge and checks on students' learning in many lessons
- insufficient guidance on marked work to help students improve.

Scope of provision

84. The provision includes childcare and education, health and social care, and counselling courses. There are full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 3. Full-time courses in early years care and education include the foundation award in caring for children, certificate of childcare and education, diploma in childcare and education, and the national diploma in childhood studies. Courses in health and social care include foundation in health and social care, first diploma in caring, and the AVCE in health and social care. Courses leading to NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 are offered in care. Part-time courses are offered in childcare and education and counselling. Short courses in first aid are offered. There are 21 modern apprentices following a care course.

Achievement and standards

85. Pass rates on many courses have improved to around the national average in 2001/02. For example, the pass rates on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate in childcare and education and the AVCE health and social care rose significantly to 100% and 82%, respectively. Retention rates have also improved and are close to the national average. Many students on NVQ level 2 care fail to complete within the time agreed on their learning plan. However, a good number of these students do subsequently complete the course and gain the qualification. In 2000/01, the retention and pass rate on the diploma in childcare and education were low, and although they improved in 2001/02, they were still below the national average. The retention and pass rates on first aid and counselling courses are consistently high.

86. Full-time students gain a useful range of additional qualifications, including British sign language, counselling, first aid, and health and safety. At level 2 and 3, full-time students have work experience to extend their knowledge and to help them to develop occupationally relevant skills. There are plans to provide work experience for students on foundation programmes. Attendance in a minority of lessons was low and this adversely affected the planned activities. Progression on all courses to further study or employment is good. On average, just over 50% of students on the foundation in caring for children course progress to the certificate in childcare, and 22% to the first diploma in caring. Over 90% of AVCE health and social care students progress to HE and nearly all students on the diploma in childcare and education gain relevant employment.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care and early years, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First aid at work	1	No. of starts	48	46	101
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	94	98	100
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	*	18	12
		% retention	*	72	75

		% pass rate	*	54	100
Certificate in counselling	2	No. of starts	24	20	24
		% retention	88	90	96
		% pass rate	86	100	83
GNVQ/AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	7	19	18
		% retention	86	58	61
		% pass rate	100	60	82

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

87. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Schemes of work are comprehensive. At induction, students complete a questionnaire to identify their preferred learning styles and many lesson plans provide a range of activities to accommodate individual learning styles. Detailed lesson plans indicate that learning will be checked, but this does not always happen. In the better lessons, teachers state clear aims and objectives for the lesson, returning to them at the end to check students' learning. The pace of work in most lessons is appropriate for the activity and the abilities of students. Teachers use a range of appropriate methods to develop students' knowledge and skills, such as teacher demonstration, student practice, group activities and presentations. In lessons, teachers encourage students to contribute to discussions, promoting their self-confidence and self-esteem. In the less successful lessons, teachers make few checks on individual learning and do not manage questioning technique effectively. A minority of students are passive for long periods of time and teachers fail to engage them fully.

88. Most childcare students make good use of life and work experience to develop their understanding in lessons, but this is not always the case in health and care. Most students are well motivated and they work together effectively in groups. In a minority of health and care lessons, students do not collaborate or demonstrate the interpersonal skills required in the occupational area. Most students' work is satisfactory and some is good. For example, a national diploma student provided good photographic evidence to support an assignment on risk assessment. NVQ portfolios are well organised and demonstrate good evidence of basic knowledge. Students are encouraged to use the college web site and the Internet for research. Key skills are taught in separate lessons using occupationally relevant materials and contexts. In the key skill of IT, students make good progress and gain confidence and competence.

89. There are good resources for students' learning. Childcare and health and social care have designated base rooms. Students' work and occupationally relevant posters are on display. Appropriate specialist equipment is available. Its suitability is reviewed and equipment is updated where necessary. Counselling courses can use additional rooms for small-group work. Handouts, work books and task sheets are good. Staff are appropriately qualified with recent occupational experience. All have gained or are working towards a teaching qualification.

90. Assessment practice is satisfactory, meeting awarding body requirements. Written assignment criteria provide good guidance for students. Comprehensive feedback is provided on counselling courses and in work-based learning where assessment is well planned. In other areas, written feedback often lacks sufficient guidance to students to ensure future improvement. All teachers do not routinely correct spelling and grammar, an issue identified through the internal verification process. The internal verification system is sound.

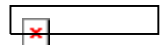
91. Guidance and support for students and modern apprentices are good. Students speak highly of the support they receive from their teachers. Additional help is provided for students identified as requiring support by the initial assessment carried out during induction. Employers are kept well

informed of students' progress. A college system to determine expected achievement is used in weekly tutorials as a basis for target setting for full-time students.

Leadership and management

92. There are many new staff in the curriculum area. New and part-time staff are well supported through induction and regular review with a named mentor. The self-assessment report is self-critical but inspectors did not agree with the assessment of the quality of teaching. Staff are working to address identified weaknesses and taking responsibility for setting and monitoring progress made towards achieving targets. The management of work-based learning has improved and there are now more regular meetings and checks on the progress of trainees.

Art and design and media



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates in 2001/02 on GNVQ intermediate art and design
- high pass rates on GCE A-level art and media courses
- lively teaching on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses
- good standard of students' work on GCE AS/A level
- wide range of enrichment activities.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on AVCE art and design courses
- some ineffective teaching in AVCE art and design and national diploma graphics
- inadequate studio and workshop accommodation for some subjects.

Scope of provision

93. There is a wide range of provision across art and design and media studies, including multimedia design, graphic design, film studies, photography and interior design. Full-time and part-time courses are offered from entry level through to level 3. An entry level course for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is provided at Brandon Wood Farm as outreach provision. GCE AS/A-level courses are offered in art and design and media. Students can also study multimedia, sound recording and video production. Some 35% of enrolments are on GNVQ/AVCE and national diploma full-time programmes.

Achievement and standards

94. Retention and pass rates across the provision are uneven. In 2001/02, the retention and pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate art and design was high and above the national average. The pass rate, however, on the GNVQ intermediate media/communications was low. Students on GCE A-level art and media achieve high pass rates. Pass rates on the AVCE art and design are unacceptably low. No student gained the qualification in 2000/01 and only 44% of students who completed their course in 2001/02 achieved the award.

95. On the GCE AS/A-level art and design course, students' work in visual studies is particularly good. Life drawing demonstrated sensitive use of media and good composition. AVCE art and design students' drawing skills and use of media are poor. There is insufficient use of sketchbooks to develop experimentation and ideas. Internet sources are over-used for research. Students on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate course develop their skills successfully. The standard of students' work on the certificate in interior design is good. On media courses some students do good research from a wide range of sources and develop and realise their ideas successfully. Photographic work is particularly good, demonstrating sound technical and composition skills. Most students are competent in the use of industrial standard desktop publishing software and sound production techniques. Writing skills are generally good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in art and design and media, 2000 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
National open college network (NOCN) art and design	1	No. of starts	*	32	42
		% retention	*	53	93
		% pass rate	*	53	100
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	8	9	17
		% retention	88	67	88
		% pass rate	71	50	80
GNVQ/AVCE advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	35	11	15
		% retention	88	55	67
		% pass rate	85	0	44
GCE A-level media	3	No. of starts	20	42	23
		% retention	55	86	78
		% pass rate	91	78	78
GCE A-level art	3	No. of starts	**	14	46
		% retention	**	57	96
		% pass rate	**	71	95

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

* course not offered

** data unavailable

Quality of education and training

96. In some lessons, particularly GNVQ foundation and intermediate, teachers demonstrate techniques effectively and enthuse students to engage with their work. In a GNVQ foundation art and design lesson the teacher carefully demonstrated the use of colour pastels to good effect, enabling students to improve their still-life drawing. The teacher showed good examples of artists' work to develop students' visual awareness. In a GNVQ intermediate lesson, students were working to produce a movie in the horror genre. The teacher effectively used examples from horror movies that appealed to students' imagination and motivated thinking and ideas for their projects. Teachers have a good rapport with students, offering encouragement. They pace the work well to provide the students with appropriately demanding work. In a GCE AS photography lesson, students displayed their work in readiness for a group critique. The teacher used skillful questioning to elicit responses from students and dialogue about the strengths and weaknesses of the work.

97. Some teaching is less successful. In a graphic design drawing class, the teacher did not set work that took account of the different abilities of all the students. The task set was to complete a simple line drawing that some students completed speedily and then remained idle waiting for other students to finish. A radio playing in the background distracted students from a disciplined approach to their work. In some lessons, teachers fail to maintain the attention of students. Poor questioning techniques do not motivate students and tend to focus only on the most enthusiastic students. The late arrival of students to some classes delays the start, or disrupts the flow and the engagement of students. Teachers too often do not address lateness firmly enough. Written feedback on students' assessed work is generally constructive. Sometimes, however, it does not state specifically the further work that is required to meet assessment criteria to improve grades. Tutorial support is good. Students value the process and understand the learning targets that are agreed with their teachers.

98. There is a good range of enrichment activities for students. All full-time students take qualifications in addition to their main course of study in art or media. Opportunities exist for students to undertake recreational and sports activities. Links with the community are good on media and art and design programmes. AVCE students recently worked with a local nursery to provide murals to brighten the environment. Students enjoyed the project and expressed pride in their achievement. A newly initiated project is to design artefacts to brighten up the wards in a local hospital. Media students recently helped to organise the Coventry film festival. Visits to galleries and museums are organised by course teams and overseas study visits are offered to students. Media students recently visited the national museum of photography, film and television in Bradford and visited Berlin.

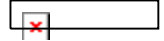
99. Teachers have good subject expertise with appropriate qualifications and experience. There are good darkroom facilities and a well-equipped computer suite. However, some accommodation is inadequate and hinders learning. Students are sometimes in unacceptably cramped conditions. There is often a lack of space to display work for critique sessions. In a computer class, students shared terminals and the chairs were at an inappropriate height. In another lesson the acoustics were poor, with background noise from a neighbouring workshop distracting students. Some areas are untidy, dirty and with insufficient storage. There are few displays on classroom walls to stimulate students.

Leadership and management

100. The department has recently been restructured and a new head of department appointed. Course reviews and minutes of course team meetings clearly identify strengths and areas requiring improvement. Data on students' achievements are, however, often misinterpreted, and low retention

on some courses has not been fully acknowledged. A revised lesson observation scheme is being implemented to help improve teaching and learning.

Social sciences (psychology and sociology)



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rate on GCE A-level psychology
- good progression to HE from the access programme
- good assignments on the access to HE course
- good journal and video-recording resources and computers for students' private study.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rate in GCE A-level sociology
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- inadequate feedback on marked work for GCE A-level and GCSE students
- students' poor attendance and lack of punctuality
- insufficiently rigorous quality assurance

Scope of provision

101. The college offers a small range of GCE AS and GCE A-level courses in social sciences. These form part of a wider GCE A-level programme. Psychology and sociology are also taught on the access course and the BTEC national diploma in forensic science. All full-time GCE AS and A-level students study GCE AS critical thinking in their first year, and may study GCE A-level general studies in their second year. In addition, a small number of students study GCE AS or GCSE psychology in the evenings.

Achievement and standards

102. Retention and pass rates are below the national averages in sociology and similar to national averages on the access to HE course and in GCSE psychology. The only subject which shows an improving trend is GCE A-level psychology. The retention and pass rates for GCE A-level sociology are well below the national average. The first cohort of GCE AS critical thinking students achieved a high pass rate. There is good progression from the access course, with almost all students progressing to HE in 2002.

103. There is little use of ICT. The standards being achieved in marked work are good in the access to HE and the national diploma forensic science courses. Attendance during the inspection was poor at 67%. Many lessons are disrupted by the late arrival of students who were not always asked to provide an explanation.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	26	25	*
		% retention	69	88	*
		% pass rate	83	73	*
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	43	38	12
		% retention	63	68	83
		% pass rate	56	73	80
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	13	30	16
		% retention	77	53	56
		% pass rate	75	38	56
GCE AS critical thinking	3	No. of starts	*	*	21
		% retention	*	*	81
		% pass rate	*	*	100
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	29	36	32
		% retention	79	67	75
		% pass rate	78	92	71

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

* course not offered

Quality of education and training

104. Much teaching across the social sciences is unsatisfactory. Most schemes of work and lesson plans are constructed to ensure adequate coverage of course requirements, but they rarely contain sufficient detail about learning outcomes or assessment opportunities. Few contain explicit reference to key skills or equal opportunities. In many lessons, teachers make insufficient demands on

students, who are passive and inattentive for lengthy periods and show little interest in the subject. In some lessons at advanced level teachers do not always successfully link the activities taking place with theory, check that students have understood what is being taught, or make reference to work previously completed. In a few lessons, teachers do not display sufficient academic knowledge to teach the subject effectively. The planning of practical activities is sometimes poor and does not result in the desired learning outcome. Teachers do not always give students enough information to enable them to complete the activity planned. The small class sizes are compounded by poor attendance in several lessons. There is little development of key skills in lessons.

105. In the more effective lessons, teachers use a range of activities and make links with professional practice and theory to engage the interest of students. There is good development of technical and specialist language in some sociology and forensic science lessons. In one sociology lesson the teacher used good examples drawn from the students' experience to introduce the concept of community. The teacher responded enthusiastically to students' contributions and helped them to develop complex ideas. In a psychology lesson, students engaged in practical experiments to explore the validity of Piaget's theories about children's acquisition of the concept of conservation. Aspects of equality of opportunity were considered carefully in an access to HE lesson, in which students explored depictions of cultural diversity in the media. Students' contributions on access to HE courses were often thoughtful and demonstrated a high level of prior learning.

106. Much of the marking of students' work by teachers of GCE AS/A-level and GCSE subjects is poorly presented and often cursory. Some work is not graded and comments from teachers are rarely sufficient to help students improve their performance. Most marked work, however, is returned promptly to students. The assessment criteria for access to HE and national diploma assignments are usually clear. Access students receive an assessment booklet that outlines what is required to get a good grade and a guide to sources of evidence.

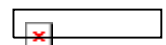
107. Group tutorials are used to cover such aspects as preparation for work, health issues, and particularly, applications to HE. Students are entitled to termly individual tutorials to discuss their progress, but some GCE A-level students reported that they had had only one or two tutorials altogether in the last academic year. Although most students have reviewed their progress with subject teachers, few have had a formal meeting to review progress with their tutor.

108. There are sufficient books in the library for all subjects, although a small number of texts are out of date. Provision of journals and video recordings is good. There are ample computers available for private study, but computers are not available for use in classrooms. The forensic science team is amassing an impressive collection of specialist equipment, including an electrostatic dust-mark lifting device for examining footprints. Most social science teachers have a teaching qualification and a relevant first degree, but a few lack sufficient command of the subject to teach effectively.

Leadership and management

109. Social science subjects are managed in two separate programme areas within the department of adult, social and continuing education. The records of quality assurance meetings do not provide sufficient evidence for making the judgements on subjects in the self-assessment report. The lesson observation scheme is insufficiently rigorous. Subject teams and curriculum area teams meet regularly. There is little evidence of consideration of equality of opportunity and widening participation in curriculum planning.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- effective initial diagnostic assessment
- good individual support for learners
- well-planned learning activities.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on OCN ESOL provision
- unsuitable accommodation
- inadequate resources for teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

110. The college offers full-time ESOL courses from pre-entry to level 1. The provision, developed since November 1999, is mainly in response to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. There is also an ESOL part-time evening course at the college and a part-time course for Chinese learners at a local community centre. Most learners are adults and at the time of the inspection there were 83 full-time and 24 part-time students. There is a small amount of ESOL franchised provision, but this was not included in the inspection.

Achievement and standards

111. The achievement of external qualifications is good. The overall standard of work is appropriate to the examination levels at which students are working. Students are aware of the standards they need to achieve to pass examinations. Students complete regular homework and the level of written work is satisfactory. Retention is low, but a number of strategies have been put in place to improve this. In 2001/02, nearly all students who completed the OCN ESOL and Royal Society of Arts (RSA) profile certificates gained the qualification, but retention was very low at 48%. Students clearly gain confidence and acquire the language skills they need to progress to further study or employment. There is frequent movement through the various ability levels reflecting the good progress that students make. At the end of 2000/01, 25% of students progressed on to mainstream provision. Some 76% of ESOL students completing courses at the college last year returned for further language development.

Quality of education and training

112. Much of the teaching is good. The ESOL national curriculum forms the basis for schemes of work and lesson plans for each class. All teaching is planned with learning activities which take account of the different abilities of students, and with good extension work for faster learners. Learners are confident with their teachers and respond well. There is good rapport. The majority of teachers make good use of authentic or realistic materials for practising language. In a higher level class in which students were doing intensive work on improving listening skills, students did detailed listening comprehension work on the radio news. This was followed by some demanding tasks that required students to listen to short excerpts from radio plays and explain the main theme. In a lower level class, students passed round items of clothing to learn vocabulary associated with shopping. Teachers used humour well and the students demonstrated good recall. In a few instances, however, activities were very worksheet-based and did not sustain students' interest or give them realistic practice of the language. Students' work is marked, but in some cases, criteria for marking are not followed by teachers or shared with learners.

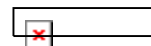
113. There is one full-time ESOL teacher who also manages the provision. Four of the seven teaching staff are new to the college and some are inexperienced. There are insufficient specific resources for ESOL teaching. However, there is regular staff development, in particular to implement the adult ESOL core curriculum, to develop schemes of work and planning to differentiate materials and activities to meet the needs of students of differing abilities. There is a good supply of reading materials for students at entry level 3 and above in the resource centre, together with examination practice books and cassette tapes. There are few resources for students at the lower levels. In most lessons the accommodation is unsuitable. Many of the rooms are too small for the number of students, making working in groups difficult. Some rooms become so hot that doors have to be left open, resulting in unacceptable levels of extraneous noise.

114. Students receive good initial diagnostic assessment linked to the new national ESOL curriculum. The assessment covers the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and is used with students to set individual learning targets and to review progress. Tutors give good individual support in class to students for their academic progress, study skills development and pastoral care needs. In tutorials, students are given guidelines to enable them to evaluate their performance on the course and this is then discussed individually with the tutor. Help and advice on personal issues are given by the tutor. Members of staff routinely accompany students on visits to hospital, assist with documentation issues relating to their refugee or asylum status and, on one occasion, the co-ordinator acted as advocate for a learner who was wrongfully arrested at night. Students value both the practical help given and the tutorial process, which they say helps them to focus on their individual targets and strategies for improvement. Students' success is celebrated. There is an end-of-term awards ceremony and senior college staff attend. At a community venue where part-time English for speakers of other languages courses are offered there is an end of course graduation ceremony which is publicised in the community newsletter.

Leadership and management

115. The ESOL team is well led. Teachers are given clear direction to ensure that initial assessment, induction, teaching and review are effective. In the staff handbook, there is good advice for teachers on how to support their learners in matters such as housing, immigration, health, and the recognition of overseas qualifications. Teachers communicate frequently to ensure coverage of the curriculum and continuity of approach. Recent initiatives to widen participation and improve retention are proving effective. Among these initiatives are additional tutorial hours under a widening participation project with Coventry University, improved induction, moving teaching to the main site from an unsatisfactory community centre, and allocating two teachers to each full-time group in response to learner feedback. Student absences are followed up and leavers' destinations monitored. Inspectors agreed with the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report relating to accommodation, lack of IT in learning, and inadequate resources. They considered that the report did not identify the weakness relating to student retention.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- widespread use of detailed schemes of work and lesson plans
- good achievement of learning outcomes in some classes for students aged 16 to 18.

Weaknesses

- much poor teaching
- insufficient focus on the identification of individual learners' needs
- ineffective monitoring of learners' progress on some numeracy courses
- slow progress in responding to national basic skills initiatives.

Scope of provision

116. All full-time students aged 16 to 18 complete initial diagnostic assessments in literacy and numeracy, as do the majority of adults and part-time learners. Learning support for literacy is timetabled for programmes at level 1 and 2. One-to-one and small group support is also provided. Numeracy support is scheduled in the study centre and is also provided in application of number key skill lessons. Fresh Start learners have literacy and numeracy support provided in their key skills lessons. The aim of support in all these cases is to improve the performance of 'at risk' learners who have been identified by initial assessment, and help them to achieve their course qualifications and improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Adult basic skills courses in literacy and numeracy take place daily in the study centre. Each learner receives an initial interview and assessment, and the intention is to map the results to the adult core curriculum to form individual work plans. In some cases, however, this does not happen. Adult classes have small numbers of enrolments. At the time of the inspection, there were 54 enrolments for this provision.

Achievement and standards

117. In provision for students aged 16 to 18 the standard of attainment in lessons and in learners' files is satisfactory, with good achievement of learning outcomes in some classes. More able

learners are confident and make reasonable progress towards achieving their targets. Less able learners lack confidence and are unaware of their progress and cannot explain what they have learned. All learners in primary literacy and numeracy classes are assessed at entry using assessment based on national basic skills standards. In the best lessons, following assessment, personal learning goals are set within the core curriculum and recorded in an individual work plan which is reviewed periodically. In the best literacy lessons the progress of learners through their work plans is meticulously tracked. In the less successful numeracy lessons there is no monitoring of learning beyond stating the topic that has been attempted. In some numeracy lessons, learners with different abilities and goals were all working on the same task. Several entry level learners thought they had enrolled on a GCSE mathematics course. Adults and students aged 16 to 18 are not well informed about the possibility of taking accredited courses. At the time of the inspection, the college had not decided on its choice of accredited courses for literacy and numeracy.

Quality of education and training

118. There is much poor teaching. Detailed schemes of work and lesson plans indicate thorough planning of teaching, but the teaching is often too prescriptive and does not take sufficient account of learners' needs and interests. Too much teaching is task rather than skills based which leads to slow and laborious skills development. In one adult numeracy class the tutor did not provide a realistic context for the work and did not equip learners with techniques to improve their skills. In a numeracy lesson for students aged 16 to 18 the purpose of the work was not explained and no indication was given of the way in which skills could be applied. In another lesson, there was insufficient variation in activity and learners lost concentration. In lessons with small class sizes it was not always possible to develop group working.

119. At the time of the inspection most teaching materials for literacy and numeracy had not been mapped to the new national standards, resulting in old materials still being used. Some newly appointed and part-time teachers were unsure about which materials to use. Teaching materials are not designed to meet the individual needs of learners of differing ability.

120. ICT is accessible in the study centre where many literacy and numeracy lessons take place. Learners use ICT confidently and competently to develop their skills. In one NVQ sports studies literacy support class, learners were using a BBC web site to research a project on racism in football. NVQ hairdressing students were particularly enthusiastic about their progress in the spelling of hairdressing terms, which was consolidated using ICT. The study centre is an attractive and welcoming place. The noise levels from students passing through to classrooms to the rear are, however, intrusive and have an adverse effect on learners' concentration.

121. Most literacy and numeracy staff have received intensive training in the teaching of the core curriculum. In an adult literacy class a volunteer was working without direction from the tutor. In the same class one of the three learners present struggled to understand the vocabulary used in a lengthy group session.

Leadership and management

122. Responsibility for the management of adult basic skills has recently changed and is now under the remit of the learning support manager. It is too early to judge the effect this change will have on the quality of the provision. The aim was to concentrate responsibility for basic skills under one manager, but the Fresh Start provision currently remains outside these new arrangements. There is insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning, and of common procedures and use of documentation between literacy and numeracy staff. The quality assurance arrangements have not resulted in continuous improvement in the quality of the provision.

Part D: College data

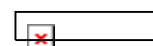


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	28	21
2	37	30
3	22	23
4/5	1	3
Other	12	24
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2002

Note: Percentages in column 19+ have been rounded and hence do not total 100

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	1,620	1,701	20
Agriculture	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering	103	168	2
Business	421	1,116	9
Hotel and catering	604	1,576	13
Health and community care	452	2,021	15
Art and design	212	201	2
Humanities	2,506	1,338	23
Basic education	586	2,043	16
Total	6,504	10,164	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 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	708	535	487	1,308	1,094	1,064
	Retention rate (%)	71	77	74	75	70	59
	National average (%)	77	78	79	74	77	80
	Pass rate (%)	67	71	77	64	59	65
	National average (%)	57	63	65	58	66	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	876	694	672	1,515	978	954
	Retention rate (%)	74	82	73	80	76	74
	National average (%)	73	74	74	75	77	78
	Pass rate (%)	65	62	70	67	67	72
	National average (%)	63	67	67	62	65	65
3	Starters excluding transfers	734	558	684	876	836	696
	Retention rate (%)	82	76	67	85	72	74
	National average (%)	75	75	74	76	78	77
	Pass rate (%)	70	74	69	62	67	71
	National average (%)	66	68	69	61	64	66
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	10	11	1	162	107	84
	Retention rate (%)	60	82	*	82	64	77
	National average (%)	78	77	*	83	84	83
	Pass rate (%)	60	38	*	50	47	68
	National average (%)	57	68	*	50	51	48

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).

**numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

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.

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)	54	37	9	78
Level 2 (intermediate)	54	39	7	46
Level 1 (foundation)	66	24	10	29
Other sessions	62	18	20	34
Totals	57	32	11	187

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