



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Stamford College

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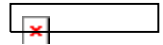
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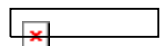
**Basic information about the college**



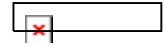
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Name of college:	Stamford College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	A Middleton
Address of college:	Drift Road Stamford Lincolnshire PE9 1XA
Telephone number:	01780 484300
Fax number:	01780 484301
Chair of governors:	J Foster
Unique reference number:	130760
Name of reporting inspector:	David Dana HMI
Dates of inspection:	18-22 November 2002

**Part A: Summary**



## Information about the college

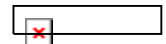


Stamford College is a general further education (FE) college in the south of Lincolnshire close to the borders of Rutland, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. Nearly half of the students come from outside Lincolnshire, but most students live within a 20-mile radius of Stamford. All full-time provision and about 20% of the part-time courses are located on or near the main campus at Drift Road in Stamford. An extensive network of buses, provided by Lincolnshire County Council and the college, transports full-time students aged 16 to 19 to the Drift Road Campus. Part-time programmes are also provided at the Spalding Further Education Centre and two information technology (IT) centres at Bourne and Stamford library. The college has six franchise partners offering programmes at 20 community venues. The Stamford College main campus has been substantially developed since 1993.

The overall education achievements of school-leavers in the area are above the national and regional average. About 80% of 16 year olds stay on in full-time education and of these, about 25% attend FE colleges. Post-16 educational providers in the area include selective secondary schools, 11 to 18 non-selective schools, a sixth form college and other general FE colleges.

Stamford College offers courses in 11 of the 14 areas of learning funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). There is no land-based, construction or retailing provision. Provision in some areas such as engineering, is small. There are currently some 1,200 full-time students and 4,000 part-time students studying at Stamford College. In 2001/02, there were 5,461 students on LSC-funded provision and Learndirect programmes. Some 8% of the college funding units are derived from the franchised provision. The college employs 340 staff.

## How effective is the college?



The provision is good in five of the eight areas of learning inspected and satisfactory in the other three. Teaching is mostly good or very good. The colleges key strengths and areas for improvement are listed below:

### **Key strengths**

- good leadership and management
- clear strategic direction by the corporation
- effectiveness of community provision in widening participation
- good learning resources and accommodation

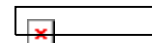
- accessibility of IT resources for students and staff
- good teaching in most areas
- effective work by the student advisers
- wide range of excellent support for students
- good attendance and high retention rates
- high pass rates for adult students
- effective use of management information.

***What should be improved***

- use of computers in teaching and learning
- integration of key skills with content of some courses
- support for some newly appointed staff
- implementation of equality and diversity strategies
- use of target setting in monitoring students' progress.

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

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

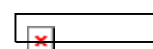


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Business	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is much good teaching, but little use of information learning technology (ILT) in lessons. Most retention and pass rates are high on secretarial programmes. Pass rates are particularly high on the intermediate General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) course, but low on General Certification of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS). Students are not set clear targets in their individual learning plans.
Information and communication technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates on many courses are high. Retention rates have risen on full-time courses, but have declined on many part-time courses. Much teaching on adult courses is good or better, but some teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18 is less effective. There are good support and guidance for students. Managers have been successful in introducing courses to widen participation. Insufficient support is provided for newly appointed part-time teachers.
Sports, leisure and tourism	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on many courses, but the retention rate is low on Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) programmes. A wide range of courses is offered. Students can work towards additional qualifications with the aim of making themselves more employable. Accommodation for both practical and theory work is good. Teachers set themselves high standards and also expect these of their students.
Hair and beauty	<b>Good.</b> There is much good teaching and there are high pass rates on a range of courses. Students on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses receive good support. They are taught key skills as an integral part of their courses. Many students progress to employment. There is insufficient use of ILT in lessons. Some accommodation is unsuitable.
Health and social care and childcare	<b>Good.</b> The area is well managed. The needs of a wide range of students on courses from levels 1 to 4 are met. Teaching methods match the needs of individual students. Assessment is carried out well. Good links are made between theory and practice. Students' progress on the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) course in early years is slow.
Art and design	<b>Good.</b> There is a good range of full-time provision, especially at level 3. Teaching is good. Pass rates are above the national average on most courses. Courses and resources are well managed. Students benefit from effective guidance and support. Some aspects of key skills provision are unsatisfactory. Some students are late for lessons.

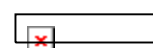
English, media and theatre studies	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high. Few students on GCE AS courses, however, achieve high grades. Lessons are well managed. Teachers give students a variety of appropriate activities and these hold their interest and motivate them to work hard. In some lessons, however, teachers fail to check students' understanding. Students are well supported. Quality assurance is not carried out with enough rigour.
Literacy and numeracy	<b>Good.</b> Provision is well managed. Students benefit from good teaching and they learn effectively. Good use is made of ILT in lessons. There are insufficient support staff. Some support staff lack relevant qualifications.

### How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. The corporation, managers and staff have a clear sense of purpose. The college's mission and strategic aims are well understood by staff. Challenging and realistic targets are set at college level and in curriculum areas. Many individual students, however, are not set clear targets at programme level. There is a systematic and well-organised approach to quality assurance. Retention and pass rates have risen. The self-assessment process is given high priority and is used effectively as a means of monitoring the implementation of the college's strategic plan. The management information system provides staff and management with accurate, timely and reliable information on finances, students enrolments, progress and achievements. Governors are strongly committed to the college. They are well informed about its work and FE in general. They maintain regular and effective contact with staff, students and the college and take a close interest in its work. The financial health of the college is excellent. The college has had operating surpluses for the last ten years and has been able to make substantial improvements to its accommodation on the Drift Road site. The college provides value for money.

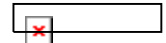
### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college promotes educational and social inclusion effectively through all aspects of its work. It has invested heavily in accommodation and staffing to improve the range of provision, to support students effectively and to widen participation. The college transport arrangements are crucial and effective in making full-time courses accessible to students in the dispersed rural communities. The college also undertakes a range of franchise and collaborative work that has been successful in attracting adults from rural areas. A widening participation co-ordinator has been appointed to develop this outreach provision further. The college has an equality and diversity policy and a race equality policy and action plan and aims to implement these effectively for the benefit of all students and staff. Equality of opportunity, however, is promoted more effectively in some curriculum areas than in others. There have been few initiatives to involve students in the promotion of equal opportunities and the celebration of diversity. The college has an open access policy for recruitment and has made positive attempts to attract students from minority ethnic groups. Students are well supported by a dedicated team of student advisers who provide academic and pastoral support. It is college policy to help all students who are identified on entry as needing additional learning support. Demand for additional learning support is high, however, and the needs of some students are not met. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. An inclusive learning co-ordinator has been appointed to spread best practice in provision of additional learning support courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the teaching of basic skills. The

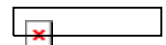
takes full account of religious and cultural festivals and makes arrangements for students to meet their religious obligations. The corporation, managers, and course teams carry out an analysis of student attendance, retention and pass rates in terms of student gender and ethnicity. Insufficient use, however, is made of the findings of analysis in future planning. Students are aware of the complaints procedures and these are followed carefully in the few instances where complaints are received. The language in some college policies and some college procedures, however, is not easily understood by all students.

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



There are good impartial pre-entry advice and guidance for students to enable them to make an informed choice of courses. Potential students receive helpful information about the college. There is strong support for students during their studies. This includes individual tuition, support in learning workshops and group tutorials. Student advisers monitor students' attendance and academic progress and provide general support to students, which they value. Attendance and retention rates have improved. Students develop the wider key skills through their tutorial programme. Where possible, these skills are made relevant to students' areas of study. A high priority is placed on improving students' basic skills and literacy and numeracy. Additional learning support is well managed and most students benefit from the good support available. The few foreign students at the college are provided with extra English language lessons. Additional help with English, however, is not available to them during mainstream lessons on their course. There is an effective counselling service.

### **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***

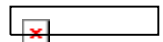
- friendly and safe environment
- the good reputation of the college
- supportive teachers
- good learning and additional support

- student advisers
- effective tutorial support and action planning
- easy access to IT
- quality and price of food in the refectory
- helpful careers guidance.

***What they feel could be improved***

- arrangements for parking
- relevance and organisation of key skills teaching
- range of enrichment and recreational activities
- social areas for students.

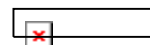
**Other information**



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that, where inspectors have judged there to be unsatisfactory or poor provision in a curriculum area or in leadership and management, 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



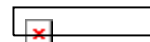
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	75	20	5
19+ and WBL*	77	9	14
Learning 16-18	71	23	6
19+ and WBL*	71	21	8

*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. In 2000/01, the college was placed in the top quartile of general FE colleges in terms of its overall retention rate for full-time students, which was 90%. This high level of retention has been maintained in 2001/02. In the same year, the college was placed in the lowest quartile of general FE colleges, in terms of its overall retention rate for part-time students, which was 81% and the same as it was in the previous year. The retention rate for part-time students rose by 3% in 2001/02. The college has held its position in the second quartile of general FE colleges in terms of its overall pass rate for all students, which rose by 3% to 83% in 1999/2000 and has been sustained in 2001/02.

2. The student attendance rate, during the inspection, of 84% was significantly higher than the national average of 76% and 1% above the college target for the year.

3. Students are encouraged to develop their wider key skills. On many courses, students confidently contributed to discussions and presentations. Oral work was particularly strong in English. High professional standards were set by teachers, particularly in sport and leisure, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and health and social care. Students were developing good practical skills in a number of areas including theatre studies, information and communication technology (ICT) and hairdressing. ICT is used well by many students for improving the presentation of assignments and in research activities through the use of the Internet.

#### **16 to 18 year olds**

4. The retention rates for students on courses at all levels of study have been at or above the national averages for the last three years. In 2001/02, the high retention rate on level 2 programmes

rose further by 5%. The decline in the retention rate on level 3 programmes over the last three years to below the national average was reversed in 2001/02, when the rate rose by 4% to 79%. While still above the national average, the retention rate on level 1 programmes declined by 3% in 2001/02 to 84%. In 2001/02, the retention rate for short courses was high at 99%. The retention rate on key skills programmes was just below the national average in 2001/02.

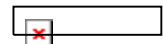
5. Pass rates on courses at most levels have been above the national average for the three years to 2000/01. The pass rates on short courses have been consistently above 80% and, in 2001/02, averaged 86%. In 2001/02, the pass rates on level 3 courses rose by 5% to 79%. They have been slightly below the national average for the last two years. In 2001/02, the overall pass rate on programmes at levels 1 and 2, whilst still above the national average, declined by 10% and 8%, respectively. Key skills pass rates are above the national average.

### **Adult learners**

6. Over the three years to 2000/01, retention rates for adults on most courses have been at, or above, the national average. In 2001/02, retention rates for adults on courses at levels 3 and 4 rose, but those for adults on courses at levels 1 and 2 fell below the national average for 2001.

7. All pass rates for adults have been above the national averages by between 7% and 10% for the three years to 2001/02. These pass rates have been maintained or have risen on programmes at all levels except those at level 2. They have declined sharply by 10%.

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



8. Most teaching is good and a high proportion is very good. Overall, the grade profile for teaching and learning is significantly above the national average for a general FE college. The best teaching was in hairdressing and beauty, health and social care and visual, performing arts and media. The weakest teaching was in ICT, English, language and communications and business administration. Teaching on courses at levels 2 and 3 was significantly better than on level 1 courses. Teaching in many lessons for adult students was better than in lessons for students aged 16 to 18, but in some instances it was poor.

9. Most lessons were well organised. Schemes of work and lesson plans were detailed. Teachers employed a wide variety of appropriate teaching methods. On vocational courses, good links were made between theory and practice. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subject. Many draw effectively on relevant industrial experience to make the lesson exciting and to stimulate and hold the students' interest. Teachers show sensitivity to the needs of students with a wide range of educational experiences and backgrounds. They give the students help and encouragement to increase their confidence. Students enjoyed their learning. In many instances, students engaged in group work and role-play enthusiastically. Teachers enjoy a good relationship with students and have high expectations of them, particularly on vocational programmes where they promote professional standards of conduct as an essential requirement.

10. In poorer lessons, the teaching was unimaginative and the teacher failed to ensure learning activities met the needs of students of widely differing abilities. In some lessons, the learning activities were not demanding enough and failed to extend the students' knowledge. Insufficient use was made of ILT in teaching. Students disrupted some lessons by arriving late, but the teacher failed to ask them to explain their lack of punctuality.

11. Many tutorials and learning support lessons were particularly good. On hairdressing courses, students gave excellent presentations on an aspect of career development. In some lessons, an additional support worker helped individual students effectively. Students receive one-to-one

sessions of additional learning support during basic skills lessons and as separate provision. These sessions are taught effectively and managed well.

12. Most teaching staff are well qualified and have appropriate vocational experience. Over 85% of teachers hold a teaching qualification and a further 10% are working towards one. Teachers on NVQ courses have appropriate assessor awards. Some of the staff who teach key skills or provide learning support do not have the relevant qualifications. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers of ICT are being addressed successfully. There are sufficient qualified technical support staff. Staff-development activities meet the needs of the college and of the individuals. Part-time staff are offered the same staff development opportunities as full-time staff and are paid for their attendance at training activities. These include updating teachers in the use of ILT. All teachers have received training to update their ILT skills.

13. The college has made significant improvements to its accommodation over the last few years. Most teaching rooms are pleasant and spacious. Specialist facilities are good in art, IT and leisure, sport and travel, but some in catering and science need updating. A few lessons take place in poorly designed or inappropriate accommodation. A draft property strategy addresses these weaknesses. Most teaching rooms and corridors have good displays of students' work and other relevant materials. In a few instances, there is a poor match between class sizes and classrooms and there is some under-utilisation of space. There are adequate social areas for students and these include the college refectory, well-used Internet cafe and spacious common room. The college has improved access for students with restricted mobility by installing a number of lifts and ramps. Over 95% of the college areas are now accessible to all students.

14. Teaching resources are good in most curriculum areas. Resources for computer maintenance, however, are inadequate. Staff and students have good access to computers, although some seating at machines is not appropriate. The college has set up an intranet for staff and students, but this is under-utilised at present. The learning centre has some very useful guides for students, including those relating to the effective use of the Internet. Most computers give access to the Internet, which many students use for research purposes. The learning centre provides a good working environment and is well used by students.

15. The college has a detailed assessment policy that requires teachers to set a standard number of assessment tasks and to record assessments in a standard format. Staff in one area have not been issued with overall guidance on the grading of students' work. The grading criteria used in some curriculum areas differ from those in others. Assessment is well managed on most courses. There are well-established procedures for the moderation and internal verification of assessments in most curriculum areas. These procedures are being consolidated and extended to include the assessment of key skills. Methods of assessment are appropriate for the courses; work is marked to standards required by the examining and awarding bodies. Assessment is fair, thorough and carried out on a regular basis. Students' work is returned within a reasonable period. Most teachers provide good, positive feedback to students on their performance and indicate how they can improve it. Students on most courses are well informed about the planned assessment programme.

16. Stamford serves a sparsely populated mainly rural area. The curriculum covers 11 of the 14 areas of learning funded by the LSC. Courses meet the needs of the local community and some are provided at all levels from 1 to 4. There are no construction, land-based or retail/distribution courses. Progression routes are available within the college and into employment and higher education (HE). The college's financial management of provision is sound and prudent. In meeting demand for courses, managers give careful consideration to what the college can afford to provide on its own, and what provision can be offered in partnership with others. At Spalding, for example, four educational providers, including the college, have worked co-operatively to ensure local needs are met. Revenue from courses that have high enrolments is used to fund some courses with low numbers. Some students, however, are enrolled on courses, such as General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English, which are inappropriate, or too difficult, for them.

17. The majority of college courses are full time. Part-time students can infill into some courses. Of all enrolments of full-time students, 75% are on vocational courses. There are 4000 enrolments on part-time courses and 75% of all part-time students are taught in 20 community centres. These

include an adult centre, several franchised outreach centres and two IT centres. The college has several partnerships with HE institutions and over 100 students are on HE courses at the college. Employers' need and local demand for courses are identified through surveys and market research. A Saturday school in catering and art has been run for children aged between 12 to 16. An effective pilot project is being run with nine local schools whereby pupils are introduced to three vocational areas for half a day each week. Links with employers are well developed in the areas of beauty therapy, health and social care and sport and leisure, but are less effective in some other curriculum areas.

18. Priority is given to helping students develop key skills. Each full-time student aged 16 to 18 is required to attend lessons in a suite of six purpose-built workshops to study the three core key skills. Although many students do not see the relevance of key skills to their main course, some felt that their acquisition of key skills had helped them to improve their performance overall. The context of many key skills assignments, particularly those involving the use of communication and IT, relates to the students' main area of study. Some key skill assignments, however, are not made relevant to the students' interests. Workshops are run to help students develop the generic skills in preparation for key skills examinations. In 2000, the proportion of students who achieved key skills certification was above the national average. Students develop the three wider key skills with the help of their subject teachers, and through the tutorial programme with the assistance of student advisers. Many staff have received training to teach key skills.

19. Students are offered a wide range of curriculum enrichment activities. These include visits in the United Kingdom and to Europe, visiting speakers, work experience and community-linked activities. An extensive programme of short courses and recreational activities is available to all students aged 16 to 18. These courses include first aid, leading to food hygiene and barkeeper qualifications. Many students felt acquisition of such additional qualifications increased their employability, particularly when seeking part-time work. Some students, however, felt that they were denied the activity of their choice because only a small number had opted for it. Instead, they had to take part in those activities that attracted large numbers of students. The extent to which students can take part in outside events, including social activities, is determined by the availability of college transport. A successful evening social event this term will be repeated. Lunchtime sports sessions have been offered, but the take up for these was low.

20. Since the last inspection, the college has made a significant investment in improving support services to students. New accommodation for support services has been provided at the front of the college. The number of support staff has grown from 8 to 40 in 3 years. Good impartial pre-entry advice and guidance are available to prospective students to help them choose a course that is suitable for them. Clear information and detailed course leaflets are provided for students and their parents. Prospective students are given advice and information about the college and its courses at interview and on open days. Students felt they had been well informed about what the college has to offer. Parents of one student with a disability felt that their child had received outstanding support in order to succeed at the college.

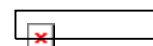
21. Financial support is available to students through the student support fund. Many students have received help with childminding, equipment, transport and other costs. A personal counselling service, highly regarded by those who have used it, is available to students five days a week at the main site and at the adult centre. The well-organised transport arrangements are essential in enabling students from rural communities attend the college. Staff in student services and student advisers help students with their accommodation problems, and also provide assistance in emergencies.

22. There are good arrangements for the initial assessment of all full-time and many part-time students. Initial assessment takes place during the first week at the college and the results are issued quickly. Students who need it receive good additional support. This support includes individual tuition, group workshops and help from learning support assistants in theory classes. Student advisers receive reports regularly on students' progress and attendance. The vast majority of students in level 1 classes and in many level 2 classes receive some learning support. The college has not been able to recruit enough people from the local community who are able to provide learning support for students from certain groups, and the additional learning support needs of a

small minority of students have not been met. Students are strongly encouraged to take up learning support and the proportion who do so is now over 60%. The retention rate for those who take up the support is above the college average. Students diagnosed as having dyslexia are well supported with learning materials that suit their individual needs. Students with physical or sensory impairments are provided with a range of specialist equipment. The college places a high priority on improving students' basic skills. Students are given extensive help with literacy and numeracy as an integral part of their course. Language support is provided for foreign students, but not as a part of lessons on their main course. Attendance at support sessions is good. Adults who attend evening classes are given information about the additional support available and they can attend additional support sessions. Facilities, such as a prayer room for a Muslim student, are provided on request.

23. The tutorial system is highly effective and well resourced. Students value the support they receive from their student advisers and 90% attendance is common at tutorials. Attendance is rigorously monitored. Student advisers are a particular strength of the support system for students. Nine student advisers working as a team are linked to different curriculum areas and provide both the tutorial programme and much personal support. They are highly valued by all students and academic staff. They provide reports to parents twice a year. Good careers education is provided through the tutorial system and by the local Connexions service personal advisor who visits the college on two days a week. Students are given good guidance by lecturers, student advisers and student services staff. There is a careers library with paper-based and computer-based materials. Students speak highly of their careers support and particularly the guidance they receive when applying to HE.

## Leadership and management



24. Leadership and management are good. The corporation, managers and staff have a clear sense of purpose. The mission and strategic aims are well understood by staff. Priority is given to raising standards throughout the college and ensuring the excellence of provision. The curriculum is managed effectively by faculty and curriculum managers. Staff make every effort to provide a curriculum that is socially and educationally inclusive. Considerable investment has been made in raising the levels and improving accommodation. Communications are effective within the college. Managers are approachable and responsive. Challenging and realistic targets are set at college level and in curriculum areas. Many individual students, however, are not set clear and sufficiently demanding targets.

25. The quality assurance process is systematic and well organised. It involves the rigorous monitoring of retention and pass rates and many of these, particularly retention rates, have risen. The college quality assurance system has recently been extended to franchise organisations. Self-assessment is central to quality assurance. Most course reviews are rigorously evaluative and clearly identify strengths and weaknesses. A few course reviews, however, are insufficiently evaluative to provide a good basis for action planning. Governors are fully involved in the self-assessment process and see all internal reports. The views of students and staff about the college are collected regularly through questionnaires and focus groups and are taken into account in self-assessment. Inspectors agreed with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report and the course reviews.

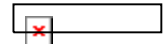
26. All teaching staff are observed for two lessons each academic year by a member of a team of trained observers which includes the principal and the quality assurance manager. All observations are graded. Overall, there was a close correlation between the grades awarded by the inspectors and those given by the college's own observers. All staff, including part-time and agency staff, are appraised by their line manager annually. Professional development needs of staff that are identified are usually met. The management information system provides staff and governors with accurate, timely and reliable information on finances and students enrolments, progress and achievements. Staff make good use of reports on various aspects of provision. Key reports, such as those on

students attendance, are updated daily. Staff find these reports particularly useful as a means of identifying students who are at risk of giving up their course or leaving it early.

27. The college has an equal opportunities and diversity policy and a race relations policy and priority is given to ensuring their effective implementation. In some areas of the college's work, however, there has been insufficient promotion of diversity and equal opportunities through curriculum. There is an anti-bullying policy for students and a harassment policy for staff. Complaints are handled effectively and promptly. However, some of the language in policies and other college publications is too complex for some students to understand.

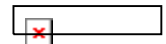
28. The college has effective governors who take a close interest in the college, know it well and are well informed about FE in general. They have a clear understanding of what is happening in the college. They receive presentations by college managers on initiatives in the college and in the sector. There is effective communication between the chair, principal and clerk. The governors maintain an appropriate level of contact with staff and students in the college. The financial systems within the college are comprehensive and effective. The financial health of the college is excellent. There have been operating surpluses for the last ten years and the college has been able to improve its accommodation on the Drift Road site and three community locations substantially. The college provides value for money.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



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#### Business



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on intermediate GNVQ in business
- high retention and pass rates on secretarial programmes
- much good teaching
- very good support for students from the student adviser.

#### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on GCE AS programmes
- poor retention rates on AVCE in business course in 2000/02.
- insufficient use of ILT in lessons
- lack of clear and demanding targets in individual learning plans.

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

29. The college offers full-time courses in GCE AS and Advanced-level (A-level) business and law and also courses leading to AVCE, GNVQ in business at intermediate level, the diploma and higher diploma in secretarial administration and administrative procedures, and a diploma for private secretaries. Part-time courses are attended by small numbers of students, who are mainly adults. Provision includes courses leading to an introductory certificate in supervision, a national certificate in business and finance, and a higher diploma in administrative procedures. Distance learning programmes are offered leading to NVQs in accounting and management. All have small numbers of mainly adult students. Part-time courses in bookkeeping and business studies are offered at the Spalding Centre. A franchise partner in Peterborough provides NVQ accounting programmes. There were 165 students, mainly aged 16 to 18, on the full-time programmes at the time of the inspection.

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

30. Pass rates on most courses are high, but they are low on GCE AS programmes. In 2001/02, pass rates were consistently high on the intermediate GNVQ and the AVCE courses. However, pass rates for GCE AS business studies and law are low and have declined. Retention rates are low on the AVCE and intermediate GNVQ courses. Retention and pass rates are high on full-time secretarial programmes. For most courses, the proportion of students awarded higher-grade passes is below the national average. Many students on GCE AS courses fail to obtain the grades predicted for them on the basis of their achievements in the GCSE. The standard of most students' work is satisfactory. Most students develop good oral skills. Attendance is good at 88%. Most students on vocational courses at levels 3 or 4 progress to employment, and many of those on GCE A-level programmes go on to HE. Students on level 2 courses progress to other courses within the college, often outside the business area.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Book-keeping and accounts (1 year)	1	No. of starts	12	9	10
		% retention	75	100	100
		% pass rate	89	67	100
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	14	21	21
		% retention	71	67	71
		% pass rate	80	86	87

Secretarial and administration - intermediate diploma	2	No. of starts	15	11	16
		% retention	87	91	94
		% pass rate	85	100	67
GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	*	49	52
		% retention	*	73	83
		% pass rate	*	67	35
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	*	30	47
		% retention	*	57	81
		% pass rate	*	66	50
GCE A-level business (2 years)	3	No. of starts	38	37	11
		% retention	68	65	82**
		% pass rate	58	75	78

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

\* course did not run

\*\* one-year programme

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

31. In most lessons, teaching is good and students learn effectively. Little teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well and use a variety of appropriate teaching methods and activities in their classes. Their questioning of students is particularly effective. In intermediate lessons on the GNVQ course, there was effective use of short activities that required the full concentration of the students and held their interest. IT workshops, where students are working at a range of levels, are well managed. In workshop lessons, good learning materials and prompt support from teachers enables students to progress quickly. In a lesson on the higher diploma in administrative procedures course, students were involved in a role-play about staff appraisal. Some students based their role of office juniors on their experiences on a work placement. The other students briefed them on the appraisal process, designed the documentation, undertook the appraisal and wrote the record and action plan. These activities provided valuable learning for all students involved. In many lessons, however, there is little use of specially designed or additional learning materials to meet the needs of all the students in the group. Although students' learning styles are identified at induction, these are seldom taken into account in the planning of teaching and learning. There is little use of ILT in lessons, though students are making increasing use of the college IT facilities to word process their work and to research topics using the Internet.

32. Students value European study trips and the college enrichment programme. Full-time students on vocational courses benefit from a period of work experience. Key skills are taught well and key skills assignments have a business context. Students develop the wider key skills through the tutorial programme.

33. Assignments are set regularly and marked and returned to students promptly. Work is assessed to appropriate standards. In general, internal verification is carried out well, but on the NVQ accounting distance learning course, the internal verification sampling programme is not well structured. Monitoring and recording of student progress on NVQ accounting distance learning programme are unsatisfactory. Individual learning plans seldom specify demanding targets for students, against which their progress can be measured. There are no systematic tutorial arrangements for helping students who are experiencing difficulties with their work.

34. Students value the support the student advisers provide. The advisers also deal effectively with absences and attendance has improved significantly. Learning support is currently taken up by most



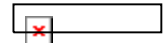
of the students identified as needing it. In addition, a learning support worker gives effective additional help to students in all lessons on the GNVQ intermediate course. This course has a high pass rate.

35. There are sufficient qualified and suitably experienced staff. Specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation are good. All teaching staff possess a teaching qualification or are working towards one. There are sufficient computers with appropriate software for use both during and outside lessons. Some lessons, such as those in book-keeping are timetabled to take place in computer rooms that are unsuitable for them. There are good displays of student work and information in classrooms.

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

36. The overall management of the curriculum area is good. The use of management information to monitor performance is increasingly effective, and useful and timely data are available on students attendance. The teacher observation scheme identifies the training needs of staff. Issues raised by students in responses to questionnaires are dealt with promptly. The area self-assessment report identified many of the strengths and weaknesses noted in the inspection. There is, however, no systematic analysis of progress students make towards achieving targets and fulfilling their potential. A constructive and positive approach is taken to equal opportunities issues. There are no curriculum links between respective staff in Stamford and Spalding who teach the same subjects.

### **Information and communication technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- very high pass rates on GNVQ IT foundation and computer technician courses
- rising retention rates to above national averages on many full-time courses
- much good teaching on part-time courses for adults
- excellent computing resources for most courses
- broad range of courses for full-time students
- effective initiatives to widen participation.

### **Weaknesses**

- declining and low retention rates on some part-time courses
- unimaginative teaching in some lessons for students aged 16 to 18
- inadequate specialist resources for computer maintenance
- poor individual action planning and target setting for full-time students
- insufficient support for newly appointed part-time teachers.

### **Scope of provision**

37. The college offers a broad range of full-time courses and progression opportunities from entry level to HE level for students aged 16 to 18. Full-time courses include those leading to GCE AS and A-level computing and ICT, GNVQ at foundation level, first and national diplomas, a computer technician course, and a newly introduced entry level course in IT. Much of the part-time provision for adults aims to further the college's strategy of widening participation. Adult provision includes computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), a course leading to the European computer driving licence (ECDL), and information business technology courses that, in most instances, can be taken at times that suit the students. At the time of the inspection, there were about 200 students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses, and some 1,000 adults on part-time courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

38. Pass rates on many courses are satisfactory, and some are high. The pass rates on the GNVQ IT foundation and City and Guilds 7261 diploma courses have been well above the national average for the last two years. Retention rates on many full-time courses have risen over the last three years, and are close to, or above the national average. In 2001/02, the retention rates on some part-time courses for adults declined and on a few courses, they were low. Measures to compare students' current achievements with previous academic performance are underdeveloped. In many lessons for 16 to 18 year olds, students are well motivated and achieve satisfactory standards. In some lessons, however, students are not given sufficiently demanding work and are not challenged to use their abilities to the full. The standard of work of many adults is high. Attendance at many lessons by both students aged 16 to 18 and adults is high. Many full-time students progress to higher level courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ IT foundation	1	No. of starts	*	14	17

		% retention	*	100	69
		% pass rate	*	100	91
Oxford and Cambridge and RSA Examinations CLAIT (one year)	1	No. of starts	788	730	483
		% retention	83	78	72
		% pass rate	74	79	84
First diploma IT	2	No. of starts	35	41	41
		% retention	77	76	80
		% pass rate	70	71	85
City and Guilds 7261 IT diploma	2	No. of starts	*	16	31
		% retention	*	81	94
		% pass rate	*	100	100
GCE A-level/A2 computing**	3	No. of starts	23	14	13
		% retention	78	79	77
		% pass rate	69	60	80
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	*	24	18
		% retention	*	79	89
		% pass rate	*	79	50
National diploma computer studies	3	No. of starts	38	37	33
		% retention	50	57	68
		% pass rate	74	100	81

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

\* course did not run

\*\* GCE A2 computing qualification completed in 2002

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

39. Teaching is satisfactory or better in most lessons. Much of the teaching of adults is good or better. The teaching of students aged 16 to 18 is often less effective, although some is good or very good. In many lessons for adults, teachers vary the level of work to meet individual student's needs and to take into account students' previous experience of ICT. In a few lessons for adults, teachers rely too heavily on workbooks and fail to check students' understanding sufficiently frequently. Most adult students are highly motivated and work confidently.

40. In the better lessons for full-time students aged 16 to 18, teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching and learning activities effectively. A data projector was used to enliven presentations and students worked well on individual and group tasks. Teachers questioned individual students skilfully to check their understanding thoroughly. In the less effective lessons, teachers fail to consider the broad range of needs within a class and some students are not provided with sufficiently challenging tasks. In some key skills workshop lessons on the application of number, the students were given unimaginative and largely irrelevant tasks and they became bored and learnt little. Students aged 16 to 18 are seldom set precise and demanding targets that they have to achieve within a clear timescale.

41. Most teachers are appropriately qualified to teach their subjects. Some recently appointed staff have come straight from industry. There is a comprehensive staff development programme for

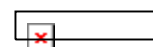
teachers. Students have the use of up-to-date computer hardware and software at most centres. A few classrooms on the main site are small or students are unable to see the whiteboard properly. There is insufficient reliable equipment available to students in computer maintenance lessons to enable them to work effectively on their own. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to specialist equipment and computer workshops. Some teaching rooms for adults on franchised partners' premises are small and untidy and the equipment is dated or unreliable. Most teaching materials are up to date and of good quality.

42. In general, assessment is planned well and recorded thoroughly. Some teachers, however, fail to record the progress students make in practice tasks they carry out largely on their own. Most teachers provide helpful and encouraging written feedback to students on their work and identify ways in which they can improve it. Most assignments are well written, but some assignment briefs do not specify clear assessment criteria for the award of higher grades. Internal verification of assessment is satisfactory. Initial induction of, and support and guidance for students, are good. Where appropriate, students aged 16 to 18 are given effective learning support in lessons by learning support assistants who work with subject teachers. A few students whose first language is not English do not receive the language support they need in lessons. There is a comprehensive pastoral tutorial programme for younger students. There are no formal tutorial arrangements for students who have specific queries relating to their work or aspects of their courses. There is very good support for adult students. Teachers provide them with induction and advice and guidance on the range and suitability of courses available. A welcome pack includes information about the course, health and safety, logging sheets, students' goals, progress reviews and a course evaluation form.

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

43. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory. Curriculum initiatives reflect the priority of widening the participation of adults. Effective partnerships have been established to offer IT courses to adults in the local and more remote communities. An entry-level course in IT has been established to promote social inclusion. Course teams meet frequently to review their progress towards achieving targets for retention and pass rates. Students' progress is regularly reviewed. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum area self-assessment report. In recent months, a number of new full-time and part-time teachers have been appointed. There is insufficient initial support for them. Managers do not give sufficient consideration to whether or not new teachers yet have enough skills and experience to take the classes to which they are allocated.

### **Sports, leisure and tourism**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on many courses
- exemplary standards of dress and conduct on the part of staff
- wide range of courses for students

- good quality accommodation, equipment and well-qualified staff
- positive working partnerships with external agencies.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates on recently introduced AVCE programmes
- insufficient sharing of good practice among staff.

### **Scope of provision**

44. The college offers a wide range of courses in leisure, sport, travel and tourism. The leisure and recreation courses offered include those leading to GNVQ intermediate, AVCE, GCE AS and A-level physical education and NVQ level 2 operational services. An AVCE is offered in travel and tourism. There is an extensive range of short courses that includes those leading to qualifications for sports leaders, swimming teachers, national pool lifeguards, sports and recreational operations certificate and archery and fencing awards. The majority of the 148 students are aged 16 to 18. Some 69% of students are studying on sports programmes.

### **Achievement and standards**

45. Pass rates on the GNVQ leisure and tourism intermediate course have been significantly above the national average for the last four years. The national diploma course in leisure studies, offered until 2001, had excellent pass rates of 100% in 2000 and 2001. There are high pass rates on the majority of vocational short courses and a rising pass rate on the NVQ in operational services course. The pass rates for the community sports leader award and the national pool lifeguard award are 10% and 14% above the national average, respectively. In 2001, the pass rate on the recently introduced sports and recreation operations certificate course was excellent, at 100%. GCE AS and A-level pass rates have varied considerably from year to year and in 2002, they were below the national average. AVCE pass rates in leisure and recreation and travel and tourism for the same year were also very low. Retention rates on these newly introduced programmes were 58% and 53%, respectively. All the first years of courses for 2001/02 had poor retention rates early in the programme. The retention rate for the current year is much improved and is good, at 97%.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	28	22	18
		% retention	79	73	94
		% pass rate	82	88	76
Royal Life Saving	2	No. of starts	39	6	18

Society National Pool Lifeguard Qualification		% retention	59	100	86
		% pass rate	78	83	86
NVQ sport and recreation	2	No. of starts	7	10	17
		% retention	86	100	76
		% pass rate	67	100	85
National diploma (2000 and 2001) and AVCE leisure and recreation (2002)	3	No. of starts	26	25	31
		% retention	65	80	58
		% pass rate	100	100	50
AVCE travel and tourism (2002)	3	No. of starts	*	*	19
		% retention	*	*	53
		% pass rate	*	*	70
GCE A-level physical education	3	No. of starts	7	4	8
		% retention	100	79	100
		% pass rate	29	64	75

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

\* course did not run

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

46. In practical lessons, the teaching is good and students learn effectively. The majority of travel and tourism lessons are good. A survey is carried out of students' preferred learning styles and the findings of this are taken into account when planning lessons. Students are given a variety of appropriate activities in lessons and they participate in these fully and enthusiastically. Teachers also draw on their personal industrial experiences to illustrate theoretical concepts and make the lessons relevant and exciting for the students.

47. Good use is made of the Internet for research and of videos for setting the context in travel and tourism lessons. In some lessons, teachers question the students skilfully to check the extent of their knowledge and understanding. During one lesson, Internet material was used as the basis for discussions, individual presentations and data analysis. A probing question and answer session followed, which enabled students to learn effectively from each other. In many lessons, however, teachers fail to go over the work covered to check students' understanding of it. They also do not give students enough feedback on their work to show them how they may improve it. Staff across the department do not share good practice enough.

48. A wide range of resources, including well-structured and stimulating learning materials, is used well in practical and theory lessons. Students with additional learning needs receive good individual support. Teachers take every opportunity to check that these students understand the lesson and are able to participate fully in learning activities. Teachers encourage students to develop and practice their skills constantly and extend their knowledge by assimilating new information.

49. Students' experiences are enriched through the partnership arrangements with local community groups and international travel companies. Students have between two and four weeks of work experience each year. Their work experience placements are in professional sports clubs, public and private leisure centres and with major tour operators. Many students further their personal development by going on educational visits, taking part in residential events, and attending national conferences.

50. Teachers are well qualified and over half have worked in the leisure industry. Of the seven staff

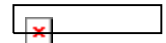
in the department, four have relevant industrial experience, five have teaching qualifications and the other two are working towards a teaching award.

51. The classroom accommodation is excellent. All classrooms have display boards that are used to celebrate students' work and achievements. Displays are professionally presented. They are attractive and informative, help to extend students' knowledge and learning, and raise students' self-esteem. There is a well-equipped sports hall where students are able to become proficient in coaching skills through working with visiting groups of pupils from local schools. Students can participate in all major and many minor sports activities. The college also has a small fitness suite and playing fields and both are well used. Students use a local swimming pool and a private fitness gym where they work towards additional awards to make themselves more employable. An extensive range of books, videos and journals on travel and tourism is available to the students. The college has no travel shop, however, where students can develop work-based skills.

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

52. The department has strong leadership. The roles and responsibilities of managers and staff are clear. Meetings are well attended and productive. All staff are enthusiastic and highly motivated. They use their contacts in the industry to obtain good work placements for the students. Most programmes are generally well managed. Some programme reviews, however, are not evaluative enough to be useful. Although much of the teaching in the department is good, in some instances, it is poor and students fail to learn effectively. Not all new, part-time and inexperienced staff receive the level of support they require. Staff set a good example to students with their high standard of conduct, dress, behaviour and professional attitude. Students value and respect staff for their firm but fair control and the emphasis they place upon health and safety.

### **Hair and beauty**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- much good teaching
- good teaching of key skills
- high retention and pass rate on TV film and make-up course
- high pass rates on NVQ level 1 hairdressing and City and Guilds wig-making courses
- high standard of practical work in hair and beauty

- effective monitoring of student progress in hairdressing and beauty
- good tutorial support for students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient training on use of IT in the salons
- inappropriate course level for some students.

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

53. The college offers a range of courses leading to qualifications in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Hairdressing and beauty therapy courses take place at the main site at Stamford. Full-time and part-time courses are available in hairdressing from level 1 up to level 3. Beauty therapy courses are offered at levels 2 and 3. There is currently no foundation level provision in beauty. The section also offers a theatrical make-up course and enrolments on this have been consistently high. There are 123 beauty therapy students and 74 hairdressing students. The college is subcontracted to provide work-based training programmes. Currently, there are 17 work-based learners, 7 modern apprentices working towards key skills certificate at level 1 and 7 trainees on NVQ programmes. Year 11 students who have been excluded from school also infill into level 1 hairdressing programmes. All students aged 16 to 18 and all work-based learners develop key skills. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18.

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

54. Retention and pass rates on TV film and make-up have been high for the last three years. They have also been high on the body massage certificate course in two of the last three years. The NVQ level 1 hairdressing course and the City and Guilds wig-making course have had pass rates above the national average over the last three years and the NVQ beauty therapy course has had a high pass rate in two of the last three years. Some students who have high previous achievements are working towards qualifications at a level that is inappropriately low for them. For example, some students on the combined hair and beauty course who have high GCSE grades, are working towards hairdressing qualifications at level 1 and beauty therapy qualifications at level 2. Few students progress to level 3 course in beauty therapy.

55. Students carry out practical work of a high standard in both hairdressing and beauty therapy and they achieve good results in competitions. In one lesson on the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course, students demonstrated extensive knowledge about cutting techniques and most displayed good practical cutting skills. In another lesson on the NVQ level 2 beauty therapy course, students demonstrated good understanding of skin cleansing procedures and analysis of skin types. Students are fully aware of the importance of sterilisation procedures and health and safety codes of practice. Students' attendance in both hair and beauty lessons is satisfactory.

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



Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	38	65	50
		% retention	86	83	72
		% pass rate	97	91	94
NVQ beauty therapy 2 year	2	No. of starts	10	37	35
		% retention	23	30	74
		% pass rate	100	67	93
NVQ hairdressing 1 year	2	No. of starts	17	50	68
		% retention	64	58	83
		% pass rate	41	46	82
City and Guilds wig-making	2	No. of starts	26	23	23
		% retention	88	83	83
		% pass rate	100	100	100
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	12	10	12
		% retention	75	70	100
		% pass rate	44	86	33
Body massage certificate	3	No. of starts	21	28	28
		% retention	86	89	89
		% pass rate	94	76	96
Sports massage certificate 1 year	3	No. of starts	*	16	17
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	25	82

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

\* course did not run

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

56. There is much good teaching. Teachers prepare lessons well. In most instances, classroom management is good and teachers share the lesson aims with students. Teachers encourage students to evaluate the extent of their knowledge and understanding and identify their weaknesses. For example, in a beauty therapy lesson, the teacher asked the students to assess how much they already knew about epilation. In another effective lesson, students were following up individual themes and were applying fantasy make-up in preparation for a forthcoming college competition. The students were inspired by the teacher and their work was of a high standard. In one beauty therapy lesson on anatomy and physiology, beauty therapy students were fully involved in identifying a human cell and selecting appropriate names through group discussions. They worked well together and developed problem solving skills. Some of the handouts given to students on beauty therapy courses, however, are poor. In a few beauty therapy lessons, the teacher did not give the students sufficiently demanding tasks that required their full concentration, and failed to motivate them to learn for themselves. There is a computerised till which is situated in a large commercial reception area for both hair and beauty students. The students, however, do not receive enough guidance on how to use this computerised till and on reception duties in general.

57. Tutorial support is well managed. In tutorials, students develop the broader key skills to help them gain employment. They learn how to conduct themselves in interviews and are given help with

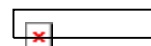
job applications. Students' progress on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses is monitored carefully. Students' progress is recorded in detail on 'tracking' documents that are clear and concise and easy to use. Students also attend key skills tracker sessions, at which their key skills are assessed. There is no record of how many times any individual student has met with the student adviser. In some instances, insufficient action is taken to assist students who are making slow progress. Assessment and internal verification meet awarding body requirements.

58. The hair and beauty accommodation is of a good commercial standard and includes a purpose-built spacious fully equipped reception area. However, the two salons are not large enough given the recent growth in student numbers. New teaching rooms form a part of the accommodation currently under construction. Technical support is good. There are adequate consumables for hairdressing and beauty therapy. The standard of house keeping and general cleanliness is high. The Indian head massage programme takes place in an unsuitable room where clients cannot receive their treatment in private. Students on the theatrical make-up programme were not advised that they would need to use their own make-up for cosmetic practical lessons.

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

59. Management of the curriculum area is effective. There is good communication between the manager and the teaching team. Staff hold weekly course meetings at which they monitor students' progress and identify those at risk of failing. There is an effective system for lesson observation. The training needs of staff are identified during lesson observations and are met through the staff-development programme. All the staff are involved in quality assurance and self-assessment. Action has been taken to deal with some of the weaknesses identified through self-assessment. The self-assessment report, however, does not acknowledge that some students with high previous achievements are placed on courses that are inappropriate for them.

### **Health and social care and childcare**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
- much very good teaching
- good support for students
- good use of ILT
- well-managed provision.

## **Weaknesses**

- slow progress of early years students towards achieving NVQ level 3.

## **Scope of provision**

60. The college offers a broad range of courses in health and social care, early years and in counselling. Full-time courses in health and social care are offered from level 1 to level 3. Students on foundation and intermediate GNVQ programmes in health and social care also complete additional early years units drawn from specialist childcare programmes. Students on the AVCE in health and social care course also study GCE AS subjects. Childcare provision includes courses leading to the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate in childcare and education at level 2 and level 3, and the CACHE advanced diploma in childcare and education. From January 2003, the college, in conjunction with the University of Derby, will offer a foundation degree in Educare and early childhood studies. Courses also lead to NVQs at level 2 and 3 in early years, childcare and education. The increasing number of part-time programmes in early years at levels 1 and 2 includes the CACHE programmes in childminding practice, the City and Guilds certificate in learning support and the innovative high scope curriculum implementation course. All the counselling courses are part time. Students who complete the open access short course giving an introduction to counselling concepts can progress to the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) advanced certificate in counselling course. Of approximately 560 students enrolled, about 440 are part time. Most full-time students aged 16 to 18 and most part-time students are over the age of 19.

## **Achievement and standards**

61. There are high pass rates on all courses, and particularly on the introductory and certificate programmes in counselling. Retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate programmes in health and social care and the CACHE diploma in childcare and education course have, in some recent years, fallen to below the national average. The college has recently raised the entry requirements for both programmes and has also introduced closer monitoring of students' attendance. Students have made slow progress towards achieving the NVQ in early years childcare and education. Recent developments include the introduction of clear target dates by which students must achieve their qualification; compulsory attendance by students at theory workshops; and a reduction to three enrolment dates in the academic year. Measures have been taken to improve assessment practice.

62. Students' files are well organised. Work in them is of an appropriate standard for the level of the course. Displays of students' work show that students achieve high standards and demonstrate a good understanding of the vocational issues involved. Students and staff take pride in their work. Students are punctual and attendance is good.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GNVQ intermediate in health and social care	2	No. of starts	16	14	24
		% retention	69	64	78
		% pass rate	73	100	83
AVCE in health and social care	3	No. of starts	18	19	18
		% retention	89	79	94
		% pass rate	58	73	94

Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	24	18	15
		% retention	88	94	60
		% pass rate	67	88	89
Advanced certificate in counselling skills and theory	3	No. of starts	12	13	15
		% retention	100	92	93
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

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

63. Much teaching is very good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Lessons are carefully planned. Teachers use a wide range of appropriate teaching methods that meet the needs of individual students. The specific learning needs of individual students in the classes are identified and taken account of in lesson plans. Learning support assistants work sensitively and co-operatively with the teachers and students. There is very good support for dyslexic students.

64. Teachers are very well qualified and have extensive experience in childcare and the health and social care services. They draw on this experience effectively in their teaching. They use their knowledge of current issues in health, social care and education well to help the students identify clear links between theory and practice. Teachers draw on students' placement experiences skilfully to relate theory to practice. In an effective lesson on a childcare course, the students learnt about the place of play in children's development by discussing their work experience and carrying out practical activities. In a care lesson, students evaluated the value of creative activities they had used in care settings. In a few less good lessons, feedback to students on their work sometimes lacks structure and key points are not always emphasised sufficiently. In a lesson on a level 3 course, students were not asked for their own assessment of their work in order that they might develop the skills of self-evaluation. Well-chosen case studies and classroom displays are used to highlight issues of ethnicity and social diversity and prepare students to work in settings different from those in Stamford.

65. Key skills are taught effectively as an integral part of lessons. In one tutorial, students were preparing their curricula vitae. These were word processed and e-mailed. In a key skills lesson on an AVCE course, students were preparing a report that was to be e-mailed to their vocational teacher. In many lessons, students are directed to relevant web sites, and also to the college intranet, to gather additional information.

66. Students are well supported and speak highly of the help they receive from all staff. There are well-structured individual and group tutorials covering pastoral and academic issues. Students are set clear and achievable targets and their progress towards achieving these is monitored. There is very good communication between academic tutors and the departmental student advisor. Records are detailed, well organised and up to date. Students working towards NVQs receive regular reviews of their progress. Many are now progressing well towards achievement of their qualification.

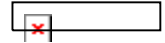
67. There are very good links with care organisations in the local community. These organisations provide students with good work placements. The college works co-operatively with three early years development partnerships in Lincolnshire, Rutland and Peterborough, respectively. Through links with the Southwest Lincolnshire Hospital Trust, students are able to develop valuable practical caring skills in a realistic working environment.

### **Leadership and management**

68. Management of the provision is very good. There are course teams in health and social care, early years and counselling. The roles and responsibilities of staff are well defined and understood. Staff work well together and there is effective formal and informal communication between them.

There are regular and effective departmental and course team meetings. The self-assessment report is detailed. Targets are set for retention and pass rates. Progress towards reaching these is monitored and taken into consideration when making strategic decisions.

## **Art and design**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates
- good teaching and effective learning
- good accommodation and specialist resources
- wide range of full-time courses at level 3
- effective guidance and support for students
- well-managed courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- failure of many students to be punctual
- insufficient integration of key skills with students' vocational studies.

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

69. The college offers a wide choice of full-time courses in art and design. Full-time provision includes GNVQ intermediate, foundation studies and national diplomas in fine art; design crafts; graphic design; multimedia and photography courses. There are also GCSE and GCE AS and A-

level courses and City and Guilds arts and craft courses, including those in textiles, jewellery and decorative techniques. Students can progress from courses at level 2 to those at level 4. At level 3, a wide range of courses is available to full-time students, but there are few part-time courses that are organised flexibly to meet the needs of adults. The college is extending its HE programmes to increase internal progression opportunities for students. There are currently just over 600 students aged 16 to 19 and 150 adults on courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

70. Pass rates on most courses are well above the national average. Retention rates have risen significantly over the past two years and those for most courses are now above the national average. At 83%, the average attendance rate in lessons inspected was above the national average. Many students, however, arrived late for lessons. The standard of most students' work is at least satisfactory. Students develop sound practical and theoretical skills and acquire specialist vocabulary relevant to their vocational pathway. There is some very good use of sketchbooks to record information. There is, however, a lack of the systematic development of ideas in some coursework. Students also acquire wider skills such as working with others and time management. Last year, almost 80% of national diploma and foundation studies students progressed to HE and 70% of GNVQ intermediate students progressed to level 3 programmes.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	12	20	18
		% retention	100	65	89
		% pass rate	83	85	88
GCE AS art studies/fine art	3	No. of starts	17	35	36
		% retention	65	74	86
		% pass rate	100	81	90
GCE A-level art studies/fine arts	3	No. of starts	50	64	52
		% retention	58	58	92
		% pass rate	81	95	96
National diploma in general art and design/fine art	3	No. of starts	15	26	31
		% retention	64	92	48
		% pass rate	89	70	93
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	12	15	20
		% retention	75	67	85
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Diploma in foundation studies art and design	3	No. of starts	35	31	38
		% retention	89	84	92
		% pass rate	100	92	100

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

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

71. Much of the teaching is good or better. Lessons have clear objectives and a sense of momentum. Teachers direct them purposefully and promote good working practices. Students extend their learning through visits to museums and galleries. Teachers show sensitivity to the

needs of students from a wide range of backgrounds and priority is given to building their confidence. Students are attentive and enjoy their learning experiences. In several lessons, students enthusiastically explored the expressive qualities of various media through a combination of direct observation and intuitive experimental response. In the most effective lessons, teachers test knowledge and strengthen students' learning through careful questioning. Of particular note is the emphasis that many teachers place on developing subject-specific vocabulary and initiating well-focused group discussion through which the students may share their ideas. In a photography lesson, the students listened with rapt attention to, and learnt a great deal from, the teacher's heartfelt and eloquent description of images of migrant workers. In a number of lessons, however, teachers fail to present their students with appropriate visual stimuli to stretch their imagination, extend their knowledge, and inspire them to action. Coursework folders indicate that students' development of ideas is sometimes insufficiently systematic.

72. Resources are good. The college has a new purpose-built art centre and all courses take place near to one another. The art centre has a lively atmosphere in which students and staff can see one another's creative activity and share good practice. Students benefit from well-lit studios and have good access to a range of specialist facilities that include two well-equipped craft workshops for wet and dry three-dimensional activities, a photographic studio and darkroom, two computer suites with an appropriate range of industry standard software and a large drawing studio. Facilities for printmaking and textiles are less extensive. Staff are well qualified and there is an appropriate range of expertise to cover all the major creative disciplines. There are good staff-development activities. Many are practising artists. Technician support is good in most areas, although currently there is insufficient technician support in the busy computer suites. The library is well stocked with an appropriate range of art and design books, periodicals, slides and videos.

73. The quality and clarity of project briefs vary considerably between courses. In a number of briefs, the language used is too complex for many students to understand. Assignments are marked regularly and assessment records are kept. Most students benefit from good written and verbal feedback on how they can improve. There is insufficient sharing of practice in internal verification by staff. Students fully understand the assessment process and value the helpful advice they are given on ways to improve their performance.

74. Students are provided with a range of additional enrichment activities such as rock climbing and first aid. Students on the foundation studies course benefit from a programme of liberal studies lectures that includes talks by artists, and thought-provoking presentations by prisons service officers. Good links have been formed with local industry. Students benefit from visits by professional practitioners and are able to undertake exciting outside assignments. The teaching of key skills is not sufficiently integral to the students' main vocational programmes. Many students consider key skills to be irrelevant.

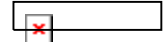
75. Prospective students are given good advice and guidance to help them choose a suitable course. They can attend taster days and explore their options at interview. New students receive an induction to their course to ensure they understand what is expected of them and the progression routes open to them. The recently appointed student advisers are proving very effective in supporting students and staff by ensuring that pastoral and disciplinary issues are addressed quickly and efficiently. Students with learning difficulties benefit from continual support given to them by a classroom assistant.

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

76. The area is effectively managed. Courses are well organised and carefully planned. Timetabling is carried out carefully in order that the best use may be made of accommodation and resources. Staff meet regularly and communication is good. Staff have confidence in their managers and appreciate the responsive management style. Students feel they can contribute to course development. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report for the area. Action plans drawn up after self-assessment, however, are insufficiently detailed. The area has a high proportion of new staff and insufficient attention is given to their early support and guidance. Staff work hard to promote equality of opportunity and make learning inclusive. They make every effort to give their students the care and attention they need,

and continually provide them with encouragement to spur them on to success.

### **English, media and theatre studies**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- excellent examination results in GCSE English
- high pass rates in most level 3 courses
- stimulating working environment
- accessible and effective learning support
- effective working of students in groups and pairs.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on some courses
- failure of many level 3 students to achieve high grades
- unsatisfactory teaching in some lessons
- insufficient use of ILT.

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



77. There are well-established courses in GCE AS and A-level English language and literature, GCE AS and A-level communication studies and GCSE English. The theatre studies and media GCE A-level programmes are recent introductions to the curriculum. GCE A2 theatre studies did not run in 2000/01. The area provides a module of the daytime Open College Network (OCN) access to HE course, and also runs a GCSE English course for students on that programme. GCSE English is the only course that is also available in the evening.

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

78. Pass rates in most subjects are high and have been above the national average for the last three years in the proportion of students on the GCSE English course who obtain grade C or above has been above the national average for the last four years. The pass rates on the GCE A-level communications studies and the access to HE course have been excellent, at 100%. The pass rates on the GCE A-level English language and literature and GCE AS media studies courses have been high, at 94%. The retention rate on some courses, however, has been low. The retention rate of 53% in GCSE English, in 2002, was a significant decline from previous years when it was at, or above, the national averages. In 2001/02, the retention rates on the GCE A-level media studies and GCE AS theatre studies courses were low. The retention rate is still low on the GCE AS theatre studies course. Although pass rates are consistently high, the proportions of students on all GCE AS courses who achieved high grades were below the national average. Most students, and particularly those on the GCE A2 theatre studies course, achieved grades lower than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE achievements.

79. Students are generally well motivated and enthusiastic. Their oral work is strong. Many students have developed impressive presentation skills and contribute confidently to large and small group discussion. Theatre studies students produce excellent practical work both in performance and design. The attendance rate in the area is below the college target.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in English, media and theatre studies, 2000 to 2002***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
GCSE English grades A* to C	2	No. of starts	30	46	38
		% retention	70	74	53
		% pass rate	71	59	80
GCE AS English language and literature	3	No. of starts	*	68	74
		% retention	*	90	85
		% pass rate	*	93	86
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	58	59	33
		% retention	78	66	97
		% pass rate	83	86	94
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	*	47	64
		% retention	*	76	73
		% pass rate	*	94	94
GCE AS theatre studies	3	No. of starts	*	13	19
		% retention	*	77	63
		% pass rate	*	90	92
GCE A-level communication studies	3	No. of starts	18	13	4
		% retention	61	69	100
		% pass rate	86	100	100

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

\* course did not run

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

80. Each subject has a detailed scheme of work and teachers produce individual lesson plans with clearly identified learning activities. Most lessons are well planned and split into a number of different learning activities. Students enjoy the variety in lessons and respond positively to the enthusiasm of their teachers. Schemes of work show that students learn the key skill of communication as an integral part of their course. In one English lesson, the teacher discussed with the group the communication techniques they needed to think about to make their presentations effective. In some lessons, the students work well in groups and pairs. The students are well briefed by the teachers and given challenging deadlines to meet. In one communication studies lesson, students had to present updates on their projects. The web site being created by one student interested the group and other students were quick to offer comments and helpful suggestions. In some GCSE lessons, teachers use effective strategies to meet the diverse learning and social needs of the groups. In one lesson, students were comparing tabloid and broad sheet newspapers and each student was able to make a contribution to the exercise. In a few lessons, the teacher fails to engage all the students. There was over-reliance on the reading out of worksheets, no attempt to check students' understanding and tasks set failed to challenge all the students to use all their skills to the full. There was no use of computers in any of the lessons observed, although some references were made to helpful web sites.

81. Teachers mark work thoroughly and return it promptly. In theatre studies, assessment cover sheets are used to record assignments and teacher and student comments. Systems for monitoring students' progress or setting targets are not used effectively. Teachers are starting to take students' previous performance in the GCSE into consideration when evaluating the standards of students' work. They seldom set the students demanding targets, however, to ensure they realise their full potential. The area has no common policy on grading students' work and students are unclear about the standards they should aim to attain. Some GCSE English students are not set regular homework. Staff do not use the college's quality systems assurance rigorously to check that homework is being set.

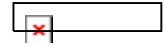
82. Staff give the students excellent support and know them well. Additional learning support systems work effectively. Staff refer students for support, mainly in relation to literacy and essay writing skills. Students value the support they are given. Liaison between subject teachers and student advisers is excellent. Problems about attendance and students' failure to meet work deadlines are quickly followed up. Students feel that their advisers have time to help them and they value their services. Students go on theatre and media-related trips and outside visits and these enrich their curriculum. Most learning materials used by students are clear and attractively set out.

83. Theatre studies are taught in a designated room that is large enough for practical work. Students also use the local arts centre to put on productions and gain experience of theatre technology. All media students have access to a specialist computer suite to develop material for their projects. English classes are taught in spacious classrooms with bright and lively displays of students' work on the walls.

### **Leadership and management**

84. Teachers in this area work well together as a team. They maintain effective informal contact with one another, but seldom hold minuted staff meetings. They do not follow the college's quality assurance procedures rigorously. In recent years, there have been several changes of curriculum manager. The annual course reviews are insufficiently evaluative and there is a lack of any detailed analysis of key performance indicators. No meaningful targets are set for students' performance. Staff acknowledge these weaknesses and have started to address them.

## Literacy and numeracy



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

### ***Strengths***

- very good teaching of basic skills
- well-managed development of basic skills provision
- good use of ILT in teaching and learning.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient learning support staff to meet students needs in some lessons
- few appropriately qualified teachers of basic skills.

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

85. The inspection covered literacy and numeracy up to and including level 1. Basic skills provision consists of courses in literacy and numeracy, additional learning support for students on level 1 courses and the teaching of the key skills of communication and the application of number at level 1. The basic skills courses are managed by the additional support section of the college. The college offers courses to meet the needs of students within the college and in the community. This provision is expanding. Some courses have been offered as taster sessions to such groups as adults with mental health problems, deaf learners, the homeless and the elderly.

86. The additional learning support section also provides literacy and numeracy support for learners identified as needing it by assessment tests on entry to the college. This support is offered to full-time and part-time students. Individual needs are diagnosed effectively and students are offered additional learning support to suit their individual requirements. Of the 158 students identified as being in need of support, 144 are now receiving additional support. The support is provided on a one-to-one basis either in class or in tutorial sessions. Support is provided for students, such as those with dyslexia, who have particular needs.

87. There are 1,200 students learning key skills. Of these, 160 and 250 are studying communication and application of number at level 1, respectively. Students develop their key skills through attendance at weekly workshops and portfolio building sessions of 90 minutes each.

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

88. Overall, students' achievements are high on basic skills courses. Retention and pass rates on these courses are also high. Most students on basic skills courses are successful in progressing to vocational courses. Most students' work is of a good standard. In most basic skills lessons, students are set challenging targets and are able to achieve them. Students also develop personal and learning skills successfully and these help them to progress to other courses. However, the individual learning plans of some students contain insufficient detail and do not specify precise targets to facilitate the monitoring of students' progress. Some students studying key skills at level 1 are set inappropriate learning goals that do not take account of their other needs, such as the development of good study skills to enable them to cope with the workshop lessons. These students make slow progress. Students are punctual for all literacy and numeracy lessons and attend them regularly.

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

89. Overall, teaching is good and students learn effectively. Basic skills teaching and additional learning support for individuals are well planned. In lessons, there is good classroom management and good support for individual students. Varied teaching strategies including the use of well-structured coloured handouts with clear English the students can understand and a mix of practical tasks and paper exercises. Account is taken of students' preferred learning styles. In lessons, students take a keen interest in what they are doing, understand the tasks they had been given and develop their skills. In many lessons, tasks are at different levels of difficulty to meet the individual needs of students. Good use is also made of ILT. Students are encouraged to scan their work into a computer, to word process documents and use the Internet to search for relevant pictures and other material. Most of the additional learning support is very good, especially for students who require one-to-one tuition. Some learning materials for key skills at level 1 are written in English the students find difficult to understand.

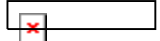
90. Students have good access to IT equipment. There are sufficient computers in the key skills workshop and in the additional learning support area to meet the needs of students and teachers. The additional learning support accommodation is spacious. However, at times when many students are using them, the rooms are not appropriate for one-to-one teaching. The high noise levels are intrusive and affect the teaching and learning adversely. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report and is being addressed in the construction of the new building.

91. Many teachers lack the appropriate qualifications to teach basic skills and a significant minority of additional learning support staff are not in possession of, or working towards a specialist qualification in basic skills. In some of the lessons taken by these staff, the needs of students for help with basic skills are not always met adequately. In some lessons, there are not enough learning support assistants.

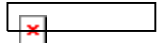
### ***Leadership and management***

92. Leadership and management of the courses and services are good. Teams have regular meetings to share good practice and to discuss any concerns. There is a very effective and accessible learning support service. Students on mainstream courses can refer themselves for support at any time. Drop-in facilities, workshop and learning centres are also available. The service also provides diagnostic assessments for students with particular needs, such as those with dyslexia. A co-ordinator for basic skills provision has been appointed and some effective initiatives have been launched. For example, a range of new courses has been introduced both in the college and in the community. Staff-development sessions to help all staff understand the importance of basic skills are being held across the college. However, there are no formal links between basic skills teachers and key skills level 1 teachers to enable them to identify and share good practice. There are, however, no formal links between basic skills teachers and teachers of key skills at level 1 to enable them to identify and share good practice, and also ensure the smooth progression of students from basic skills courses to level 1 courses.

## Part D: College data



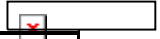
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	18	39
2	44	26
3	21	15
4/5	0	1
Other	17	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in 2002*

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and mathematics	693	96	6
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	40	20	1
Business administration, management and professional	362	781	9
Information and communication technology	758	2,347	24
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	21	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	740	356	9
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	181	124	2
Health, social care and public services	1,325	637	16
Visual and performing arts and media	501	132	5

Humanities	1,020	138	9
English, languages and communication	1,124	190	10
Foundation programmes	841	352	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,585</b>	<b>5,194</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2002

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	878	405	282	1,402	1,242	1,223
	Retention rate (%)	93	86	87	83	79	79
	National average (%)	81	80	79	79	79	77
	Pass rate (%)	80	78	93	68	71	78
	National average (%)	60	65	69	61	65	68
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	796	824	656	754	733	716
	Retention rate (%)	78	81	78	82	78	76
	National average (%)	76	77	76	80	79	78
	Pass rate (%)	53	67	81	64	69	78
	National average (%)	65	66	69	62	65	70
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,361	842	1,437	597	497	471
	Retention rate (%)	87	76	75	79	81	79
	National average (%)	75	76	78	79	79	79
	Pass rate (%)	76	73	74	76	79	77
	National average (%)	73	75	77	63	66	70
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	6	7	1	97	63	34
	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	94	59	88
	National average (%)	84	80	83	84	80	84
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	*	58	90	56
	National average (%)	65	65	57	58	57	54

colleges).

Sources of information:

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

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

\* too few students to provide a valid calculation

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	77	19	4	51
Level 2 (intermediate)	77	13	10	52
Level 1 (foundation)	63	31	6	16
Other sessions	79	14	7	14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>133</b>

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