



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Eastleigh College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Construction](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Business and professional studies](#)

[Business administration](#)

[Computing and information and communication technology](#)

[Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism](#)

[Beauty therapy](#)

[Health, social care and public services](#)

[Visual and performing arts](#)

[Humanities](#)

[Foundation programmes](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

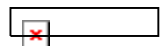
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

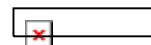
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

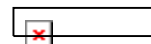


Name of college:	Eastleigh College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Dr Penny Hackett
Address of college:	Chestnut Avenue Eastleigh Hampshire SO50 5HT
Telephone number:	02380 911 000
Fax number:	02380 322 131
Chair of governors:	Rex Knight
Unique reference number:	130692
Name of reporting inspector:	Keith Abbott HMI
Dates of inspection:	25-29 November 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

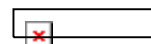


Eastleigh College is a general further education (FE) college in Hampshire. The main site is located close to Eastleigh town centre and two annexes are within walking distance. There are opportunities for adult learners at 24 local venues. Accommodation for 16 students with learning difficulties is provided in College House, a residential centre at Compton, eight miles from the college. Eastleigh has a population of approximately 117,000. The college also serves Winchester, Test Valley and parts of Southampton. At about 1%, unemployment is low in this relatively prosperous area, although there are pockets of social deprivation. Almost all of the businesses in the area are small and medium-sized enterprises.

Following the last inspection in 1997, the number of full-time students fell. This trend was reversed in 2001 and 2002. Since 1997, the numbers of part-time and adult students have increased significantly. In 2001/02 the college enrolled 1,002 full-time and 12,059 part-time students. Almost all part-time students were aged 19 and over. About two thirds of adult students and just under half of the students aged 16 to 18 are female. The growth in student numbers has followed an expansion in short course provision and in the range and number of courses provided in local community venues. In 2001/02, 32% of the college's part-time students were taught in community venues.

The college is situated less than half a mile from Barton Peveril Sixth Form College; a college that primarily offers GCE A-level courses. Eastleigh College provides a complementary range of courses that lead to vocational, technical and professional qualifications. Distinctive features are the high proportion of adult students and of programmes at levels 1 and 2, although 55% of full-time students are enrolled on level 3 courses. The college's mission is 'to enable the organisation to constantly and cost-effectively adapt to satisfy the diverse learning needs of the community it serves, in the friendly way that make Eastleigh College special'.

How effective is the college?



Eastleigh College has pursued its objectives effectively. Overall, provision is good. Of the 12 curriculum areas inspected, 10 were judged to be good and 2 satisfactory. The standard of teaching is above the average for FE colleges. Adults are particularly well taught. Pass rates are high on most courses. Retention rates improved in 2002, but remain below the national average. There is a wide range of vocational courses. There are good opportunities for students to enrich their studies. The participation of adults in education and training has increased through the provision of suitable courses in many local community venues. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- pass rates on most courses

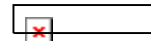
- teaching and learning, particularly on courses for adults
- governance, leadership and management
- guidance and support for students
- monitoring of students' progress and feedback on their assessed work
- opportunities for work experience and enrichment activities
- wide range of vocational courses and of provision in the community
- quality assurance procedures.

What should be improved

- retention rates on many courses
- students' attendance in some curriculum areas
- some general and specialist accommodation
- opportunities for progression from entry level courses.

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
Construction	Good. There are good pass and retention rates on refrigeration and air-conditioning courses. Pass rates are very good on some plumbing and carpentry courses. Students produce high standards of work in practical lessons. Teaching in these lessons is particularly good, but some theory lessons proceed too slowly. Most written feedback to students is inadequate.
Engineering	Good. There are good pass and retention rates on most courses, and good progression from level 1 to level 2 courses. Learning materials are well prepared and contribute to the high standard of practical work. Specialist accommodation is cluttered and drab. Attendance is low and some schemes of work are unsatisfactory.
Business and professional studies	Good. Courses are well managed. Pass and retention rates on most courses are very good. Many students progress to higher level courses. Most teaching is very good or good, but in several lessons, teachers failed to engage the interest of students.
Business administration	Good. Both teaching and tutorial support are good. Teaching is good as are pass rates on most courses, with the exception of level 3 courses. The effective integration of full-time and part-time students in classes enhances learning.
Computing and information and communication technology	Good. There is good achievement on most part-time courses. The retention rates on full-time courses are unsatisfactory. Adults are taught effectively, but feedback to full-time students about their progress is inadequate. Off-site provision is well managed.
Hospitality, catering, leisure and tourism	Good. Teaching is good on catering and travel courses, but unsatisfactory on the first diploma in sport. There are good retention and pass rates on some courses. Resources for travel are excellent. Resources for catering and sport are satisfactory.
Health, social care and public services	Satisfactory. Pass rates are good on full-time and short courses. The retention rate is unsatisfactory on most courses. Teaching is particularly effective on public services courses. Full-time students benefit from an extensive range of enrichment activities. A wide choice of part-time courses meets community needs, but the range of full-time courses is inadequate.
Beauty therapy	Good. Teaching and learning are good. There are high pass and retention rates on most courses. Resources are good, but the reception area is poorly maintained. Management is effective, but there are inadequacies in the monitoring of students' progress.
Visual and performing arts	Satisfactory. There are a wide range of courses and good enrichment opportunities. Adult students and dance and drama students produce a high standard of practical work. There are good pass rates on adult and performing arts courses, but unsatisfactory retention rates and below average pass rates in music and art. Some

	accommodation and specialist resources are inadequate.
Humanities	Good. Teaching and learning are good. Pass rates on most courses are above national averages. Retention rates are poor on access to higher education (HE) courses. Students are well supported and enjoy their learning.
Foundation programmes	Good. Teaching and pastoral and learning support are good for all students. There is a wide range of college and community provision, including good residential facilities. Management of the area is good.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. There is much good teaching, particularly on courses for adults. There are high pass and retention rates on key skills qualifications and on some courses for adults. There is an effective response to local need through collaborative projects. There is insufficient use of computers in the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are good. The college has made significant progress since the last inspection. Governance is very good. A clear mission has been established and is pursued successfully. The college has moved from poor to a sound financial position. Staff are positive and enthusiastic. Pass rates are high for adults and students aged 16 to 18. Retention rates have also improved since the last inspection, although they remain low on many courses. The strategic plan gives clear direction and it is effectively linked to development and operational plans. There have been significant improvements to the quality assurance system. Rigorous course review and thorough and effective self-assessment have led to improvements in provision.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

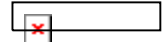
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Initiatives to widen participation have resulted in the recruitment of students from groups which are not traditionally well represented in FE. The college's programmes range from entry level through to HE and include provision for some students aged 14 to 16. Most full-time students are aged 16 - 18, but 85% of all students are adults. A good range of basic skills courses are offered in many different locations and there is very good daytime and residential provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is access to HE courses for adults. The college has an equal opportunities policy and a race equality policy and plan. It has set up an equality and diversity committee to monitor the equal opportunities and race equality policies. This committee has made satisfactory progress.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Guidance and support for students are good. Extensive information, advice and guidance are available to potential students through effective school links and a range of open evenings, taster

suitable information about college support services. Comprehensive arrangements for supporting students include: learning support; the work of personal tutors; careers advice; counselling; financial support; and help for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most tutorial support is good; some is unsatisfactory. There is initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy needs; in a few cases teachers do not make use of the results in lessons. The monitoring of students' attendance and progress is good on most courses.

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

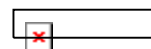
- friendly atmosphere
- supportive staff
- good teaching
- learning resource centre and IT facilities
- well-organised enrolment and induction activities
- good information about courses, progression opportunities and support services.

What they feel could be improved

- specialist facilities and resources in some curriculum areas
- refectory menus, prices and opening hours
- parking for cars and bicycles

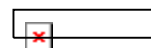
- arrangements for smokers.

Other information

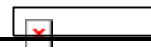


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (local LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

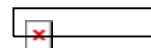


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	61	30	9
19+ and WBL*	74	23	3
Learning 16-18	62	30	8
19+ and WBL*	79	18	3

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



16 to 18 year olds

1. In 2001/02, the 859 students aged 16 to 18 accounted for 86% of students enrolled on full-time courses. In the same year, the 1,238 students aged 16 to 18 accounted for 10% of students on part-time courses.

2. In the three years ending in 2001, overall pass rates on long courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were generally above the national average for students aged 16 to 18 in FE colleges. The overall pass rates on level 1, 2 and 3 courses in 2001 were 82%, 81% and 84% respectively. These are well above the respective national averages of 69%, 69% and 77%. Over the same three years, the trend has been one of improvement in pass rates. Between 1999 and 2001, pass rates improved by 19% at level 1, 16% at level 2 and 13% at level 3. In 2001, high pass rates placed the college in the top quartile of general FE colleges at each of the three levels. At the time of the inspection, the achievements of a few students completing in 2002 were not known. However, reliable college data show that pass rates have been maintained at a high level in 2002 and, at level 2, have improved from 81% to 87%. About 500 students aged 16 to 18 took short course qualifications in both 2000 and 2001. The pass rate in 2000 was unsatisfactory at 56%. There was a significant improvement in 2001 to 83%. College data for 2002 show that this good pass rate has been maintained.

3. The college has been much less successful in its retention of students aged 16 to 18. In the three years ending in 2001, there was a decline in overall retention rates. In 2001, retention rates at levels 1, 2 and 3 were respectively 6%, 4% and 9% below the national average. This places the college in the bottom quartile of general FE colleges at each level. College data for 2002 show that downward trends have been reversed, although the retention rate remains below the national average at levels 1 and 3.

4. The college achieves some of its highest pass and retention rates on level 2 qualifications. In 2002, at NVQ level 2, pass rates on plumbing, production engineering and business administration courses were 100%. Pass rates were high on food preparation, beauty therapy and accounting courses. Overall pass rates were high and retention rates were above average on intermediate GNVQ courses. In the three years ending in 2002, several advanced GNVQ courses had falling enrolments. Overall retention rates on these courses were below national averages and overall pass rates were close to national averages. However, in 2002, advanced courses in engineering, IT, sports studies, hospitality and catering, and media studies had 100% pass rates.

5. Students have been successful in achieving key skills qualifications. In 2001 there were 856 starters on key skills qualifications. The retention rate was 97% and the pass rate was 84%. These rates are well above the national averages of 81% and 32% respectively. High pass rates for IT level 1 and communication level 2 were maintained in 2002, but overall pass rates declined. For example, the pass rate for numeracy level 1 fell from 94% in 2001 to 67% in 2002. Nevertheless, overall pass and retention rates remain well above national averages.

6. In many curriculum areas, for example in construction, engineering, hospitality and catering, beauty therapy, and public services, students produce a high standard of practical work. Students work to industry standards and meet reasonable deadlines. Portfolios of work are well maintained, but many contain grammatical and spelling errors. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly the residential students in College House, make sound progress and acquire good personal and social skills.

Adult learners

7. Of the 13,000 students who enrolled in 2001/02, nearly 11,000 were aged 19 or over. Most were studying part time and about three-quarters of enrolments were on level 1 and 2 courses.

8. The overall achievements of adult students on long courses are similar to those of students aged 16 to 18. In the three years ending in 2001, the college consistently achieved pass rates well above the national averages on long courses. In each year it was in the top quartile of general FE colleges for level 1 long qualifications. In 2001 it was also in the top quartile for level 3 qualifications.

9. Retention rates for adult students on long qualifications declined at all three levels between 2000

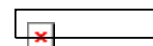
and 2001. The greatest fall was at level 1, from 74% in 2000 to 61% in 2001, which compares poorly with a national average of 77%. At all three levels, the college was in the bottom quartile in 2001. College figures for 2002 indicate a reversal in declining retention rates, but with retention rates below the national average at all three levels, the position remains unsatisfactory.

10. The number of part-time students taking short qualifications has risen significantly in the three years to 2002. Pass and retention rates are close to the median for all colleges. Pass rates at level 1 are higher than at level 2, although pass rates vary considerably between vocational areas. In construction, engineering and business administration they are high. In IT, visual and performing arts and humanities they are low.

11. Adult students achieve consistently good results at levels 2 and 3 on beauty therapy courses. Pass and retention rates on most of these courses exceed national averages. A high proportion of students who began IT courses in 2002 gained their qualifications. At level 3, there are very good pass rates on professional courses in business, where students make good use of their commercial backgrounds.

12. The standard of most adult students' practical work is high. On business administration courses, students display accuracy and speed in word processing, audio typing and shorthand. Language students acquire good written and oral skills. British sign language students acquire appropriate advanced communication skills. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop a good range of skills to enable them to live independently. Adult students in art and design and performing arts develop good technical skills that enable them to produce ambitious and distinctive work.

Quality of education and training



13. Inspectors observed 217 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 66% of lessons, satisfactory in 27% and less than satisfactory in 7%. This profile is slightly better than the average for general FE colleges inspected in 2001/02. Teaching was particularly effective in beauty therapy, humanities and foundation programmes, where 87%, 75% and 75% respectively of lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good or better. Teaching was least effective in visual and performing arts, where only 47% of lessons were good or better.

14. Teaching is significantly better in lessons where the class primarily consists of adult students. Over 74% of these lessons were good or better, compared with 61% for students aged 16 to 18. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons was also much lower at 3%, compared with 10%. In many of the unsatisfactory lessons involving students aged 16 to 18, teachers did not control the students effectively; they were allowed to chat rather than work. They did not concentrate on their tasks and they achieved very little. Learning is generally good or better; lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory for learning were 69%, 35% and 6% respectively. Learning was also much better in lessons in classes of adults; 79% of these lessons were good or better. The profile for attainment was similar to the profile for teaching. The percentages of lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory were 66%, 26% and 6% respectively.

15. In the more effective lessons, there are good working relationships between teachers and students. Suitably detailed planning takes full account of the students' individual needs. Teachers skilfully involve students in discussions, role play and presentations. Teachers draw on students' industrial experience to illustrate and enrich lessons. For example, a plumbing student gave up-to-date advice on the use of liquid petroleum gas in commercial premises. Beauty therapy lessons progress logically from simple skills to more advanced procedures. In health and social care, work placements are well managed and valued by students. Public services students are taught teamwork and leadership skills. In several curriculum areas, teachers and support assistants work well together to help students to learn. However, in some areas, for example health and social care, there is insufficient use of IT in lessons.

16. Most practical lessons in laboratories and workshops are well organised. Practical demonstrations by teachers are handled competently. Students are suitably briefed about the tasks they need to perform. They are closely supervised and well supported, although in a small number of lessons, insufficient attention was paid to health and safety procedures. Practical lessons in hospitality and catering enabled the students to develop good skills. In motor vehicle engineering, good use was made of customers' cars to provide opportunities for valeting, servicing and MOT testing.

17. In unsatisfactory lessons, as well as in some lessons that were satisfactory overall, weaknesses included failure to check students' understanding of the work, slow and dull teaching sometimes resulting from teachers talking for too long, poor discipline, poor questioning techniques and failure to involve students in class discussions.

18. Assessment of the progress of both full-time and part-time students is generally effective and well managed. Information about assessment procedures is shared with students and they receive full details of assignment schedules. Assessment methods are linked to the standards required by awarding bodies. Effective initial assessment of full-time and substantial part-time students contributes to individual learning plans, which include targets and are used to monitor progress. In some curriculum areas, insufficient use is made of this information. For example, in IT the enrolment on to level 3 courses of many students who fail to meet the course entry requirements has contributed to unsatisfactory retention rates.

19. The overall standard of feedback to students on their assessment is very good. The quality of oral feedback in many curriculum areas guides and encourages students to make progress, for example in foundation studies, beauty therapy, construction, modern foreign languages and English. Written feedback is appropriately detailed and specific on most courses. In GCSE English, the marking of technical accuracy is meticulous and ample constructive comment is made. In leisure, tourism and sport, both grammatical and subject-specific errors are corrected. In a few curriculum areas, inspectors observed examples of inadequate feedback; there was insufficient positive comment on work done well and inadequate guidance on how to improve.

20. Thorough internal verification procedures on most courses help to maintain good assessment practice and contribute to consistently high standards across the college. There are complimentary comments in many external verifiers' reports. Curriculum managers carefully monitor the actions required by external verifiers. The college uses the local Open College Network (OCN) to accredit many of its part-time courses. Moderators' comments on these courses are favourable, particularly for access to HE and modern foreign language courses.

21. There are good systems on most courses for the regular monitoring of individual students' progress towards their learning goals. Most students have regular progress reviews with their tutors. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 are kept well informed. They receive two written reports and invitations to two parents' evenings each year. Employers also receive written information on their employees' progress. On courses in engineering, general refrigeration and air conditioning, wall-mounted checklists are used by students and teachers to monitor performance and provide employers with termly reports. Some courses are using computer tracking systems to monitor students' progress. Students, for example on the access to HE course, can access the progress records on-line. Some monitoring of students' progress on full-time courses in ICT and beauty therapy is unsatisfactory.

22. The college offers prospective students a wide variety of information and guidance to enable them to choose the right course. Prospectuses for full-time and part-time courses are comprehensive and widely distributed. There are open evenings and taster days. Students who have applied for full-time courses are invited to introduction days in July to sample some course activities. The customer service team liaises effectively with curriculum managers to ensure that prospective students receive impartial information about available opportunities.

23. All students receive a formal induction to their course and a student handbook giving details of the support available to them. On part-time courses, an appropriate shorter induction programme is provided. There are good arrangements for the initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy

skills. Assessment results are fed back to tutors promptly and appropriate learning support is arranged, either as part of lessons or on a one-to-one basis. In a few cases, the outcomes of initial assessment do not contribute to lesson planning. Almost all students identified as needing support make use of the support that is made available. Retention and pass rates, particularly on level 2 courses, have improved.

24. A sound tutorial framework provides clear guidance for tutors. It includes suggested schemes of work for group tutorial lessons. A new team of specialist retention and progression tutors supports personal tutors by helping students whose attendance, progress or motivation are giving cause for concern. An initial evaluation of the team's work suggests that many of the students, with whom they worked over the six months prior to the inspection, have been retained when they might otherwise have dropped out. This team also supports tutors by producing tutorial teaching materials on, for example, settling in to college, time management and confidence building. Some tutors do not use tutorial lessons or tutorial support effectively. They have low awareness of the 'cause for concern' procedure and of the range of additional support that is available. There are good procedures for recognising poor records on punctuality, attendance and performance. These include the 'first impressions of group' process. This involves an analysis by teaching teams, after the first three weeks of a course, of students who might be at risk of dropping out. The retention and progression tutors are then requested to work with these students.

25. Opportunities for personal advice and support are good. Advice on personal, financial, domestic, childcare, transport and health problems is readily available. The college has an attractive nursery that offers day care for students' children. Specialist support is available for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as dyslexia, visual and hearing impairments and behavioural difficulties. Learning support staff have the expertise to support most students. External specialist help is sought when required.

26. Personal tutors and staff in the learning resource centre offer careers education. They help students to find relevant information about careers or HE institutions. A member of the local careers service attends the college regularly to interview students.

27. The college serves its local community very well. It offers a broad range of vocational courses. Courses are offered in all 14 of the areas of learning funded by the LSC and range from entry level to HE. The college's focus on vocational and community education complements the largely academic courses offered by the nearby sixth form college. The college has a particularly wide range of full-time courses at levels 2 and 3. The range at level 1 is less comprehensive which restricts the progression opportunities of a significant number of entry level students. In many curriculum areas, provision has been developed in conjunction with employers and local community groups.

28. At the time of inspection there were around 4,500 enrolments on courses taught in community venues. Most of these students are following ICT and basic skills courses, although a wide range of community courses is available. The college also offers a good range of enrichment activities for full-time students. The provision includes, for example, the development of personal presentation skills, activities connected with the Duke of Edinburgh's award and a successful male dance project.

29. The college has strong and effective links with schools, employers and community organisations. For example, the college provides vocational training for nearly 200 students aged 14 to 16, a few of whom have been excluded from school. Partnership arrangements with the local council and job centre have enabled assessment facilities to be provided for employers offering NVQs in manufacturing. The college works with housing associations to provide 'learning representatives' who make contact with people from groups that are not well represented in FE to encourage them to join in college programmes. The college has responded to increasing demand for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. At the time of the inspection, 45 students had recently attended a summer school and 131 adults were enrolled on part-time ESOL courses.

30. The college is responsive to the training needs of local employers and training providers. It offers a good range of relevant courses and other support, including basic skills teaching on employers' premises. Work experience is offered to most full-time students. Where the college is unable to

secure work placements, students are placed within appropriate areas of the college.

31. Overall, college accommodation is satisfactory. Most buildings are well maintained and most general classrooms are of sufficient size and fit for their purpose, although some rooms have poor acoustics. In addition, the college has a residential facility, College House, for 16 students with learning difficulties. College House has well qualified staff and good specialist facilities. In 2001, the college was awarded the Chartermark for this provision. Common areas, including the college refectory, are satisfactory, but the main reception area is not located at the main entrance which is unsatisfactory. College buildings, particularly the older accommodation, are not easily accessible to wheelchair users. There are insufficient automatic doors and heavy internal doors. It is difficult for wheelchair users to use the low desks in the learning resource centre.

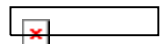
32. The quality of specialist facilities is uneven. There are very good resources for beauty therapy and public services students. The travel office is an excellent facility. Some specialist areas are unsatisfactory. Workshops for motor vehicle welding, plumbing and carpentry are cramped. The general engineering workshop is untidy and the refrigeration workshop is not a realistic working environment. The base room for students of popular music is poor and there are no suitable changing facilities for dance and drama students.

33. The learning resource centre has recently been refurbished. It is a pleasant and comfortable area in which to learn and includes suitable provision for group work, individual work and quiet study. There is good access to a wide range of learning materials for most student and there are sufficient modern computers that provide access to the Internet and the college intranet. There are sufficient books, CDs, newspapers and periodicals in the curriculum areas, with the exception of catering and ICT. Students with impaired vision or hearing difficulties use specialist computing equipment in the centre.

34. Most teachers are well qualified and have appropriate experience. Over 60% of all staff are qualified teachers and a further 15% are training for a teaching qualification. Many staff take advantage of good opportunities to update their skills through secondments or work experience in industry. However, health and social care teachers have had insufficient recent industry experience.

35. The college has a sound strategic basis for the development of its resources. A clear property strategy identifies proposed improvements to accommodation and buildings. Staff development needs are set out in the staff training plan and an ICT strategy identifies areas for ICT development.

Leadership and management



36. The college is well led and managed. Managers, staff and governors have worked together effectively to ensure that the college has made significant progress since the last inspection. They have established a clear mission and pursued it with success. The number of adult students has increased substantially. A positive and enthusiastic culture among staff has been created and maintained. The quality assurance system is effective. Overall pass rates are high and have improved over the three years to 2002. The retention rate is gradually improving, but remains below national averages on many courses.

37. The college's strategic plan gives clear direction. Strategic objectives are linked to development and operational plans. Managers and teachers understand the college's mission. Challenging enrolment targets for adult students have been consistently met, but enrolment targets for full-time students aged 16 to 18 were not met in the three years up to 2002. In 2002/03, enrolments of students aged 16 to 18 had increased at the time of inspection by 4%, despite a 3% decrease in the number of school leavers. College finances are well managed. The financial position has improved significantly from an earlier substantial deficit to one of good financial health. Governors and budget holders monitor budgets appropriately. There are clear links between the strategic plan, financial

targets and performance indicators.

38. Governance is good. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the college. Suitably detailed monthly reports on financial and academic performance provide relevant information to all governors. The standards committee closely monitors curriculum performance and reports back to the corporation. The board has an appropriate mix of expertise and experience.

39. Curriculum areas are generally well managed. Course team meetings are well recorded and lead to actions to address weaknesses. Procedures are well understood and they are applied consistently across the college. Provision at venues in the community and franchised courses are also managed efficiently. The management information system provides reliable data on enrolment, retention and achievement. Course leaders and managers use the data with confidence. Communications within the college are good. A regular and informative newsletter is distributed to all staff. Survey results show that staff feel valued and well informed.

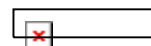
40. There have been significant improvements in quality assurance arrangements since the last inspection. Course review and self-assessment are rigorous and have contributed to the improvement in retention and pass rates. Measures to improve retention include a more thorough monitoring of attendance. Close attention is paid to courses that have unsatisfactory levels of achievement and remedial action is taken. Demanding targets for retention and achievement based on sector benchmarks and current performance in the college are set for each course and regularly reviewed. A clear framework for self-assessment includes students' feedback and comparison between targets and actual achievements. A panel of governors, senior managers and external consultants moderates self-assessment reports. The final report reflects the college's strengths and weaknesses.

41. Managers pay close attention to the quality of teaching. The lesson observation programme includes all staff. The outcomes influence the development plans for individual members of staff. Unsatisfactory teaching is observed again within three weeks and line managers monitor the resulting action plans. The college has recently appointed two advanced practitioners to support and disseminate good practice in teaching and learning. Staff appraisals take place annually. In 2001/02, over 95% of full-time staff and part-time staff were appraised. Teachers' performance is reviewed against Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) standards. Staff development is explicitly linked to the college's five strategic objectives.

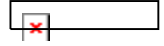
42. The college has good links with schools and community organisations. One outcome is the college's provision of vocational education for over 200 pupils aged 14 to 16, some of whom have been excluded or at risk of exclusion from school. This provision is well managed. All the students receive an admission interview; regular and close contact is maintained with their schools. Staff who teach them are trained in classroom and behaviour management appropriate to this age group. The college has sought to collaborate with the neighbouring sixth form college. Joint governors' meetings have increased governors' understanding of the two colleges, but there have been few other outcomes.

43. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Policies on equal opportunities and race equality are displayed in the college and the topics are included in staff and student induction programmes. A diversity working group has recently been established to monitor the equal opportunities and race equality policies. Management training on diversity has taken place. Students' performance is not currently monitored by gender or ethnicity.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Strengths

- good pass and retention rates on refrigeration and air conditioning courses
- very good pass rates on plumbing level 2 and wood occupations level 1 courses
- high standard of students' work
- particularly good teaching in practical lessons
- well-managed provision.

Weaknesses

- insufficient checking of students' learning and slow paced teaching in theory lessons
- insufficient written feedback to students.

Scope of provision

44. The college offers a broad range of construction courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, including craft and technician programmes. Specialist provision includes a centre of vocational excellence in refrigeration, electrical and air conditioning. The courses offered provide progression opportunities for craft students to progress to HE. Some students enrol at the college having previously attended 14-16 school link programmes. Franchised off-site provision enables 60 students to study trowel and wood occupations.

Achievement and standards

45. Pass and retention rates on most courses are close to or just above national averages. Achievements on refrigeration and air conditioning courses are good. Pass rates on the plumbing NVQ level 2 courses have improved over the past three years and were outstanding in 2002. Wood

occupation level 1 pass rates are consistently good. The new level 1 certificate in plumbing for full-time students aged 16 to 18 had an unsatisfactory pass rate of 39% in 2002.

46. Building services students produce good work in practical lessons. For example, in an electrical installation lesson, first-year students produced accurate and neat fixing arrangements for the connection of switches to various types of lighting. First-year plumbing students produced lead aprons with welds that were free from major defects and very even in their appearance. In both examples, students met deadlines and industrial standards. The technical knowledge displayed by students in theory lessons ranges from satisfactory to good. Students on the AVCE course were confident, articulate and accurate when presenting IT work for a measurement and costing assignment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	38	48	32
		% retention	89	83	88
		% pass rate	76	98	82
NVQ refrigeration and air conditioning	2	No. of starts	92	83	64
		% retention	63	66	73
		% pass rate	79	65	79
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	35	23	17
		% retention	57	52	69
		% pass rate	80	83	100
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	7	6	26
		% retention	86	100	92
		% pass rate	67	100	71
GNVQ advanced built environment (AVCE in 2002)	3	No. of starts	16	15	25
		% retention	63	80	72
		% pass rate	67	83	78
City and Guilds electrical installations	3	No. of starts	*	*	64
		% retention	*	*	68
		% pass rate	*	*	81
NVQ commercial refrigeration and air conditioning systems	3	No. of starts	16	19	12
		% retention	94	89	92
		% pass rate	47	82	82

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

47. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There is very little unsatisfactory teaching. Practical lessons are particularly well taught. Teachers in these lessons are skilful in planning tasks, providing practical demonstrations, paying sufficient attention to detail and appraising students' work critically in a supportive manner. As a result, students are well motivated. For example, first-year carpentry

students produced scale drawings and cutting lists of various timber joints. The teacher's demonstration and close supervision ensured the correct use of hand tools. In this lesson, close attention was paid to health and safety. However, this was not the case in all practical lessons.

48. Teaching in theory lessons is mostly satisfactory. Relationships with students are purposeful. Lessons reflect course and industry requirements. Teachers are helpful and sometimes draw on students' industrial experience to illustrate and improve lessons. For example, a plumbing student was able to provide clear up-to-date advice to the class on the use of liquid petroleum gas in commercial premises. The slow pace of teaching in a significant minority of lessons reduces opportunities to extend students' knowledge and skills. Learning is good or better in almost 70% of lessons. However, there are insufficient checks during lessons to ensure that students are understanding the work. In one lesson, the teacher answered his own questions. In another, all the teacher's questions were answered by a small number of students.

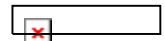
49. Teachers are well qualified and have relevant industrial experience. Two teachers have been seconded to local companies to update their skills. Construction workshops have adequate resources, but they are cramped. The new wood machining area is good, but there are no facilities to provide second-year carpentry students with realistic practical construction tasks. Staff running building services courses have good links with local employers and training organisations. This situation contributed to Department for Education and Skills (DfES) recognition of the electrical, refrigeration and air conditioning section as a centre of vocational excellence.

50. Teachers provide regular and effective verbal comments to students on their work, but there is a lack of written feedback on written work. In carpentry and plumbing, students receive feedback on the basis of industrial standard checklists, but there are no written actions. Assessment planning, monitoring and recording in refrigeration and air conditioning are comprehensive. Wall-mounted checklists are used by students and teachers to monitor performance. There are termly reports to employers on their employees' progress. Tutorial support is satisfactory. Group tutorials provide students with effective careers guidance and support. Individual tutorials are run skilfully, but not all students are given clear, written instructions for follow up activities.

Leadership and management

51. Construction courses, including the off-site franchised provision, are well managed. Effective action to cover for staff absence through illness has minimised disruption to students. Joint planning and contract arrangements ensure effective working relationships with franchise partners. Monthly, unannounced monitoring visits ensure that good provision is maintained. The self-assessment report overstates the quality of teaching and as a consequence, does not identify strategies to improve teaching and learning.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on most courses
- well-prepared learning materials

- good practical work by students
- good progression from level 1 to level 2 courses.

Weaknesses

- cluttered and drab specialist accommodation
- low attendance
- some inadequate schemes of work.

Scope of provision

52. The college focuses on practical engineering programmes which include a foundation course, NVQs at levels 1 and 2 in motor vehicle and mechanical engineering, and an introductory welding programme. There is good progression from level 1 to level 2 courses. There are good links with local schools. A significant number of 14-16 year old school pupils study NVQ level 1 motor vehicle engineering and the practical elements of manufacturing and engineering GCSEs at the college. All full-time students undertake work experience. At the time of the inspection there were 76 full-time and 146 part-time students of whom 21 were adults. Local training providers were sponsoring 16 modern apprentices on college courses. The college also provides assessment and verification for an NVQ in manufacturing operations to 68 employees of local companies on their sites.

Achievement and standards

53. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 engineering production and the national diploma in engineering courses are excellent, whilst those on City and Guilds IT electronic servicing, NVQ level 1 vehicle maintenance and NVQ level 2 vehicle mechanical and electronic systems are good. There are high retention rates on all courses, with the exception of the national diploma in engineering, which is no longer offered.

54. Students are industrious and demonstrate high levels of practical competence. In some cases the artefacts produced are exemplary. Students have worked on successful local community projects, for example, a model body scanner to enable children to understand the motion of the device before the start of their treatment. The portfolios of motor vehicle engineering students are well structured and clearly indexed, but there are too many examples of poor grammar and spelling.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds basic	1	No. of starts	13	11	23

welding skills		% retention	69	91	91
		% pass rate	11	50	62
City and Guilds IT electronic servicing	1	No. of starts	57	50	50
		% retention	82	80	86
		% pass rate	79	95	88
NVQ vehicle maintenance	1	No. of starts	42	*	9
		% retention	71	*	100
		% pass rate	59	*	89
NVQ engineering production	2	No. of starts	13	12	10
		% retention	100	92	100
		% pass rate	92	100	100
NVQ vehicle mechanical and electronic systems	2	No. of starts	28	20	*
		% retention	48	85	*
		% pass rate	88	76	*
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	9	7	7
		% retention	89	71	57
		% pass rate	88	100	100

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

55. The quality of teaching in engineering ranges from satisfactory to good. The more effective practical lessons are well organised and have clear objectives. In motor vehicle engineering, good use is made of customers' cars to provide opportunities for valeting, servicing and MOT testing. Students, well supported by their teachers, demonstrated good skills in preparing a car for the emissions test and were able to explain the relevance of the test results correctly. Another group removed the brake pads from a car, under the close supervision of the teacher, who expertly questioned them about the process. In a theory lesson, good use was made of an Internet site to aid learning about clutches. Theory was well related to practice when the students subsequently inspected a clutch in the adjacent workshop, promoting a lively discussion.

56. Mechanical engineering lessons were often structured around well-designed learning materials. In an engineering drawing lesson, effective use was made of a workbook containing graded examples of drawings together with appropriate explanations. This approach enabled some students to work at their own pace with minimal supervision, while others sought and received more help from their teacher. Well-prepared workbooks are also used in motor vehicle lessons. They provide opportunities for students to demonstrate key skills. Some schemes of work are too brief. There is a good working relationship between staff and students; staff show care and consideration for their students.

57. Both the mechanical workshop and adjacent classroom are cluttered and have not been redecorated for some time. The machine tools are old, but they are fit for their purpose. The welding workshop is cramped and the store is too small. The welding equipment is satisfactory. The motor vehicle workshop and adjacent classroom lack refurbishment. There are insufficient modern cars and the store area is poorly organised. A major feature of the workshop is the recently acquired MOT testing equipment, enabling customers' cars to be tested to Ministry of Transport standards. This facility offers realistic work experience for students.

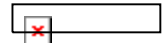
58. Practical work in motor vehicle and mechanical engineering is regularly and systematically assessed. Progress charts showing individual students' achievements are displayed in relevant classrooms and regularly updated. There is effective tracking of evidence from work carried out in the college and the workplace, and good monitoring of actions following external verifier visits.

59. Overall attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was low at 75% and some students left early. Tutorials are scheduled regularly. In one tutorial there was no scheme of work or lesson plan. The tutorials, comprising discussions with individual students, focused on progress and were helpful, but no formal action plans were completed. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed prior to their course and any identified additional support needs are met. The students respond well to this support and commented on the effectiveness of the help offered to them.

Leadership and management

60. Leadership of engineering courses is satisfactory. Although informal communications between staff are very good, there are few formal meetings. Action has been taken to focus the curriculum on practical courses, which match the career aspirations of the students and the needs of local employers. There are good links with local schools and employers.

Business and professional studies



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

Strengths

- very good pass rates on most courses
- good retention rates on many courses
- good teaching, particularly of adults
- effective curriculum management
- good support and monitoring of full-time students
- good commercial experience of staff.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention on the advanced GNVQ and intermediate Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) courses
- some inadequate tutorial support for part-time students.

Scope of provision

61. The college offers a wide range of part-time courses in accounting, marketing, human resources, management and teacher training. Intermediate GNVQ and AVCE courses are provided, but enrolments have declined over the three years to 2002 and numbers are low. Part-time adult students on business and professional courses comprise the vast majority of students. They are recruited from a wide catchment area. Most are employed in service industries.

Achievement and standards

62. Pass rates on the certificate in marketing, personnel management, foundation and intermediate AAT, and the Joint Examining Board (JEB) teachers' diploma courses are very good. Most courses have good retention rates, although retention on intermediate AAT and the advanced GNVQ course are unsatisfactory. Pass rates on the intermediate GNVQ courses were significantly above national averages in 2001. On the advanced GNVQ and AVCE courses, pass rates have been consistently above the national average for the three years to 2002. AVCE first-year and second-year students are taught together. This arrangement is a satisfactory response to low numbers. Students' overall attainment is higher than the national average.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ intermediate business studies	2	No. of starts	14	10	*
		% retention	57	80	*
		% pass rate	75	100	*
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	40	26	31
		% retention	92	96	96
		% pass rate	80	73	90
GNVQ advanced business studies (AVCE in 2002)	3	No. of starts	22	19	12
		% retention	77	63	67
		% pass rate	94	92	88
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	40	43	56
		% retention	90	95	89
		% pass rate	100	100	**
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	89	90	63
		% retention	64	40	68
		% pass rate	83	74	65
City and Guilds further	3	No. of starts	16	28	39

teacher's certificate		% pass rate	75	84	**
JEB teacher's diploma (IT)	3	No. of starts	16	18	35
		% retention	88	82	83
		% pass rate	86	86	80
Certificate in marketing	3	No. of starts	14	11	12
		% retention	79	91	83
		% pass rate	70	50	60

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

* course not running

** incomplete data

Quality of education and training

63. The overall quality of teaching is good. Lessons are clearly structured and taught with enthusiasm. Teaching is particularly good in management and teacher training lessons where classes consist of adult students. In a marketing class the teacher prepared an imaginative quiz based on the 'dove from above' from a television quiz. This approach led to an entertaining and stimulating lesson. In a management class the teacher used well-structured management games to allow students to work collaboratively, brainstorm ideas and think for themselves. On professional courses, students make excellent use of their own commercial backgrounds to link theoretical concepts to contemporary business practice.

64. A minority of lessons are uninspiring. Teachers fail to engage students' interest. Some teachers rely on explaining concepts to students instead of encouraging them to arrive at their own logical conclusions. In finance lessons, teachers rely too heavily on set texts and standard exercise materials. The college's standard framework for key skills teaching are applied inconsistently on the intermediate GNVQ course. The scheme of work for an IT key skills lesson was inadequate. It made no reference to key skills criteria or how students would be prepared for their examination.

65. Teachers have good commercial experience and many work in business occupations. In many lessons, teachers draw on their industrial experience to illustrate the practical application of complex business or accounting concepts. In one accounting lesson the teacher prepared a case history based on her work for a small company. Placing the case study in its proper context helped students to understand a difficult accounting procedure.

66. Classrooms are well equipped, clean and tidy. Students have access to industry standard computers and software. They are skilled in using these resources to produce a high standard of coursework. In an intermediate GNVQ lesson, students made good use of the college's learning centre to research materials for their personal finance guide.

67. Students are highly complimentary about the level of support and guidance offered by learning centre staff, who help them to develop the skills needed for independent research. Full-time students value the good advice and guidance they receive on their progress and on personal issues. Students are highly satisfied with the quality of teaching, the resources, and the welcoming atmosphere in the college. Initial assessment is used to identify students who need additional learning support. On professional courses, staff do not always respond quickly enough when such needs are identified. It is college policy to provide tutorial support for part-time students, but this support is not always forthcoming. Where good tutorial activities are available on part-time courses, tutors develop students' study skills, presentation techniques and time management skills.

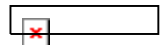
68. Individual target setting and monitoring of full-time students' progress are sound. Students are clear about their learning objectives, what they need to do to achieve them and the resources available to help them. Course teams agree assessment methods and criteria and communicate these to students. All students are regularly given homework. Assignments and coursework are

marked regularly and accurately. Feedback on assessment is supportive and constructive, and students are left in no doubt about how they can improve.

Leadership and management

69. Courses are managed effectively and efficiently. Good links have been established with employers and local schools. Communication within course teams is very good. The processes of target setting and improvement planning are highly developed. They have contributed to an increase in students' achievements, their capacity for course management and satisfaction with their work. Course files show how improvements have been implemented following self-assessment. However, action plans place insufficient emphasis on improving the standard of teaching.

Business administration



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

Strengths

- very good pass and retention rates on full-time level 2 courses
- very good pass rates on audio and word processing short courses
- good teaching
- effective integration of full-time and part-time students
- thorough monitoring of full-time students' progress.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates on level 3 programmes
- unsatisfactory retention rates on the full-time secretarial diploma 2002
- ineffective assessment of learning support for students progressing to level 3 courses.

Scope of provision

70. The college offers a wide range of business and secretarial courses from levels 1 to 4. At the time of inspection, there were 39 full-time and 450 part-time students. About one third of the full-time students and almost all of the part-time students are adults. Full-time courses comprise level 2 and 3 secretarial courses and the NVQ level 2 in business administration. Part-time day and evening courses are offered at the main site and at several local community venues. They include text and word processing, audio typing, shorthand, practical bookkeeping and legal secretaries' courses.

Achievement and standards

71. There are excellent pass rates and good retention rates on level 2 full-time NVQ courses in business administration and on the level 2 legal secretaries' course. Retention and pass rates are also good on word processing and audio typing short courses for adults. Pass rates on the full-time level 3 secretarial course and the part-time stage 3 word processing course are low. Pass rates on the shorthand course have steadily improved and are above the national average, but there are very few students. The retention rate is good at level 2 and on most word processing, text processing and audio short courses, but is unsatisfactory on the full-time level 3 secretarial diploma course. In 2002 no students completed this course.

72. Adult students achieve high levels of accuracy on skills courses and students are encouraged to aim for high grades in their examinations. The levels of attainment in skills lessons were good, and students produced accurate work. In business theory lessons, effective group work enables students to demonstrate their good knowledge and understanding of theory. Attendance at observed lessons was unsatisfactory at 74%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Word processing (short courses)	1	No. of starts	284	489	426
		% retention	85	92	88
		% pass rate	66	80	78
Shorthand speed	1	No. of starts	17	12	8
		% retention	71	92	50
		% pass rate	25	55	75
NVQ business administration	2	No. of starts	40	20	22
		% retention	95	70	86
		% pass rate	73	100	100
Legal secretaries' certificate	2	No. of starts	18	13	12
		% retention	100	100	92
		% pass rate	94	100	100
Text processing stage 3 (short courses)	3	No. of starts	20	22	27
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	65	68	56

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

Quality of education and training

73. Teaching is good or better in most lessons. Lesson planning is particularly thorough. The good use of standard lesson plans normally includes evaluation of previous lessons. A strong feature of several level 2 and 3 theory lessons for secretarial students is the collaborative learning between full-time and part-time students. For example, in one lesson students worked in pairs to examine and interpret data to solve business problems relating to production, marketing and purchasing. Students worked diligently and knowledgeably, sharing ideas and skills before confidently feeding back to the whole group. In a word processing evening class, adults worked effectively in pairs for proofreading and peer assessment. In another interesting lesson involving full-time and part-time students, one group prepared a positive and accurate paragraph about a new holiday hotel for a brochure. The other group, given the same facts, prepared a complaint about the same hotel.

74. Some lessons, although satisfactory, were less effective than they might have been because teachers talked for too long, and there were no activities for students. In a few lessons, teachers asked questions which some students could not answer. There were some examples of inappropriate gender stereotyping in all-female groups where exercises were used that referred to male managers and female administrative assistants.

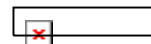
75. There is good access to IT equipment and up-to-date commercial software at both the main site and in the community venues. Audio equipment is old, but it is well maintained. Work books and handouts are clearly presented. Some secretarial business lessons and a group tutorial were inappropriately timetabled in computer rooms, which made it more difficult for students to interact, take notes and complete exercises. Staff have relevant vocational qualifications and are qualified NVQ assessors. NVQ students undertake work experience. Staff ensure that appropriate placements are found in business administration departments.

76. The progress of full-time and part-time students' progress is monitored frequently and well recorded. Individual students' progress summary sheets include targets and review dates. Evening class students have their work marked thoroughly each week and receive individual feedback on their progress. Full-time students have well-planned weekly tutorials that include, for example, the development of time management skills and confidence building activities. Students are very appreciative of their tutors' support. They are well supported in class and their particular needs are assessed effectively. However, some students' progress on level 3 courses is hindered because their need for literacy support has not been recognised.

Leadership and management

77. Recent changes in curriculum leadership have led to an emphasis on staff working to improve the standard of teaching and learning. Full-time staff seek continuous improvement. Part-time staff are less well integrated in the teaching teams; they rarely attend meetings and do not have staff appraisals.

Computing and information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on full-time level 3 courses and on most part-time courses
- good teaching of adult students

- good learning materials
- well-managed off-site provision.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on full-time courses
- insufficient feedback to full-time students about their progress.

Scope of provision

78. The college offers a good range of part-time ICT courses including computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), European computer driving license (ECDL), integrated business technology (IBT) levels 2 and 3, Internet technologies, and City and Guilds IT courses. Courses are provided at many venues in the community. Partnership arrangements have also helped to expand the range of part-time courses offered to adults. At the time of the inspection, there were about 1,200 students enrolled on part-time courses. For full-time students aged 16 to 18, the college offers BTEC first and national diplomas, and certificate courses for IT practitioners. The BTEC courses replaced the intermediate GNVQ and AVCE courses in September 2002. Recruitment to full-time courses was low at about 50 students.

Achievement and standards

79. There are good pass rates on most part-time courses. Pass rates for full-time students who complete advanced level courses are also good. Pass rates on IBT 2, Internet technologies, ECDL and the City and Guilds diploma in networking are above the national averages. The ECDL course recorded a 90% pass rate in 2002. The diploma in networking course and the full-time AVCE course both achieved 100% pass rates in 2002. Retention on level 2 and 3 full-time courses declined between 2000 and 2002, and at 65% and 58% respectively in 2002, the rates were unsatisfactory. The enrolment on to level 3 courses of many students who failed to meet the course entry requirements contributed to unsatisfactory retention. The retention rate of 97% on the part-time IBT 2 course was above the national average in 2002.

80. Part-time students work confidently and develop good practical and independent learning skills. New adult students, who had initially been apprehensive about studying, are enthusiastic about learning. They quickly develop practical skills and make very good progress. In an Internet technologies lesson, students learned to use e-mail and set about e-mailing each other with enthusiasm and humour.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
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CLAIT	1	No. of starts	678	751	642
		% retention	88	93	92
		% pass rate	72	72	**
IBT 2	2	No. of starts	70	198	97
		% retention	96	95	97
		% pass rate	67	64	70
ECDL	2	No. of starts	*	21	55
		% retention	*	100	78
		% pass rate	*	67	90
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	16	18	26
		% retention	88	67	65
		% pass rate	79	67	65
GNVQ advanced IT (AVCE in 2002)	3	No. of starts	33	37	20
		% retention	73	54	58
		% pass rate	64	85	100

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

* course not running

** incomplete data

Quality of education and training

81. Teaching is good or better in most lessons for part-time adult students. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and students are given clear learning objectives for each lesson. Teachers use good materials and well-structured exercises. On full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18, half of the teaching was good or better, but two lessons were unsatisfactory. The most effective lessons contained suitably varied and stimulating activities. In these lessons, teachers encouraged students to develop independent learning skills; the standard of their work was high. In a lesson for first diploma IT students, the teacher used an on-line projector to introduce AutoCAD. Clear instructions, effective questioning and good control of a lively group ensured that all students made good progress. In less effective lessons, teachers were not well prepared. One desktop publishing lesson for a mixed group of full-time students and part-time adult students was unsatisfactory because the lesson lacked structure and the younger students were allowed to chat. Little learning took place.

82. Students have comprehensive induction programmes. Adult students' prior attainment and experience are carefully assessed and learning is planned accordingly. Information about the assessment schedule is provided during induction. Adult students are well supported. Systems to monitor their progress and provide feedback are effective. Written feedback on their work is generally comprehensive and helpful. Feedback to full-time students about their progress is unsatisfactory. In tutorials there are informal checks on progress, but systems to record discussions and agree individual targets are inadequate. Some written feedback on their assignments and coursework is good, but in too many cases teachers' comments do not give clear indications of the actions required for improvement.

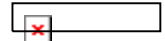
83. The learning centre at the main site is well equipped with computers and popular with students. Some of the IT book stock is out of date and there are too few books on modern IT applications, such as Java and Frontpage. Accommodation and equipment at the main site are mostly good, although some computer rooms have unsuitable layouts. Many teachers use projectors to provide on-line demonstrations and powerpoint presentations in lessons. Much of the accommodation at the

off-site centres are of a high standard, but the centre in Eastleigh has an unwelcoming entrance hall and poorly lit and badly decorated computer rooms. Staff are suitably qualified and most participate in regular staff development activities to update their technical knowledge and teaching skills. However, few full-time staff have recent industrial experience.

Leadership and management

84. Management of the off-site part-time courses is good. Effective record keeping complies with quality assurance procedures and good practice is shared between staff. Provision in the community is well planned and students may enrol throughout the year on courses that lead to a wide range of qualifications. Management of full-time courses has been unsatisfactory but has recently shown some improvement following changes to course responsibilities and to staffing. Erratic record keeping reflects the inadequate application of some quality assurance procedures.

Hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- good teaching on community courses, and catering and travel courses
- strong links with employers
- good curriculum management
- excellent resources for travel courses.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching on the first diploma in sport
- insufficient use of evidence from the workplace on NVQ catering courses.

Scope of provision

85. The college offers a wide range of courses in catering, hospitality, sport and travel. Provision

includes the BTEC first diploma in sport, the BTEC national diploma in sports studies and additional coaching, lifeguard, first aid and sports leader awards. Travel courses include intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism with travel options, the AVCE travel and tourism, fares and ticketing, and travel agency courses. Catering courses include NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking, NVQ level 2 food and drink service, AVCE in hospitality and catering, and the certificate in basic food hygiene. The college also offers a wide range of community provision ranging from yoga to cookery for beginners. At the time of the inspection over 800 students were enrolled on these courses. There were 125 full-time students of whom 90% were aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

86. Retention and pass rates are good on the intermediate GNVQ leisure and tourism, the national diploma in sports studies and the GNVQ hospitality and catering courses. Retention on AVCE travel and tourism was good in 2002 and pass rates were close to the national average. Retention is also good on basic food hygiene courses. Achievements on fares and ticketing courses improved to above the national average in 2002, but fell to below the national average on the travel agency course. Pass rates are unsatisfactory on the one-year NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking course, and declined to well below national averages in 2002. Retention is satisfactory on both one-year and two-year programmes. Retention and achievement are good on short courses in sport. The standard of full-time students' work is good; clear reference is made to industry practice. Progression rates to HE and related employment are good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Basic food hygiene	1	No. of starts	41	164	369
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	61	86	72
NVQ food preparation and cooking (one year)	2	No. of starts	17	9	9
		% retention	88	78	89
		% pass rate	85	71	63
NVQ food preparation and cooking (two year)	2	No. of starts	16	28	20
		% retention	75	70	65
		% pass rate	40	89	92
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	25	23	26
		% retention	80	100	81
		% pass rate	65	100	95
British Airways fares and ticketing	2	No. of starts	17	7	17
		% retention	100	71	100
		% pass rate	65	40	76
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism (AVCE in 2002)	3	No. of starts	36	13	13
		% retention	81	62	92
		% pass rate	76	88	82
BTEC national diploma in sports studies	3	No. of starts	12	10	16
		% retention	75	80	87
		% pass rate	89	100	100
GNVQ advanced	3	No. of starts	14	10	9

hospitality and catering (AVCE in 2002)	% retention	92	63	78
	% pass rate	82	80	100

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

Quality of education and training

87. The quality of teaching in travel and catering is significantly better than the quality of teaching in sport. In the more effective lessons teaching is well planned. All students are attentive and want to learn. Clear guidelines are given for assignment and group work. In a GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism lesson, students worked purposefully on an assignment identifying gaps in the provision of local leisure and tourism facilities. Students on this course, and on catering NVQ level 2 courses, receive help in lessons from a learning support tutor.

88. Both practical and theory teaching in catering are good. In practical lessons, students take a pride in their work and teachers instil a professional approach. Some schemes of work and lesson plans lack sufficient detail about learning outcomes and assessment methods. Teaching on all community courses is good or better. Teaching in the two lessons for the first diploma in sport was unsatisfactory. For example, in one lesson, individual reviews of assignments were carried out in the sports hall while the rest of the group played football. Students did not concentrate on the teacher's analysis of their assignment and were distracted by the game.

89. Written feedback on students' work is comprehensive. All students have three individual progress reviews each year in addition to a well-devised tutorial programme of social and personal topics. Students on travel and sports courses find the reviews and tutorials helpful, but catering students do not. The attendance of some part-time catering students is poor and some students arrive late for lessons.

90. There is a strong vocational emphasis in all courses. Evidence from work experience in travel and sport is clearly linked to assignments, but there is insufficient use of evidence from the workplace on NVQ catering courses. Employers come into college as guest speakers, facilitate visits to their organisations and provide information to support courses. Staff are well qualified and have a good range of relevant industrial experience.

91. Resources for travel are excellent. The well-equipped travel shop is a branch of a well-known multiple travel agency. Resources for sport are satisfactory. The large sports hall is well maintained but has an area blocked off for storage, which is being inappropriately used for changing and for meetings with students. The college does not have outdoor sports facilities, but suitable arrangements are made to use local swimming, football and athletics facilities. Resources in catering are generally satisfactory, but some catering books are out of date and there is a lack of modern recipe books and periodicals.

Leadership and management

92. Curriculum management is good. Managers and staff meet regularly to review students' progress. Issues relating to achievement and retention are addressed efficiently. Action to address low attendance has been particularly effective. During inspection, attendance was good at 89%. Constructive discussions are held at team meetings about the range of provision. Effective action has been taken in sport to change the national diploma from a science-based course to a more general sports studies course, which more accurately reflects the career aspirations of students. There is no foundation level provision. Consequently, some students are struggling to achieve on the level 2 sports course.

Beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- good achievement on most courses
- good teaching and learning
- effective leadership and management
- wide range of modern equipment in the beauty salons.

Weaknesses

- inadequate formal tracking systems for assessment of students' practical work
- unattractive and poorly maintained reception area.

Scope of provision

93. The college offers a broad range of courses designed to provide access to FE and employment. Full-time courses include holistic therapy and NVQ levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy. Part-time provision includes, theatrical make-up, reflexology and body massage courses. At the time of inspection there were 514 students, most of whom were adults.

Achievement and standards

94. There are good pass rates on beauty therapy courses. Pass rates on most courses exceed the national average. Pass rates on part-time reflexology, aromatherapy, and Indian head massage courses are well above the national average. Retention rates are good on the Indian head massage and aromatherapy courses and are satisfactory on the other courses. The general trend is one of improving retention rates. Many of the students' assignments are good; a few are excellent. The better assignments include good use of IT and demonstrate well-developed research skills. Some of the make-up students' assignments, show evidence of independent thought and imaginative use of pictures. Students are well motivated and responsive in lessons. They have a professional approach towards their studies.

95. Students demonstrate a high standard of practical skills, for example in holistic facial massage and micro current facials. External clients in the college salon are clearly impressed with the students' professionalism. NVQ level 2 beauty therapy students and the holistic therapy students

have two weeks work experience. This opportunity is not offered to level 3 beauty therapy students. The section has good links with employers and many students progress to employment with these salons.

96. Attendance is monitored carefully and certificates are awarded to students who attend all lessons during the term. Students who are consistently late have to sign into each class and to report regularly to the curriculum leader. Nevertheless attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was low at 78%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	*	39	47
		% retention	*	74	83
		% pass rate	*	72	100
Body massage certificate	2	No. of starts	71	97	72
		% retention	87	89	82
		% pass rate	97	96	86
Indian head massage diploma	2	No. of starts	49	82	36
		% retention	82	100	100
		% pass rate	80	87	100
Aromatherapy diploma	3	No. of starts	16	12	14
		% retention	88	83	100
		% pass rate	100	90	100
Reflexology diploma	3	No. of starts	12	16	29
		% retention	83	69	79
		% pass rate	100	100	96
Beauty specialist diploma	3	No. of starts	43	38	29
		% retention	72	71	79
		% pass rate	90	93	86

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

*course not running

Quality of education and training

97. The teaching of both students aged 16 to 18 and adult students is good. Schemes of work and lesson plans provide a sound balance between theoretical and practical activities. Teachers have very good technical knowledge and there are very good working relationships between staff and students. Some teaching is very imaginative. For example, in one lesson for adults, the teacher used straws and Clingfilm to describe and build an example of muscle tissue. Lessons are carefully planned. They start with simple skills and graduate to more advanced work. In one excellent lesson, the teacher made effective use of a whiteboard, overhead transparencies, handouts and questions to teach the central nervous system. However, there is little use of IT in lessons. The teaching of theoretical knowledge is effectively integrated into practical teaching.

98. Students are well informed about assessment procedures. At the start of their courses all

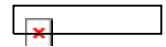
students are given a calendar that includes schemes of work, deadlines for completing assignments, and a checklist of all practical assessments. Most feedback on assignment work is clear and helpful. Written feedback on practical assessments is suitably detailed and provides good guidance for improvement. However, there is insufficient documentation to track students' progress throughout their courses, although records of final assessment are adequate. Internal verification is rigorous and covers all aspects of students' assessed work. Students are generally well supported by their tutors. The induction programme is effective. Parents of students aged 16 to 18 receive regular reports on them and are invited to parents' evenings, which are well attended.

99. The section is situated in an old school a few minutes walk from the main college. The three beauty salons are well decorated and make best use of an old building. There are good examples of students' work in the corridors. Students have good access to a wide range of modern equipment. The theory rooms have high ceilings and poor acoustics, sometimes making it difficult to hear the teacher or students. The client reception area is unattractive and poorly maintained. Teachers have relevant qualifications and experience. They regularly increase their knowledge by attending courses on the latest developments in the industry and education.

Leadership and management

100. Leadership and management are effective. The curriculum leader provides clear direction and communicates effectively with all staff, who are regularly consulted on the section's development. There are regular meetings to discuss development issues, internal and external verification, and quality assurance.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on most courses
- effective teaching on public services courses
- extensive enrichment activities for students on full-time courses
- effective management of public services and off-site provision in health and care.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on most full-time courses

- insufficient use of IT on health and childcare courses
- inadequacies in accommodation and resources
- narrow range of full-time courses.

Scope of provision

101. There is a wide range of part-time and short courses for adults in health and care. At the time of the inspection there were 104 students on childcare programmes at NVQ levels 2 and 3, and 36 students on the oral health course at level 3. The range of full-time care courses is narrow, especially in social care, where there is only one level 3 course. There are 90 students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses in childcare at intermediate and advanced levels, and 9 on the one social care course. There are 47 full-time public services students on BTEC first and national diploma courses. There are no foundation level programmes in either health and care or public services, and no intermediate course in social care. There are good enrichment opportunities for full-time students.

Achievement and standards

102. Pass rates on most courses are good. They are outstanding on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma courses and on the national diploma in childhood studies. However, they are below the national average on the AVCE in health and care and the national diploma in public services. Retention rates are unsatisfactory on most courses. They are consistently poor on the AVCE in health and social care and the national certificate in dental nursing. In 2002, less than half of the students who started these courses gained the award. The proportion of high grades achieved by full-time students on level 3 courses is significantly below the national average. The standard of students' work on public services courses is high. Students on part-time courses in early years also produce work of a good standard. Portfolios are well kept and evidence is well documented and appropriate. Students show good levels of attainment in public services lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First diploma in public services	2	No. of starts	20	11	13
		% retention	65	45	77
		% pass rate	54	100	89
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	18	16	17
		% retention	67	88	71
		% pass rate	75	93	100
National diploma in childhood studies	2	No. of starts	17	26	19
		% retention	82	62	74
		% pass rate	*	63	100

National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	31	24	27
		% retention	61	50	63
		% pass rate	83	78	80
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	34	20	19
		% retention	88	70	79
		% pass rate	93	86	100
AVCE in health and social care	3	No. of starts	11	6	8
		% retention	64	50	63
		% pass rate	86	100	60
National certificate in dental nursing	3	No. of starts	55	30	35
		% retention	84	77	57
		% pass rate	60	59	75

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

* unreliable data

Quality of education and training

103. Much teaching is good, particularly on public services courses. Lessons are well planned and taught. Teachers establish frequent and relevant links between theory and practice, and both teachers and students use examples from the workplace to clarify topics and extend learning. Work placements are well managed and valued by students. In a childcare lesson, students combined their work to provide evidence from their work of key skills in communications. In the previous lesson, they had developed learning activities and materials and used these with small children in their work placements. An effective activity for public services students involved a visit to the local country park to learn about navigation. Students made detailed map readings and worked to checkpoints. They developed teamwork and leadership skills.

104. In the less effective lessons, teachers spend too long introducing topics and students become bored. Progress is too slow in some lessons. In one lesson, ineffective management of group work led to students working individually rather than collaboratively. There is little use of IT in lessons. Teachers and students are not able to use relevant computer applications during lessons. Childcare students rarely receive appropriate web site references and they mainly use computers for word processing.

105. Resources are generally good on public services courses. Teachers are well qualified and have recent, relevant industrial experience. Specialist equipment is of high quality, but public services classrooms are cramped, untidy and lack relevant displays. There are inadequacies in staffing and resources for health and social care courses. Full-time health and care teachers lack recent industrial experience. Most teachers on the courses in oral health are not teacher trained. Health and care classrooms and corridors have good displays of students' work. However, some rooms have poor acoustics which impede with learning. There are no computers for students' use in the building in which they are taught, nor are there any reference books or journals. The range of health and care books and journals in the learning centre is inadequate.

106. Arrangements for assessing and monitoring students' progress are satisfactory. In public services, staff have developed a computer tracking system to record and monitor students' progress. Assignments are available to students on the public service folder of the college intranet. On health and care courses, students receive clear and frequent feedback and guidance on how to improve their work. On NVQ courses in care and early learning, there are good arrangements for assessment. However, assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory on the NVQ courses in oral

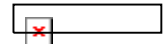
health. Students who had started in April 2002 had not had an assessment by the time of the inspection in late November.

107. Full-time students have weekly tutorials. Group tutorials are infrequent for some students and individual progress reviews for these students run behind schedule. There are good arrangements for learning support. Support is provided through 'drop in' workshops, in lessons, or on a one-to-one basis. Most students identified as needing basic skills support take up the support offered.

Leadership and management

108. Curriculum management is effective in public services. Off-site provision in health and care is well managed. After a period of instability in the management of college-based health and care courses, changes were made in autumn 2002. Improvements are being made, but it is too early to judge their impact.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- good practical skills of part-time adult students and dance and drama students
- good pass rates on part-time courses and full-time performing arts, dance and drama courses
- good work experience and enrichment opportunities
- good range of courses and opportunities for progression.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching
- unsatisfactory retention and pass rates on several courses
- poor drawing and presentation skills of graphic design students

- poor accommodation for popular music students
- inadequate specialist resources in some areas.

Scope of provision

109. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time visual and performing arts courses. At the time of inspection, 1,590 students were enrolled on part-time courses. Almost all are adults studying off the main site in community venues. The range of leisure courses for adults includes painting, drawing, calligraphy, stained glass, jewellery, acting, guitar, piano, interior design, glass engraving and embroidery. These courses lead to a college certificate. A further 220 part-time students were following vocational courses. There were 72 art and design students and 114 performing arts students on full-time courses. The first diploma courses in design and performing arts provide good progression routes to specialist national diplomas in dance, drama, music, fine art, media and graphic design. These courses offer opportunities for work experience and community projects. There are also gallery visits, performances and overseas trips.

Achievement and standards

110. There are good pass and retention rates on most part-time adult courses. Pass rates on some full-time courses are above the national average, for example, the 94% pass rate in 2002 on the national diploma in performing arts, but there are low pass rates on the national diploma in graphic design and on fine art courses. There is a low retention rate on the full-time art and design and media courses. The popular music course has had unsatisfactory retention and pass rates for the three years to 2002. Of the 19 students who began the course in September 2000, only 6 completed successfully in 2002. Staff have worked hard to improve punctuality, attendance and retention. The retention rate of students at the time of the inspection was better than at the same period in previous years.

111. Adult students develop good practical skills and successfully produce some ambitious work. One student of stained glass was awarded the gold award for best student of the year by City and Guilds. Drama and dance students demonstrate good performance skills. In a first diploma drama lesson, three groups of students scripted and acted movie trailers with sound effects and music. They worked enthusiastically and their results were professional and atmospheric. The media students produce short films that demonstrate a good understanding of film genres. In contrast, the work of graphic design students is poor, due largely to weak presentation and drawing skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
City and Guilds interior design	1	No. of starts	17	12	14
		% retention	82	75	57
		% pass rate	83	81	88
BTEC first diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	24	29	26
		% retention	65	83	77
		% pass rate	100	88	95
BTEC national diploma	3	No. of starts	35	21	19

in popular music		% retention	49	55	58
		% pass rate	63	50	55
BTEC national diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	34	39	46
		% retention	79	68	74
		% pass rate	96	88	94
GNVQ advanced art and design (national diploma in fine art in 2002)	3	No. of starts	17	14	11
		% retention	76	57	73
		% pass rate	58	75	75
GNVQ advanced media/national diploma media	3	No. of starts	22	*	15
		% retention	82	*	67
		% pass rate	88	*	100

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

112. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Staff prepare thoroughly for most lessons. Good planning and effective attention to the sequence of tasks help their students to learn. Teachers, particularly those teaching the adult classes, are very experienced and use examples from their industrial experience to illustrate their lessons. In a minority of lessons the teaching lacks rigour, students are allowed to drift, and some achieve very little. Poor discipline undermines the effectiveness of some lessons. There were instances of staff talking over students' noise and not planning the use of time well.

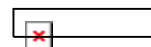
113. Assessment is regularly carried out. Written feedback is sensitive and includes suggestions for improvement. Popular music students can access their grades and assessment feedback on-line. There is good use of students' self-assessment of their learning. In one dance lesson, students gave verbal presentations to the class and were then assessed by their peers. This was done thoroughly and with sensitivity. Key skills teaching is fully integrated in art and design. Tutorials are effective in supporting students' learning. Students report that staff are friendly and always available to give help.

114. The accommodation and resources for art and design and performing arts and media have improved since the last inspection and are adequate. The popular music students have access to an industry standard recording studio for some of their lessons. However, the base room for popular music students is isolated and of a poor standard. There is a lack of rehearsal space and the standard of decoration and furniture is poor. Some of the spaces used by part-time students do not have sufficient equipment and are cramped when all students are present. The media, photography, performance, and art and design studios are adequate, but there are insufficient video editing facilities for media students, no changing or shower facilities for dance and drama students, and insufficient access to specialist image manipulation software for graphic design students. Many teachers of adult courses provide their own very specialist tools and learning materials.

Leadership and management

115. Curriculum leadership is good. Most courses are well managed, but few opportunities are taken to link projects between art and design, music and dance and drama students, particularly during the many public performances involving college students. There is good communication within the curriculum area and staff make effective use of students' views in reviewing courses. There are appropriate action plans to address the issues raised by the self-assessment report, in particular a range of measures designed to improve achievements on the popular music course.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates in GCSE English and GCSE Spanish in 2002
- good pass rates on access to HE and British sign language courses
- good teaching and learning
- effective use of foreign language assistants.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on language courses and on the access to HE course
- unsatisfactory GCE AS law provision.

Scope of provision

116. At the time of the inspection some 850 part-time students were studying French, German, Spanish or Italian. Most were adults, taking evening classes at the main site and at community venues. The college does not offer a full-time GCE A-level programme, since this is offered by the neighbouring sixth form college. However, the college offers GCSE courses in English and psychology as well as GCE AS law. There were about 75 students on access to HE and access to social work courses. About 100 students were taking a good range of British sign language courses. The college works in close association with the regional Deaf Association. It is one of few centres in the south of England to offer these courses to level 3.

Achievement and standards

117. Most pass rates are improving or are being maintained at a high standard. GCSE Spanish and GCSE English language pass rates were very high in 2002, at 100% and 92% respectively. Pass rates are good on access to HE courses and on basic British sign language courses. Students achieve good standards of work in modern foreign languages. Listening, comprehension, and writing skills are well developed. Higher level students debate and discuss contemporary issues with

confidence. They are able to write complex, grammatically accurate sentences. Access students also gain in confidence as they acquire knowledge. In 2001, 85% of those who completed the access to HE course progressed to university, but the retention rate on this course is poor. It was less than 60% in 2000, 2001 and 2002. Retention is also unsatisfactory on language courses.

118. The attainment of students on most courses is good. British sign language students acquire appropriate advanced communication skills by imitating the precision with which their deaf teacher uses sign language. GCSE English students are capable of vivid, descriptive writing.

119. However, standards on the GCE AS law course are low. The students had difficulty understanding legal language and remembering important information. In 2001, only one of nine students who began the course was successful. The provision is unsuitable as an addition to their main course of study. Attendance at some lessons observed by inspectors was unsatisfactory. Overall attendance on this course was low at 73%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
British sign language	1	No. of starts	81	50	50
		% retention	86	72	80
		% pass rate	64	78	90
Surrey open college federation (all languages)	1	No. of starts	333	448	426
		% retention	60	30	36
		% pass rate	88	90	96
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	80	63	50
		% retention	70	65	78
		% pass rate	68	78	92
GCSE Spanish	2	No. of starts	16	6	18
		% retention	94	50	67
		% pass rate	93	100	100
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	85	55	62
		% retention	57	45	55
		% pass rate	80	92	100

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

Quality of education and training

120. Most lessons were good or better. Students make good progress in these lessons and enjoy learning. Teachers are alert to the needs of individuals. Lessons are well planned and lively. In most lessons, teachers sustain momentum and cover much ground. In the best modern language lessons, teachers combine serious learning and humour to good effect. In languages, the deployment of foreign language assistants to support teachers in lessons is effective. Students also value the workshops run by the assistants before or after lessons. Skilful teaching on the access to social work course equips students for the difficult and sensitive issues which people encounter in their lives. On the access to HE course, students make good progress in learning the research skills used in the social sciences. They also develop their study skills. In a few lessons, teachers did not provide students with a sufficiently varied range of activities. Opportunities were sometimes overlooked to engage students in discussions.

121. Assessment is thorough and students are clearly informed about their performance and progress. Assessment follows awarding bodies' guidelines. Most written work in humanities and languages is meticulously marked and students are given specific advice on how to improve. The quality of oral feedback in languages is good. GCSE English teachers correct grammar, spelling and punctuation carefully.

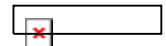
122. Initial guidance is thorough and part-time students receive all necessary information about their course and college. Students are well supported throughout their courses. Inspectors observed several examples of sensitive support where students with slight disabilities were helped to overcome their learning difficulties.

123. Wall displays are lacking in most rooms. Sometimes rooms are cluttered with resources for other subjects. There is no base room for languages and a lack of storage and display facilities. The library contains sufficient books for psychology and sociology, but the collection for 20th century Russian history is inadequate for the needs of access students.

Leadership and management

124. Leadership and management are good with the exception of GCE AS law. Day-to-day administration is efficient. There are flexible arrangements for the timetabling of GCSE English and the access to HE courses to suit students' availability. Curriculum leaders organise their documentation well; detailed information of all kinds is readily available. A determined effort to raise standards has been underpinned by relevant staff development activities and lesson observations. Pass rates have improved steadily. Action to improve retention has been less effective, but the retention rate for students at the time of the inspection was better than at the same period last year.

Foundation programmes



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

Strengths

- good range of provision for adults
- much good teaching
- good placements for work experience
- effective programme and good pastoral support for residential students
- good links with families, local schools and community agencies.

Weaknesses

- few progression opportunities from entry level to level 1 programmes
- some unsatisfactory teaching on the diploma in vocational education
- some unsatisfactory teaching rooms and resources for ICT.

Scope of provision

125. The college provides a good range of full-time and part-time courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A wide range of adult part-time programmes is offered at the college and in Eastleigh and Southampton. Community venues include using a local health centre and accommodation made available by voluntary organisations and social services. The college's residential facility, College House, provides accommodation for students with moderate learning difficulties. There are insufficient opportunities for entry level students to progress on to college courses. Level 1 programmes are only available in engineering, motor vehicle and construction. At the time of the inspection there were 100 full-time and 126 part-time students on foundation programmes.

Achievement and standards

126. Achievement on foundation programmes is good. Retention and pass rates on the diploma in vocational education have been outstanding at level 2 for the two years to 2002. At level 1, pass rates have been above the national average in each of the three years to 2002. Retention on this course was unsatisfactory in 2001, but was just above the national average in 2002. Students on the residential programme achieve good personal and social skills. Students on the full-time community education work experience programme have recently been successful in their application for a grant to fund a project redeveloping the gardens of a local activity centre for people with additional needs.

127. Working partnerships between students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and students on other college courses are good. Engineering students work alongside community education course students in the workshops. Public services students work as mentors for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh's award.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Diploma in vocational education foundation	1	No. of starts	19	26	40
		% retention	95	54	78
		% pass rate	89	86	74
Diploma in vocational education foundation	2	No. of starts	19	12	7
		% retention	74	100	100
		% pass rate	86	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

128. Teaching was good or very good in most observed lessons. Students have a wide range of opportunities to develop personal and employment skills. Teaching on the pre-foundation programme and part-time community programmes at venues away from the main site is good. Staff working with the pre-foundation students with multiple learning difficulties, make effective use of sign language and symbols to communicate with students. On full-time community education, foundation and pre-foundation programmes, well-prepared individual learning plans are used effectively. Teaching on the diploma in vocational education was unsatisfactory in two lessons. The section has recently been affected by staff absence due to sickness. Cover arrangements had been made, but lack of continuity has adversely affected the students' learning.

129. A wide range of work experience programmes is offered. Placements in the college and in the community provide good learning experiences. Students' progress on placements is closely monitored and linked to individual learning plans. Effective initial assessment is used to develop challenging individual learning programmes. Support needs are identified and support is effectively implemented in almost all cases. Assessment and monitoring of all students' progress is good. A regular review of progress against individual learning goals ensures that there is appropriate support. Learning goals are revised in response to students' needs and performance. Pastoral support is good.

130. Provision for residential students in College House is good. The curriculum provides appropriate learning opportunities and effective training. Staff are well qualified and very experienced. A high level of pastoral support is offered as a part of the life and social skills programme. Planning and monitoring of programmes for residential learners is very good. Learning goals are clear. A good balance is achieved between developing the independence of students and involving carers in the planning and review process. The residential facilities are also used by students on the foundation and community education programmes, enabling them to develop practical life skills

131. Links with local feeder schools, parents and other community agencies are strong. Communication with tutors and families is very good. A weekly symbolised news sheet, which can be read by text readers and symbol readers, has been introduced as a valuable communication aid between the college and families and carers. A wide range of community programmes away from the main college site has been developed in partnership with the local adult care service and with local health authority neurology departments. A broad range of work is undertaken with local education authorities and schools to provide opportunities for school pupils from the age of 14 who are having difficulty remaining within mainstream school provision.

132. Some resources are unsatisfactory. For example, students with complex needs on community education programmes have no access to ICT resources on the Desborough site. Software for these students on all sites is not up to date. Some teaching takes place in inappropriate rooms. Staff are well qualified and a number of staff have advanced qualifications in teaching students with special educational needs, but some staff have not updated their vocational training.

Leadership and management

133. Leadership and management are good. Programmes are regularly reviewed and new programmes developed to meet the needs of the community. All staff are involved in regular monitoring of programmes and contribute to the self-assessment process. Internal and external verification processes effectively ensure the quality of programmes.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- effective response to the learning needs of the local community
- high pass rates for most qualifications, especially key skills
- good teaching on adult basic skills and ESOL courses
- effective use of learning support assistants for classroom support
- good management.

Weaknesses

- slow pace of learning in some lessons for full-time students
- uneven use of initial assessment for planning individuals' learning
- insufficient use of computers for literacy and numeracy teaching.

Scope of provision

134. The college provides good opportunities for adults and young people to improve their basic skills. Full-time students from pre-entry level to level 2 receive literacy and numeracy teaching in separate classes and as an integrated part of their vocational programmes. Part-time courses for adults are offered during the day and in the evening. At the time of inspection, 93 students were enrolled on these courses. The college has responded effectively to the learning needs of the local community, offering new courses for asylum seekers and for family literacy. An ESOL summer school had 45 learners, and 131 adults were enrolled on ESOL classes. The college is expanding its workplace provision, providing both ESOL and basic skills courses in local bakeries. Provision for health workers is being developed with a local health trust. Additional support with basic skills and ESOL is provided through individual tuition and in lessons. At the time of the inspection, 145 young people and 21 adults were receiving this support.

Achievement and standards

135. Pass rates are high for most qualifications. Key skills pass rates exceed national averages. Wordpower level 2 and ESOL courses also have high pass rates. Retention rates are high on key skills level 2 and wordpower level 2 courses. Both retention and pass rates on numeracy stage 2 dropped below the national average in 2002. Students are positive on their decision to study literacy and numeracy. Adults who previously did not succeed at school are gaining new skills and confidence. Attendance at observed classes was satisfactory at 82%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Key skills numeracy	1	No. of starts	44	9	18
		% retention	82	88	61
		% pass rate	91	100	50
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	17	112	212
		% retention	88	97	80
		% pass rate	93	94	67
Key skills communication	1	No. of starts	24	92	206
		% retention	92	98	73
		% pass rate	95	96	46
English for speakers of other languages	2	No. of starts	28	14	*
		% retention	100	100	*
		% pass rate	57	86	*
Key skills communication	2	No. of starts	*	187	248
		% retention	*	99	87
		% pass rate	*	93	91
Key skills application of number	2	No. of starts	*	192	268
		% retention	*	99	92
		% pass rate	*	76	63
Wordpower	2	No. of starts	80	35	11
		% retention	87	69	91
		% pass rate	88	87	80

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

136. There is much good teaching and learning. Teachers provide good explanations and worked examples of questions. Students enjoy lessons and make good progress. On adult basic skills, ESOL courses and in learning support lessons, teachers plan well for individuals' needs. In a very good mathematics workshop, students were working on individual tasks using materials appropriate to their needs. Qualifications are tailored to individuals' requirements. ESOL students receive lively and engaging teaching; there is a good mix of work whether in pairs, individually or as a whole group. However, the pace of learning is too slow in some lessons for full-time students.

137. Staff are committed to their work and relate well to students. Many are well qualified, but some vocational staff teaching literacy and numeracy on full-time courses lack specialist training in the basic skills curriculum. This hampers detailed planning. There is insufficient use of computers for literacy and numeracy teaching, which reduces opportunities to motivate students and to respond to their varied learning styles. Oral feedback is used well to guide and encourage students on all courses. Good use is made of marked drafts of students' work on adult basic education courses to improve the quality of the final piece. Good written feedback on an ESOL course combined correction of errors with positive comments and focused advice.

138. Students are well supported. There is good use of learning support assistants for classroom support. They have a positive impact on learning, keeping students on track and giving their individual attention. There are good arrangements to support late starters on full-time courses and students with identified risk factors. There are clear and well understood procedures for addressing lateness and absence. Initial assessment is used for all full-time and many part-time students. In some courses, the results contribute to detailed individual learning plans, but this good practice is not applied consistently in all courses. Students identified as needing basic skills support receive good teaching from specialists in the learning centre. They appreciate the support they receive but some would like more time. Students found admissions advice and information helpful.

Leadership and management

139. Management is good at team level. Regular and informative meetings are held with different staff groups. Cross-college management of basic skills is not yet fully organised. A co-ordinating group has been established and there is an agreed development plan. Work has begun on the essential skills for work pilot scheme, which involves different teams looking at the teaching of basic skills for full-time students. This development is a positive move towards sharing good practice. There are clearly defined and well-understood procedures for self-assessment. Good use is made of data and national averages to set targets and judge progress.

Part D: College data

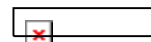
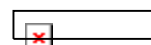


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18	19+
1	26	56
2	31	20
3	12	9
4/5	0	3
Other	31	12
Total	100	100

Source: Provided by the college in 2002

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments %
Science	819	1,581	10
Agriculture	1	147	1
Construction	328	548	4
Engineering	284	746	4
Business	260	3,007	14
Hotel and catering	352	1,545	8
Health and community care	1,607	3,277	20
Art and design	576	3,932	19
Humanities	1,546	2,625	17
Basic education	43	637	3
Total	5,816	18,045	100

Source: Provided by the college in 2002

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
1	Starters excluding transfers	631	469	234	1,440	1,243	1,131
	Retention rate	73	79	73	76	74	61
	National average	81	80	79	79	79	77
	Pass rate	61	69	82	75	84	81
	National average	60	65	69	61	65	68
2	Starters excluding transfers	856	816	591	1,133	1,302	1,112
	Retention rate	80	79	72	76	76	73
	National average	76	77	76	80	79	78
	Pass rate	65	75	81	68	74	76
	National average	65	66	69	62	65	70
3	Starters excluding transfers	504	483	398	888	990	882
	Retention rate	75	79	69	78	74	73
	National average	75	76	78	79	79	79

	Pass rate	71	68	84	68	74	86
	National average	73	75	77	63	66	70
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	39	7	3	229	222	115
	Retention rate	79	71	*	82	62	64
	National average	84	80	83	84	80	84
	Pass rate	26	100	*	70	61	55
	National average	65	65	57	58	57	54

Note: Summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary colleges or sixth form colleges)

**numbers too low to provide a valid calculation
Sources of information:*

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

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

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	61	31	8	79
Level 2 (intermediate)	68	23	9	66
Level 1 (foundation)	64	32	4	44
Other sessions	82	14	4	28
Totals	66	27	7	217

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