



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Hopwood Hall 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](#)

[Science and mathematics](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Business and administration](#)

[Information and communications technology](#)

[Hospitality, sports and travel](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

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

[Childcare](#)

[Visual and performing arts and media](#)

[Humanities](#)

[English for speakers of other languages](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

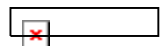
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

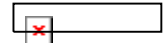
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

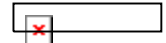


Name of college:	Hopwood Hall
Type of college:	General Further Education/Tertiary College
Principal:	Michele Sutton
Address of college:	Rochdale Road Middleton M24 6XH
Telephone number:	0161 643 7560
Fax number:	0161 643 2114
Chair of governors:	David Bartlett
Unique reference number:	130507
Name of reporting inspector:	Ruth James HMI
Dates of inspection:	24 November-5 December 2003

Part A: Summary



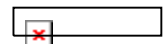
Information about the college



Hopwood Hall College was opened in September 1990 as the tertiary college for the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale. It has two main sites. The Rochdale campus is situated in the town centre of the borough and is a compact site delivering mainly vocational programmes. The Middleton campus is situated five miles to the south of Rochdale centre and close to Middleton. It stands in a 75-acre rural site and provides both academic and specialist vocational and sports-related training. Around 40 community venues are also used by the college. The Rochdale Metropolitan Borough of 205,357 residents is mostly an urban environment with over 5,000 largely small-scale companies providing employment which is typical of the North West. Engineering, textiles, retail and distribution industries are the largest employers, together with health and education in the public sector.

In 2002/03, there were 2,360 students aged 16 to 18, of whom the majority (1,974) were full time. There were 5,996 adult students, of whom the majority (3,939) were part time. The college offers courses in all areas of learning. There is a joint Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in early years and childcare with Bury College. Overall, 46% of all students were male and 54% female. For students aged 16 to 18, the respective proportions were 51% male and 49% female. 44% of adult students were male and 56% female and 18% of students were of minority ethnic origin. There is a growing number of international students (120 at the time of the inspection) coming mainly from China, Hong Kong and South East Asia. Within the college, there is a high level of commitment to promoting equality and diversity, reflecting the level of disadvantage in the community it serves. The college's mission is to provide 'the widest of range of quality education and training to learners in the borough of Rochdale and beyond to ensure they achieve their individual, educational and employment goals, whilst meeting the skills needs of the region.'

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged provision to be good in seven of the curriculum areas inspected, and satisfactory in five. The college's main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- good leadership

- much good teaching and learning

- high pass and retention rates for many courses

- effective strategies to widen participation
- good provision for English for speakers of other languages
- good support for students
- extensive community links
- wide range of provision for young people aged 14 to 16
- broad and responsive range of courses
- good resources for sport.

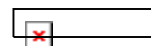
What should be improved

- some inaccuracies in management information
- low achievements for work-based learning
- unsatisfactory teaching in hospitality
- insufficient analysis of weaknesses in the self-assessment report
- low pass rates for level 1 courses for adults
- insufficient literacy and numeracy provision

- weak management of key skills.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

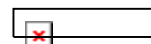


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Retention rates for many advanced level courses are high but pass rates for most General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses are low. There are high pass rates for free-standing mathematics units. Some teaching in mathematics, chemistry and human biology is very good. Attendance and punctuality are poor, and quality assurance is ineffective.
Engineering	Good. Retention and pass rates on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation and national diploma courses are high. There is good development of engineering skills. The enrichment programme is effective and support for students is good. Theory teaching lacks variety and challenge and full-time students do not have work experience.
Business and administration	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high for some courses, but low for others. Retention rates for most courses are high. Progression to higher level courses and to employment is good. Support for students is good. There is insufficient good teaching, and attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory in some lessons.
Information and communications technology	Good. There is much good teaching and learning and students develop good occupational skills. Retention rates are high. Support for students is good. There is a wide range of courses which meets community needs. Pass rates for several courses are declining and for key skills they are low.
Hospitality, sports and travel	Satisfactory. Pass rates for GNVQ foundation leisure and tourism and first diploma in sport are high. Pass rates for GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) physical education and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) leisure and recreation are low. Retention rates for some courses are low. Resources for sport are good. There are effective strategies to widen participation in sport and good support for students. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching of practical skills in hospitality.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Pass rates for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 1 hairdressing and NVQ level 3 beauty therapy are high, but for NVQ

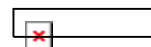
	level 2 beauty therapy they are low. There is much good teaching and development of students' occupational skills. Resources and support for students are good. Curriculum management is effective. There are too few clients in college salons.
Health, social care and public services	Good. There are high pass rates on many courses. Retention rates are low and declining for GNVQ foundation and the certificate in counselling. Some pass rates were low in 2003. There is much good teaching, and good development of skills for employment. Progression is good, and there are productive links with community providers. Some aspects of management are weak for some courses.
Childcare	Good. There are high pass rates on most courses and much teaching is good. Support for students is good and progression is excellent. Learning resources are good and there are effective links with external agencies and providers. Pass rates for the diploma in childcare and education declined in 2003.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates for GCE AS fine art are high. There are low retention rates and low pass rates on some courses. Much teaching is good and there are extensive resources in art and design. Formative assessment is good and enrichment is effective. Students' drawing skills are underdeveloped at advanced level. Some accommodation is unsuitable.
Humanities	Good. There are high pass rates for General certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and GCE A-level psychology. Much teaching is good and the pastoral system is very good. There are declining pass rates for part-time GCE A-level students. Access to audio visual facilities is limited. Curriculum leadership and management are good.
English for speakers of other languages	Good. Teaching is very good and students achieve well in spoken skills tests. Retention rates were high in 2003. Students' information technology (IT) and language skills are integrated and developed. Widening participation strategies are effective. There are insufficient audio-visual and information and communications technology (ICT) resources and some inadequate recording of progress.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. There are good teaching and learning in key skills at level 1. Staff development has improved teaching and learning. Students' support needs are diagnosed well, but some literacy and numeracy needs are not met. There is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT). There is too little discrete basic skills provision.

How well is the college led and managed?



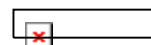
Leadership and management are good. Most student achievement and retention rates are high and most teaching and learning are good. Governors and senior managers have set a clear strategic direction for the college, achieved through implementation plans. There is a high level of staff involvement in strategic planning and course review. Improvements in the quality of provision are assisted by effective setting and monitoring of targets. The college has strong local links and partnerships. There are thorough arrangements to promote equality of opportunity and diversity. Communications are good throughout the college. The college has sound finances and maintains a high level of investment in the development of its accommodation and resources. Some aspects of self-assessment lack sufficient analysis of weaknesses and management information reports occasionally lack clarity and accuracy. The management of hospitality provision is unsatisfactory.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



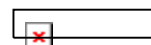
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. There is a high level of commitment to promoting equality and diversity. The college has a well thought out community development strategy and maintains strong links with the local race equality council. Challenging targets are set to raise the profile and improve the college's responsiveness to diversity. Staff and students have comprehensive equal opportunities and diversity briefings. The college has many initiatives to address equality and diversity issues, including strategies to increase progression rates of minority ethnic students to higher education (HE) and better access for those with mobility difficulties. The college has strong links with local schools. Around 400 pupils, aged 14 to 16 from local schools are studying at the college. The college is fulfilling its duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (SENDA). The college offers a broad range of community provision in 41 community venues. There is insufficient discrete literacy and numeracy provision.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. Students receive clear information and helpful guidance before and during enrolment. They are assessed to determine additional learning support needs using appropriate initial and further diagnostic testing. Induction is effective for full-time students. Students are made aware of the wide range of support services available, including careers, confidential counselling, social and welfare, and financial assistance. There is a well-developed tutorial programme across the college and all students have scheduled tutorial sessions that include group, small group and individual reviews. There is good tutorial support documentation that provides guidance to tutors and records students' progress. Students place a high value on the support they receive from both specialist support staff and teachers. Bursaries are available to assist students. Some students who need additional literacy and numeracy support do not receive it quickly enough. Requests for financial assistance from a small minority of students are not dealt with swiftly.

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

- supportive, friendly teachers

- high level of support

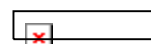
- good teaching
- friendly, adult atmosphere
- good computer facilities
- good opportunities to study locally, both at college and in the community
- regular reviews of progress
- opportunities to express their views
- teachers' availability outside lessons
- good induction which helps students to settle into college.

What they feel could be improved

- choice, quality and cost of food
- car parking at the Rochdale campus
- lack of social areas
- too few private study facilities
- unreliable lifts at the Rochdale campus

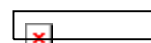
- o induction for part-time students
- o lack of bus service between campuses
- o lack of access to enrichment activities for some students.

Other information

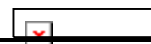


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

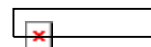


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	68	25	7
19+ and WBL*	70	27	3
Learning 16-18	64	29	7
19+ and WBL*	68	30	2

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. Data on students' achievements were provided by the LSC for 2001 and 2002, and by the college for 2003.

16 to 18 year olds

2. Enrolments for long courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were 1,092, 1,416 and 2,280, respectively, in 2001/02. For short courses the figure was 541. Retention rates for long courses at levels 1 and 2 were broadly in line with the national averages for colleges with a high widening participation factor between 2001 and 2003. At level 3, retention rates were above national average in 2001 and 2003, but low in 2002. Retention rates for short courses are consistently high, placing the college in the top 25% of similar colleges for this measure in 2002. Pass rates for long courses at levels 1 and 2 were consistently above national averages between 2000 and 2002, placing the college in the top 25% of colleges for level 1, and the top 10% for level 2 in 2002. At level 3, pass rates have been consistently high. For example, in 2002 the overall pass rate was 9% above national average. In both 2001 and 2002, the college was in the top 10% of similar colleges for level 3 pass rates. In 2003, the overall pass rate fell, but still remained above national average. Short course pass rates have generally been significantly above national averages, and in 2002 the college was in the top 25% of similar colleges for this measure. Value added data shows that overall GCE A-level students do better than would be expected on the basis of their prior attainment at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Progression to higher level further education (FE) courses, employment and HE is good.

3. Many students on vocational courses make good progress to develop appropriate skills. On engineering competence courses, students are able to use machine tools and bench fitting skills to manufacture complex components well. Electrical engineering students install and terminate cables particularly effectively. Foundation level motor vehicle students are able to carry out basic vehicle maintenance tasks. Level 1 beauty therapy students can carry out treatments on face and hands after only eight weeks on their course, and give detailed and accurate explanations for their choice of techniques and products. The work produced by graphic design students is good, and students are skilled in their use of software packages. Childcare students develop good interpersonal and vocational skills in the workplace. Many students also develop the ability to analyse and evaluate and are able to apply their knowledge effectively. Students on performing arts courses develop appropriate skills in assessing their own and others' performances and are able to make astute observations. Music students are knowledgeable and develop good analytical skills. In business, students demonstrate good application of theory by suggesting strategies to improve business communications. A student on a computing course used his skills to design a learning aid for a nephew. Sports students show proficiency in movement analysis and in the execution of practical skills. Travel students have good awareness of the travel and tourism industry and use resources well to research information. There are also many examples of individual achievements. Seven students achieved awards in the United Kingdom mathematical trust senior challenge in 2003. Two students from the pre-uniformed services courses were awarded 'best recruit' of their respective armed forces intake. However, there are also examples of poor skills development. Hospitality students have unsatisfactory occupational skills. Some students are poor at peeling and cutting vegetables. In art and design, the standard of the observational drawing and life drawing produced on some level 3 courses is unsatisfactory. Engineering students' drawing and presentation skills are poor.

4. The number of work-based learners who successfully complete all aspects of the framework is low. Between 1999 and 2003, only 31% of those who started their learning programme completed successfully. The overall retention rate for work-based learners, during the period between 1999 and 2003, was 59%.

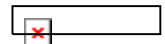
Adult learners

5. Enrolments for long courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were 1,197, 1,705 and 1,264, respectively, in 2001/02. For short courses, the figure was 4,230. Retention rates for long level 1 courses were in line with national average between 2000 and 2002 and improved to a high figure in 2003. At level 2, retention rates are consistently high, and in 2002 the college was in the top 25% of similar colleges for this measure. At level 3, retention rates are generally in line with national averages. Short courses, with the greatest number of enrolments, have high retention rates. In 2002, the college was in the top 10% for this measure. Pass rates for long courses at level 1 are low. At level 2, pass rates were high between 2000 and 2002. For level 3, pass rates improved between 2000 and 2002 and were well above national averages for each of the three years. In 2001 and 2002, the college was in the top 10% of similar colleges for both level 2 and level 3 pass rates. The pass rate for level 3 fell in 2003, but remained in line with national average. Short course pass rates were high between 2000 and 2003 placing the college in the top 10% in 2002. Around a third of the college's small number of Jobcentre Plus clients have moved into employment.

6. Accountancy students confidently participate in lessons by suggesting data for inclusion into an extended trial balance. Adult management students can effectively apply quality assurance concepts to resolve issues in the workplace. A student on a computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) course used her spreadsheet skills to support her new business. Students on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses work well to extend their familiarity with written and spoken English and take part in discussions particularly effectively. Students make good progress in developing their personal, social as well as their language and ICT skills.

7. Twelve teachers at the college, including eight from a minority ethnic background, are former students of the college. Some 90% of the successful level 3 access students in 2003 progressed to university. Two access students won celebration awards presented by the local open college network. A secretarial student was awarded the gold award in the diploma for executive secretaries.

Quality of education and training



8. Most teaching and learning are good or better. Inspectors observed 265 lessons and visited 12 workplaces to interview work-based learners and employers to assess the standards of teaching, training and learning. Table 4 in Part D shows, 69% of teaching was good or better, 25% was satisfactory and 6% was less than satisfactory. This compares with an average of 63%, 30% and 7%, respectively, for all general FE and tertiary colleges inspected during 2002/03. The profile of grades for learning was slightly different. In 65% of lessons, learning was good or better, in 29% it was satisfactory and in 6% it was less than satisfactory.

9. Teaching on courses for adults was better than on courses for students aged 16 to 18. In 76% of adult lessons, teaching was good or better and in 3% it was less than satisfactory, compared with 68% and 7%, respectively, for students aged 16 to 18. Full-time teachers provide a higher standard of teaching than part-time teachers. In lessons taught by full-time teachers, 71% of the teaching was good or better and 5% was less than satisfactory. For part-time teachers, 60% of the teaching was good and 11% was less than satisfactory. The highest proportions of good or better teaching were found in ESOL, humanities and childcare. The lowest proportions of good or better teaching were found in business and administration, and literacy and numeracy. The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was found in hospitality where a third of lessons were unsatisfactory.

10. The best lessons are thoroughly planned by teachers. Lesson plans and schemes of work are comprehensive and link effectively to awarding body syllabuses. Teachers use a variety of effective teaching and learning methods, which take into careful account the full ability range of students and their preferred learning styles. There is regular use of questioning to check students' understanding. ESOL teachers use their thorough understanding of students' backgrounds and faiths to prepare

very good lessons, which are both culturally sensitive, celebrate diversity and improve language skills. Classroom management by humanities teachers is good. In engineering and hairdressing and beauty therapy lessons, teachers provide good demonstrations of vocational skills to strengthen students' occupational competences. ICT is used to develop students' learning skills effectively by mathematics and ESOL teachers. In literacy lessons for Jobcentre Plus, teachers are able to develop clients' grammar skills well. In theory lessons for work-based learning, teachers provide learners with good individual support.

11. In the small minority of unsatisfactory lessons, teachers use an inadequate range of teaching and learning methods and do not take sufficient account of the individual learning needs of students. Students find lessons dull and are not stimulated to learn. There is insufficient use of questioning to check understanding. In some lessons in mathematics and science and business and administration, students who are more able are not provided with work which challenges and extends their knowledge and skills. In hospitality, the unsatisfactory planning and teaching of practical work prevents students acquiring good occupational competences. In some numeracy lessons, teachers do not explain adequately what they are doing.

12. Most curriculum areas have sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff. Nine tenths of full-time and two thirds of part-time teachers hold a relevant teaching qualification. The college makes good use of part-time teachers to bring current commercial practice to learning, particularly the specialist coaches in sport and the practising artists in visual arts. The college works successfully with other regional colleges to attract teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds. Incentive payments help to recruit staff for hard to fill posts. Induction for staff is effective. The strong staff development programme includes training for teaching and literacy and numeracy support and for the college's quality assurance system.

13. The college's range of accommodation and resources is appropriate for the provision it offers. Sports facilities are good, especially for boxing. Apart from a few areas, the college is accessible to students with mobility difficulties. In some areas, students' work is well displayed, but in others there are few displays of work or celebration of students' achievements. In addition to the two main campuses at Rochdale and Middleton, the college also uses 40 local community venues. A major programme of building has recently started at the Middleton campus.

14. The two learning resource centres, one on each campus, have a range of satisfactory printed and e-learning materials. Access to the Internet is good, but some books are no longer relevant. Most teaching materials are satisfactory or good, although the quality of presentation is variable. The college IT network extends to all community learning venues. Students appreciate the good ICT facilities. The ratio of computers to students and staff is high. However, there are some staffrooms where the ratio of computers is causing some accessibility problems. There are insufficient computers in classrooms. During the inspection, there was insufficient use of ILT and audio visual equipment.

15. Assessment is well organised and planned effectively. Most curriculum areas provide students with detailed assessment schemes. There is careful monitoring of assessment by curriculum managers. Assessment and monitoring are less effective on ESOL programmes where there is insufficient recording of students' progress. Occasionally a shortage of assessors has hindered students' progress towards their NVQ qualification. Internal verification is generally effective. There is useful feedback from internal verifiers to assessors on assessment practice. Managers and staff regularly review assessment and internal verification procedures to take account of guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and awarding bodies. Reports from external verifiers and moderators are mostly positive.

16. Assignment briefs are clear. Teachers carefully explain the briefs and marking criteria to students. Occasionally students find the jargon in some briefs difficult to follow. Teachers provide students with regular and timely written and verbal feedback on assignments. Some feedback is detailed and constructive, while occasionally it is too minimal to be of use to students. In some cases, teachers do not correct poor spelling and grammar. Marking is fair and accurate and there is effective moderation of marked work. The appeals' process allows for re-marking by an independent marker. Tutors are good at providing students with effective reviews of progress and establishing

action plans to improve their performance. Teachers use the results from initial assessment to identify students' preferred learning styles and this information is used to plan learning in many areas.

17. The college offers a broad and useful range of mainly vocational courses to meet the needs of most students and employers. Courses range from pre-entry to level 4 and allow students to progress and build effectively on prior levels of attainment. There are effective initiatives to increase provision for young people and adults who are not traditionally represented in FE. There is good range of ESOL and ICT courses for a wide variety of local groups, which include minority ethnic communities, single parent groups and tenants associations. The college listens carefully to the needs of these groups and provides courses that are culturally and religiously acceptable. There are some imaginative projects to attract those hard to reach, for example by providing sport for women. The college provides an extensive range of enrichment activities for students. This includes residential team building courses, visits to employers and HE providers, and cultural events and a programme of sports and recreational activities.

18. In a number of curriculum areas, the links with employers are good. There are close working relationships with employers to provide work-based learning in construction, motor vehicle engineering, and hair and beauty. Work experience is a key part of some full-time programmes, but it is not provided for engineering students. In health and social care, there are well-established work placements in primary schools, nurseries, residential and nursing homes and the National Health Service (NHS). In ICT and engineering, employer links are underdeveloped. Collaboration with other local and regional providers of education and training is strong. The partnership with the local education authority and secondary schools has developed a range of good provision for pupils aged 14 to 16. Over 400 pupils from 14 local schools are on courses, many leading to vocational qualifications. These include manufacturing, engineering and childcare. Some of the teaching is innovative. For example, in engineering, a hot water powered model boat is used to teach basic fabrication and soldering skills.

19. There are weaknesses in the management and co-ordination of key skills and key skills achievements are poor. There is initial assessment to establish key skills levels and requirements and many students are successful in external key skills tests. However, many fail to complete their coursework and do not gain the qualification. The college has a specialist team to manage the provision across the curriculum areas. Curriculum area teachers provide the key skills teaching and learning. The college has started actions to resolve weaknesses in key skills but it is too early to judge their impact.

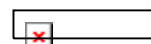
20. The college provides a high standard of information to potential students on the courses it offers. There are clear and easy to understand entry conditions and application procedures. Impartial advice and guidance ensure potential students enrol on the appropriate course and level. To help potential student make the correct course decision, the college visits local schools to explain its provision. There is a wide range of taster days and courses with curriculum activities and visits to college facilities so potential students are fully informed about what the college can provide. Summer courses and specialist classes in specific curriculum areas are also available during school holidays. Most students find that induction settles them into their course well. Students proposing to move to HE are provided with a range of services that helps them progress effectively. Students wanting to enter employment or further their training are provided with guidance on modern apprenticeships and local and national employment opportunities.

21. There is a well-established tutorial programme. Most tutorials are good or better. There is good tutorial support documentation which provides guidance to tutors and records students' progress. Some tutors do not always complete this documentation. Communications between subject teachers and tutors is good. Teachers keep tutors well informed about students' progress. Tutors monitor attendance and punctuality. Actions are taken if punctuality and attendance are unsatisfactory. Parents and employees are kept well informed of student progress and achievement. The diagnosis of additional support needs is good. All students have an initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills. There is further diagnostic testing for those identified as needing additional support. There has been some delay in providing additional literacy and numeracy support due to staff shortages. Support arrangements for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

are good and include signers, care and support workers and specialist equipment. The support team is experienced and well qualified.

22. Students appreciate the college's well-managed range of support and guidance arrangements. These include childcare, confidential counselling, social and welfare and financial support. Bursaries are available to students to assist in the purchase of clothing and equipment. However, in a small minority of cases, there have been delays in responding to requests for financial support and the initial assessment interview.

Leadership and management



23. Leadership and management are good. Senior managers are successful at maintaining most pass and retention rates at a high level and providing students with good quality teaching and learning. Occasionally they have been less successful. For example, the pass rates for adult students at level 1 have been below the national average for the last three years and there is too much unsatisfactory teaching in hospitality.

24. Governors and senior management have set a clear mission and strategy for the college. This is monitored regularly and updated annually. Governors, managers and staff are fully aware of the college's strategic priorities. The strategic plan has a clear set of values. The values cover equality of opportunities, mutual respect, honesty, openness and trust, celebration of success and innovation. The strategic plan is succinct and has clear quantifiable targets which takes careful account of the local social and economic requirements and learning and training needs. To meet these needs, the plan emphasises the importance of maintaining and developing the curriculum areas for early years, ICT, graphics and new media, teacher education, provision for pupils aged 14 to 16, and work-based learning. Detailed implementation plans with measurable milestones and clear responsibilities helps achieve strategic targets.

25. The college has strong and extensive partnerships with the local community. There are good external links with local schools, HE providers, local businesses and communities, the local learning partnership, Connexions service and the Rochdale strategic redevelopment partnership. The principal is a member of many of the boards of these organisations. College managers and staff also work with these organisations to help the college maintain effective links with all sections of the community. These links help the college to plan and provide provision, which in most areas is particularly responsive to the requirements of local organisations, businesses and communities.

26. The college has a clear management structure and most staff are aware of their responsibilities. Regular timely meetings at all levels, effective college briefings and an informative monthly newsletter to staff and students maintain good communications throughout the college. The college has recently updated its corporate policies. Some, such as the financial policy, are detailed and comprehensive, while others lack sufficient information to provide effective guidance.

27. Overall, curriculum management is good in seven of the inspected areas and satisfactory in the others. Curriculum managers mostly manage teaching and learning effectively and have a clear focus on pass and retention rates. Managers have thorough understanding and share the values of the college. Most communicate with their staff well and share examples of good practice. Managers, with their staff, plan the curriculum effectively for most areas of learning. There are some deficiencies in curriculum management. For example, insufficient successful action to raise pass and retention rates for work-based learning, a slow response to changes in awarding body criteria in health and social care and, in hospitality, the failure to appreciate the lack of effective teaching of practical skills.

28. The self-assessment process is thorough. Most of the college's key strengths and weaknesses are identified. Students and staff are fully involved in detailed course reviews which inform the self-

assessment process. There is a thorough process of validation of the self-assessment report involving governors, managers and staff. The data used to inform the self-assessment process are not always accurate. The self-assessment report is long and has extensive commentary on key strengths, but insufficient analysis of key weaknesses.

29. The setting and monitoring of targets are effective. There is a broad range of realistic and challenging targets for enrolment, retention and pass rates, progression, attendance, punctuality, staff training, employer engagement and equality and diversity. The achievement of targets is carefully monitored; most targets are met. When they are not, reasons are sought for the cause of the lack of success and further actions are established to resolve the issue.

30. The quality of staff appraisal is varied. Senior management appraisals are thorough and closely link to the college's strategic objectives and implementation plans. Some other appraisals, however, lack adequate quantifiable objectives, and do not distinguish clearly between objectives and staff development needs.

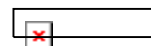
31. The college is good at widening participation and promoting equality and diversity. It has strong links with the local race equality council. An equality and diversity group, chaired by the principal, and a disabled access working party meet regularly. These groups consider a broad range of topics and monitor college performance against equality and diversity targets. For example, the equality and diversity group has recently discussed the organisation of residential events to ensure they meet the needs of minority ethnic student groups, in particular Asian women. The college provides staff and students with comprehensive equality of opportunities and diversity briefings. For example, the college has provided useful information to staff and students on Ramadan and Eid. The college has a broad range of initiatives to promote equality and diversity. These include a strategy to increase the number of students from minority ethnic groups progressing to HE. Another initiative has been the successful recruitment of staff from minority ethnic backgrounds. The college meets the requirements of the SENDA and the Race Relations Amendment Act.

32. Financial management is good. The college has a sound financial position. There is effective and efficient deployment of resources. The college has maintained a major programme of investment in resources. These include significant development in accommodation and equipment in sport, relocating and re-equipping performing arts, upgrading residential accommodation and investment in ILT. There are termly meetings between finance team and budget holders to review the use of resources. The college offers good value for money.

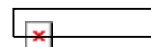
33. The college has established arrangements to collect and provide data on students. This includes information on gender, ethnicity, starts, withdrawals and pass and retention rates. Reports from these data are used to show students' performances for each curriculum area. Most managers use this information to monitor and analyse the performance of students and help them develop actions to improve pass and retention rates. However, during the inspection, some information held by a few curriculum areas lacked clarity and was insufficiently accurate to provide curriculum managers with robust information on the student pass rates.

34. Governors are highly committed. They are well informed about the college's key strengths and weaknesses. They bring a mix of good skills to the work of the corporation and its committees. The college has carried out a skills analysis of the governing body to identify the appropriate skills for new board members. Governors have a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and management. There is a strong and open relationship and links between governors and senior managers. Both understand fully their respective roles.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention rates for many advanced level courses
- high pass rates for free-standing mathematics units
- very good teaching in mathematics, chemistry and human biology.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for most GCE A-level courses
- low attendance and poor punctuality at the start of the day
- ineffective quality assurance practices.

Scope of provision

35. The college offers a range of GCE AS and A-level courses including biology, human biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. Other courses include GCSE single-award science and mathematics, open college mathematics units (levels 1 and 2), free standing mathematics units (level 1) and life sciences modules which are part of the college's access to HE provision for adults. There are no vocational courses in science. Most science and mathematics students are aged 16 to 18 and attend the college on a full-time basis. There are 276 enrolments on GCE AS and A-level courses and 165 on GCSE courses. Some 28 students are studying for free-standing mathematics units.

Achievement and standards

36. There are high retention rates on many advanced level courses including GCE AS and A-level physics and mathematics, and GCE A-level biology. For 2003, the average retention rates for these courses was 90% for GCE AS, and 100% for the second year of the GCE A level. Retention rates for GCSE courses were also high in 2003, and A* to C pass rates were above national averages. Pass rates for the level 1 free-standing mathematics units are also significantly above national averages,

reaching 97% in 2003. The pass rates for most advanced level courses were low in 2003. For example, in 2003, pass rates for GCE AS biology and GCE A-level chemistry, physics and mathematics were well below national averages. The quality of students' work is generally satisfactory. There are examples of very good individual achievement. In the United Kingdom mathematical trust senior mathematical challenge 2003, one student qualified for the British Mathematics Olympiad and seven others achieved awards, two gold, two silver and three bronze. Attendance during the inspection was low, at 68%.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Free standing mathematics units	1	No. of starts	*	62	86
		% retention	*	52	80
		% pass rate	*	81	97
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	191	155	194
		% retention	62	61	77
		% pass rate	44	31	45
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	96	102	134
		% retention	68	68	84
		% pass rate	40	61	49
GCE A-level chemistry and physics	3	No. of starts	56	17	24
		% retention	39	94	96
		% pass rate	77	94	78
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	54	**	28
		% retention	44	**	100
		% pass rate	71	**	68
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	57	22	55
		% retention	75	41	76
		% pass rate	53	89	43
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	23	26	37
		% retention	65	77	89
		% pass rate	73	60	73

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course not offered

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Note - retention rate for GCE A-level courses measured over two years in 2001, but over one year in 2002 and 2003

Quality of education and training

37. Most teaching is satisfactory or better and there is some very good teaching in mathematics, chemistry and human biology. In a GCE AS human biology lesson, the teacher's enthusiastic delivery engaged students in learning particularly effectively. Good use was made of questions to named individuals and a mix of theory, practical and discussion activities enabled students to relate

enzyme function to protein structure. In a GCE A-level mathematics lesson, students tested their theoretical centre of mass predictions by performing simple experiments on bridges. In mathematics lessons, computers are used effectively. For example, in a level 1 mathematics lesson, students learning about value added tax and true costs reinforced their classwork with individual computer work. In advanced level lessons, groups with a range of cultural backgrounds are focused, enthusiastic and self-disciplined. Teachers respond well to the needs of students for whom English is not the first language. For example, they carefully explain new, difficult words or technical terms and take account of the different preferred learning styles of students from different cultural backgrounds.

38. Some lessons, however, are unsatisfactory. In one GCSE science lesson, there was inadequate planning and the teacher allowed some students to dominate while others were distracted. The pace was slow and insufficiently challenging. Low attendance and poor punctuality hinder learning. In one lesson, the teacher stopped to recap on information previously covered on four occasions to accommodate late arrivals, frustrating those students present at the start. There is insufficient use of ILT in science.

39. Science laboratories are equipped with appropriate subject-specific resources. Rooms are bright and spacious, although some are in need of refurbishment. Laboratory and corridor walls have science-related posters on display. There are small amounts of students' work on show in biology and chemistry laboratories, but no examples are displayed in physics laboratories. Technician support is good. Laboratories are clean and tidy and there is good attention to health and safety. Staff are suitably qualified. ILT facilities in science are inadequate. There are individual computers in a minority of laboratories, but little use is made of these. There is insufficient access to IT teaching rooms. There is no up-to-date science software and many textbooks are out of date.

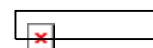
40. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed at the beginning of their course and support is provided where necessary. Some teachers make use of initial assessment information in planning lessons. Practical experiments, coursework and past exam questions are all used appropriately for assessment. Students' work is marked thoroughly and teachers give constructive feedback. Value added data is used in individual reviews to set targets, but it is not used by subject teachers in monitoring student progress, for example, in the formal twice-yearly subject reviews.

41. Appropriate advice is given to students before enrolment. Induction is effective. Personal tutorials, particularly individual reviews, are valued by students who also appreciate the strong emphasis on equal opportunities and the cultural diversity at the college. Teachers provide much informal support. Some students with specific learning difficulties experience delays in receiving the support they need. There is a lack of rigour in monitoring attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

42. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff understand the mission of the college and share its values. The promotion of equality and diversity is effective. There are appropriate staff development opportunities. Student induction is well managed. Effective curriculum developments include the introduction of free standing mathematics units which develop students' interest in mathematics by giving learning a more practical relevance. Some quality assurance practices are ineffective. Not all teachers are observed regularly. Some teaching staff do not use lesson plans and there is insufficient sharing of good practice. The self-assessment process lacks rigour and the report fails to identify major strengths and weaknesses in retention and pass rates. Staff appraisals also lack rigour.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on national diploma and gnvq foundation courses

- good development of engineering skills

- good assessment practice in work-based learning

- effective programme of enrichment

- effective individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- lack of variety and challenge in theory teaching

- no work experience for full-time students.

Scope of provision

43. The college offers a range of courses at different levels. At the time of the inspection, there were 118 students on full-time courses, the majority aged 16 to 18. These courses include foundation and intermediate GNVQs in engineering, national diploma in engineering, computer maintenance, an entry level motor vehicle course and a level 1 motor vehicle course. Part-time courses include national certificates in electrical and electronic engineering and in mechanical and production engineering, City and Guilds awards in mechanical production competences, computer-aided design, motor vehicle progression awards at levels 1, 2 and 3 and a motor vehicle certificate of management course. For those in the motor vehicle industry, NVQs at levels 2 and 3 are offered. HE courses are also available. Additional supplementary qualifications are available for national diploma students. No specialist or bespoke courses are offered to local industry. There are 20 students on work-based motor vehicle modern apprenticeship programmes.

Achievement and standards

44. The retention and pass rates on most courses are above or close to national averages. For the GNVQ foundation engineering and for the national certificates and national diplomas in electrical and electronic and in mechanical engineering retention and pass rates are substantially above national averages. However, the pass rates for the GNVQ in intermediate manufacturing, NVQ at level 2 in vehicle mechanical and electrical systems and the City and Guilds 4351-07 course in computer-aided design have all declined significantly in 2003 from the previous year. Students achieve good standards in their practical work. Students on the City and Guilds 2280 course and the City and

Guilds 6938 engineering competence courses are able to use machine tools and bench fitting skills, to manufacture complex components to a high degree of accuracy and finish. Students on the national diploma course are able to install and terminate cables to a good standard, with an appropriate emphasis on neatness and health and safety. Foundation level motor vehicle students are able to carry out basic maintenance tasks, to a good level of competence and in a realistic time. Students' written work is often good and portfolio work is of an adequate standard. However, students' drawing and presentation skills are generally poor.

A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Awarding Body Consortium (ABC) certificate in motor vehicle studies	1	No. of starts	46	40	37
		% retention	76	92	73
		% pass rate	73	79	70
GNVQ intermediate manufacturing	2	No. of starts	**	24	25
		% retention	**	63	72
		% pass rate	**	93	61
NVQ in vehicle mechanical and electrical systems	2	No. of starts	39	29	17
		% retention	44	38	83
		% pass rate	53	73	53
City and Guilds 4351-07 computer-aided design	2	No. of starts	**	52	44
		% retention	**	94	95
		% pass rate	**	96	69
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	31	30	32
		% retention	74	70	65
		% pass rate	*	71	100
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	38	32	35
		% retention	61	75	74
		% pass rate	83	75	88

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* data unreliable

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

45. There is much good practical teaching. For example, in a GNVQ foundation engineering science lesson, students studying velocity and acceleration produced experimental data from a fixed position bicycle rig. Student participation was encouraged by the competitive elements of the activities and all were actively involved in collecting data and calculating and plotting distances, velocities and accelerations. Many practical lessons involve good development of practical engineering skills. In mechanical engineering lessons an innovative heat engine project is used to develop and assess machining and fitting skills. Students produce the components to a high standard of accuracy and finish. A similar project has been developed for fabrication and welding students and provides them with an equally challenging range of tasks. Additional lessons, by an external speaker, are used to explain the principles of operation of different types of engines. Good use is made of a college developed interactive computer programme, to explain the use of machining processes and hand tools. Many theory lessons, however, lack variety in teaching and learning activities. Too many are

teacher led and fail to interest and challenge students. Insufficient use is made of ILT to support teaching and learning.

46. Staff have appropriate teaching and professional qualifications and relevant industrial experience. There are good computer-aided design facilities and student access to computers is good in most classrooms. Teaching rooms are generally satisfactory and effective use is made of commercial display material. However, there are too few displays of students' work. The motor vehicle workshop has a large floor area, but there are insufficient vehicle lifts and modern vehicles.

47. Student progress is monitored effectively and students make good progress. Written work is marked and returned promptly and written feedback is good. Work-based learners have frequent assessment visits. Employers are appropriately involved in assessment. Internal verification is thorough and effective.

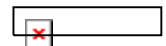
48. There is a comprehensive enrichment programme. Many students take part in sports activities. Visits are arranged to relevant exhibitions and industries. These include, for example, visits to the Manchester Velodrome to investigate the use of modern materials racing cycles. A wide range of residential activities are part of all full-time engineering programmes. These focus on team building, and include outdoor activities, water sports and skiing, as well as engineering. For example, a trip to a Paris theme park is organised to study the design and technology of adventure rides. Many of these opportunities are also available to part-time students. However, there is no work experience for full-time engineering students.

49. Teachers know their students well. They freely make themselves available to students outside of timetabled lessons. Specific individual additional support needs are met by specialist staff, working with vocational teachers in lessons. Personal tutors support their students well. In individual reviews, there is careful monitoring and effective recording of progress, and realistic learning targets are set and advice and encouragement given. Students speak very highly of, and value, this support.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are good and the curriculum is well managed. There are regular course team and section meetings. The self-assessment report is thorough and broadly accurate, although inspectors did not agree with all the strengths identified. Action is taken to resolve weaknesses. Curriculum managers recognise there are very few female engineering students. They have clear strategies aimed at improving the engineering curriculum and the image of engineering to attract a broader range of students. These include the development of the extensive variety of enrichment opportunities, additional qualifications and innovative and challenging practical activities, and new courses with joint qualifications in computer maintenance and electronics to improve the different progression options.

Business and administration



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

Strengths

- high pass rates for GNVQ foundation business and NVQ accounting level 2

- high retention rates for most courses

- good internal and external progression

- good personal support.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for GNVQ intermediate business, AVCE business (single award), GCE AS business and office procedures level 1

- insufficient good teaching

- unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality in some lessons.

Scope of provision

51. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to HE level. These are available during the day and the evening, at both campuses. Courses lead to business foundation and intermediate GNVQ, AVCE, GCE AS and GCE A-level awards and NVQs in administration from levels 1 to 3. The college has recently introduced a certificate and diploma in business administration. The well-established professional provision includes course for the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) and the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply qualifications. The college offers management and personnel courses at postgraduate level. The satisfactory range of specialist courses for employers is provided on their premises. There are just over 1,200 full-time and part-time students, of these 57% are adults.

Achievement and standards

52. For the three years to 2003, the pass rates for GNVQ business foundation were outstanding. Pass rates for NVQ accounting level 2 and the AVCE (double award) are also high. In 2003, pass rates for GNVQ business intermediate, GCE AS business, AVCE business (single award) and office procedures at level 1 were low and below the national average. Retention rates for most courses are good. Retention rates for business administration courses are significantly above the national averages. The retention rate for NVQ level 2 accounting was also above national average in 2003, but the retention rate for NVQ accounting at level 4 declined by 17% to well below the national average.

53. Most students make satisfactory progress in lessons. Their written work is satisfactory or better. In one GCSE lesson, students demonstrated good application of theory by suggesting strategies to improve business communications. Accountancy students confidently participated in lessons by suggesting data for inclusion into an extended trial balance. Adult management students can effectively apply quality assurance concepts to resolve issues in the workplace. Most students work well independently or in small groups. Progression to HE is good and many students continue to higher level qualifications at the college. One student has moved from GNVQ foundation through higher level courses to a degree course. In some lessons, students' punctuality is unsatisfactory and

attendance at lessons is 7% below the national average for this curriculum area.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business and administration, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Office procedures	1	No. of starts	**	20	17
		% retention	**	80	94
		% pass rate	**	69	44
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	20	20	18
		% retention	75	90	88
		% pass rate	80	78	47
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	34	48	34
		% retention	79	77	82
		% pass rate	81	81	82
AVCE business (single award)	3	No. of starts	*	41	62
		% retention	*	73	84
		% pass rate	*	70	42
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	42	33	42
		% retention	69	79	79
		% pass rate	62	77	56
GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	42	70	61
		% retention	81	84	92
		% pass rate	82	69	55
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	32	20	15
		% retention	88	90	73
		% pass rate	32	56	45

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course not offered or did not run

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

54. Most teaching is satisfactory. The better lesson plans make good use of students' preferred learning styles. Teachers of business administration develop students' keyboard skills well to produce work of a high standard. Students' examination techniques are developed by good use of past exam papers. There is effective use of vocationally relevant learning materials for key skills lessons. For example, an exercise in ratios involved apportioning a company's promotional budget to marketing activities. Some teaching is uninspiring and relies too much on teacher exposition at the expense of students' contributions. There is insufficient use of questioning to reinforce and check understanding. Often, students who are more able are not provided with sufficiently challenging work. In other instances, teachers do not develop students' evaluative skills and make little reference to current business issues. There is some use of ILT in a minority of lessons.

55. Most learning resources are good. Teachers hold appropriate subject and teaching qualifications. Opportunities for staff development are good, although not all staff take up the

opportunity. Learning centres provide an appropriate range of course texts. Some books are out of date. Learning resources in the curriculum area are not available to all students. Students have satisfactory access to computers for private study. However, in one adult class, students were encouraged to use colour to design a cash flow form, but no colour printer was available to print their work.

56. All full-time students receive a thorough initial assessment. Teachers use this to plan teaching, learning and assessment. The recording of student progress is accurate. Teachers use value added systems effectively to set targets and monitor student achievement on GCE A-level courses. Internal verification for NVQ programmes is good. There is insufficient work-based assessment by observation for NVQ administration. Written feedback to students is variable and does not always indicate how they can improve.

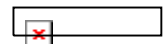
57. Progression routes within the college and to external providers are good. Links with a local university are strong and help students to progress. The college uses meeting with local employers to develop course provision. For example, some administration courses are designed to meet particular local employers' requirements. Local employers provide good opportunities for work experience. Enrichment activities for full-time students include an extensive programme of national and international external visits, sporting activities and short courses. First diploma students have undertaken a course in sign language so they can communicate more effectively with a student with hearing difficulties. Some students cannot attend some enrichment activities because of difficulties with timetables.

58. Students receive good advice and guidance about their courses and personal issues. Students speak highly of the good individual tutorial and daily support available from tutors. Students make good use of the college support arrangement and the referral system to outside agencies including Connexions. There are effective arrangements to identify students' additional learning support needs, but they do not always receive timely support. Most students receive an effective induction. This is not always the case for late starters and part-time students. Parents of full-time students aged 16 to 18 receive written reports on progress and are invited to parents' evenings. Feedback to adult students sponsored by employers is insufficient.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are involved in the self-assessment process and target setting. Communications are good. There are regular team meetings. Meetings effectively monitor key performance indicators, for example, student attendance and retention rates. Good use is made of the college intranet and e-mail. There is satisfactory informal sharing of good practice, but no formal arrangements. All staff undertake equal opportunities training, but in some instance this has not been recent

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- much good teaching and learning

- high retention rates

- good occupational skills development

- good support for students

- wide range of courses which effectively meets the needs of the diverse community.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for key skills information technology

- declining pass rates for CLAIT, IBT stage II and national diploma in computer studies.

Scope of provision

60. The college offers a wide range of ICT courses for full-time and part-time students to meet effectively the needs of the diverse community. Full-time courses in ICT include GNVQ foundation and intermediate, AVCE single and double awards, and GCE AS and A level. Other full-time courses offered are the national diploma in computer studies, City and Guilds IT practitioners and higher qualifications. There are part-time courses at entry and levels 1 and 2 offered in a significant number of locations in the local community. These include entry level ICT, CLAIT, Integrated Business Technology (IBT 2 and 3), desk-top publishing and the European computer driving licence (ECDL). Computer programming is available in the college on a part-time basis. There is also provision for young people aged 14 to 16. Many students enrolling on ICT courses each year have already successfully completed a course at the college. There are approximately 3,000 students in total, 55% of whom are women, although most of the full-time students are men.

Achievement and standards

61. There are high retention rates for most courses. For the GNVQ foundation, intermediate and AVCE in ICT both pass and retention rates are high. Retention rates are also above national averages for CLAIT, IBT 2 and the national diploma in computer studies. Pass rates for CLAIT, IBT 2 and national diploma computer studies all declined in 2003 to below national averages. Pass rates for level 2 key skills IT were low in 2002 and 2003. Most students make good progress, gaining confidence and rapidly increasing their levels of skill and knowledge. They quickly become independent and competent in the use of ICT. Students are able to apply their skills outside college. For example, a student on a CLAIT course used her spreadsheet skills to support her new business and a national diploma student used his skills to design a learning aid for a nephew. Students attend regularly and punctually. There is good progression from entry and foundation courses to FE and HE and to employment.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	20	31	32
		% retention	95	87	94
		% pass rate	89	96	87
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	460	230	155
		% retention	84	88	87
		% pass rate	54	90	56
CLAIT (1 year)	1	No. of starts	584	474	459
		% retention	76	83	84
		% pass rate	64	53	42
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	52	45	50
		% retention	81	84	92
		% pass rate	88	84	91
IBT 2	2	No. of starts	161	215	103
		% retention	79	88	88
		% pass rate	81	79	43
Key skills	2	No. of starts	992	1,284	1,301
		% retention	73	0	88
		% pass rate	77	0	5
National diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	21	21	18
		% retention	81	71	61
		% pass rate	100	80	55
GNVQ advanced/AVCE in ICT	3	No. of starts	37	55	57
		% retention	76	82	91
		% pass rate	57	76	73

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

62. Most teaching is good. There are comprehensive schemes of work which are shared across teams and reviewed regularly. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the individual learning needs and to provide challenging work for students. Teaching encourages students to become independent quickly. The pace in lessons is lively. Students have a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge they have gained at the end of each lesson. This motivates them particularly well. Many students share their knowledge with others to help advance their progress. In one lesson, students enthusiastically tackled the set tasks, determined to solve problems with the minimum of teacher involvement. In a lesson on copyright law, an enthusiastic teacher encouraged excellent debate amongst students, who asked challenging questions and undertook effective research on the internet to support the discussion.

63. Teachers assess the skills of all students on entry to ensure that they are placed on an appropriate level course. Progress is checked regularly. Assignments are interesting and relevant, and extension exercises are provided for the more able students. Assessment practice meets awarding body requirements. The quality of feedback on students' work is variable. Some teachers provide comprehensive and encouraging feedback and guidance for improvement, but in other

cases students receive insufficient feedback.

64. Staff are appropriately qualified and most have teaching qualifications. IT resources are good both at the main sites and in community venues. Computers are networked, and colour printers, CD writers and scanners are available. Software is up to date, but there are no interactive whiteboards or plasma screens. Some IT rooms have specialist software which allows teacher demonstrations to be replicated on all student computers and also allows individual student computers to be monitored by the teacher. In other rooms, where this software is not available, teachers sometimes demonstrate using only one monitor screen and not all students have a clear view. Library stock includes a good range of modern textbooks, but the number of journals is low. Accommodation is generally good and there is good technician support.

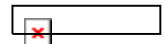
65. There are good links with community groups such as single parent groups, tenants associations and groups from minority ethnic communities. A good range of courses is offered in community venues. These courses meet the needs of the community and encourage participation by groups under-represented in education.

66. Students are provided with good support. Teachers make themselves available outside lessons. The tutorial system is effective and includes procedures for monitoring attendance, punctuality and poor performance and taking appropriate action where needed. Occasionally tutors fail to give appropriate recognition to all students. Students who are at risk of failing are identified and given extra support. Good use is made of individual learning plans with students at community venues. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed, supported and taught with other students. Most community venues are accessible to students with mobility difficulties. There are special adaptations to enable students with disabilities to use the technology.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management are good. Managers support most teachers effectively. There is a good teamwork and sharing of good practice. All teachers are involved in the thorough and evaluative course review process, which contributes to the self-assessment report. Students are encouraged to contribute to the review process. Teaching staff monitor management information data and use it for target setting and self-assessment. Teachers regularly review their work. Professional development is effective. Some teachers working in community consider they are isolated and are not sufficiently involved in the rest of the curriculum area. The management of IT key skills is weak.

Hospitality, sports and travel



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

The contributory grade is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high pass rates for GNVQ in foundation leisure and tourism for first diploma in sport

- good resources in sport

- effective strategies to widen participation in sport and leisure

- good personal and academic support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates for some courses

- low pass rates for GCE AS sport and AVCE leisure and recreation

- too much unsatisfactory teaching of practical work in hospitality and catering.

Scope of provision

68. The college's broad range of full-time and part-time hospitality, sports, leisure and travel courses is designed to meet the needs of students and industry. Courses lead to AVCE, GNVQ, NVQ, first and national diplomas and other vocational qualifications at different levels. The college offers specialist and short courses in cake decoration, wines and spirits, food hygiene, innkeeping and customer service. Additional qualifications are also available for full-time and part-time students. These include sports coaching, sports leaders, travel ticketing, children's couriers and pool lifeguards. The college offers introductory sport and hospitality courses to pupils from local schools aged 14 to 16. There are 550 students aged 16 to 18 and 159 adult students. Around half the students are on sports courses, just under a third on leisure and travel courses and the remainder on hospitality courses.

Achievement and standards

69. The pass rate for first diploma science (sport) in 2003 was high and well above the national average. This was a significant improvement on the previous year. The pass rates for the GNVQ foundation and the NVQ food preparation and cooking at level 2 were very high, but the retention rates for these courses were particularly low in 2003. Pass rates on the GCE AS and the GCE A-level sports courses were low. Pass rates on the AVCE leisure and recreation in 2003 declined to well below the national average. Retention rates were also low on the NVQ food preparation and cooking course at level 1 and the AVCE in leisure and recreation course, which declined to nearly 40% below the national average. There is good progression of students from level 1 to level 3.

70. Most sport, leisure and travel students make good progress, particularly those who have low levels of prior attainment. Many have improved in confidence and develop good communication skills. Sports students have a good understanding of how sport is organised and show proficiency in movement analysis and in the execution of practical skills. They carry out risk assessments well and are aware of health and safety issues. Travel students have good awareness of the travel and tourism industry and use resources well to research information. AVCE students produce informative assignments, which use computer graphics and other applications to improve the presentation of information.

71. Too many hospitality students have not developed their occupational skills well. In bakery and larder classes, students are untidy. In one cookery lesson, sauces were too thick and glutinous and lacked flavour. Some students are poor at peeling and cutting vegetables. Some food service students have poor communication skills.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, sports and travel, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ in foundation leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	*	19	19
		% retention	*	63	42
		% pass rate	*	100	88
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	16	20	31
		% retention	69	90	65
		% pass rate	100	78	80
First diploma in science (sport)	2	No. of starts	26	15	21
		% retention	65	73	86
		% pass rate	24	65	83
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	20	24	34
		% retention	85	83	44
		% pass rate	88	85	87
GNVQ in advanced leisure and tourism/AVCE in leisure and recreation	3	No. of starts	34	64	34
		% retention	62	69	65
		% pass rate	76	70	36
GCE AS physical education	3	No. of starts	16	56	30
		% retention	88	57	90
		% pass rate	50	44	37
National diploma in sport (applied science)	3	No. of starts	47	28	22
		% retention	70	50	59
		% pass rate	88	86	85

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

72. Most teaching in sport, leisure and travel is satisfactory. Schemes of work are clear and detailed. Where teaching is good in sport, leisure and travel, there is effective questioning to check learning and challenging practical work for students. Discipline in lessons is good. Some teaching is unsatisfactory; it lacks sufficient detail to cover a learning topic. The teaching of key skills by vocational teachers is stimulating and relevant. In a communication key skills lesson, students showed knowledge and maturity in debating the legislation of soft drugs. In an ICT key skills lessons, students designed a website to promote the college's training restaurant. In hospitality, there is much unsatisfactory teaching of practical skills. There is insufficient planning. Occasionally, teachers provide incorrect information about ingredients and cooking methods. Often, students are not given recipes. Some teachers use imperial measurements. In some lessons, teachers do not correct students' poor vocational techniques.

73. Sport, leisure and travel staff have relevant subject knowledge. Highly qualified and experienced coaches support sports activities. The college has good sports equipment and facilities. These include a new large sports hall, commercial standard fitness suite, aerobics studio and playing fields. Boxing facilities are of a particularly high standard and include two rings and a wide range of boxing training equipment. The good practical facilities for hospitality and catering include commercial kitchens and a restaurant. Sometimes the inappropriate use of practical rooms for theory affects the quality of learning. There are no lockers for the storage of hospitality students' clothing and equipment. The college intranet provides a good range of vocationally relevant Internet links and learning materials for sport, leisure and travel students.

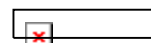
74. There are effective strategies to widen participation in sport and leisure. The college's sports academies for boxing, football and rugby league encourage students under-represented in FE to participate. The extensive school links gives pupils aged 14 to 16 the opportunity to study sports and catering at the college, including courses leading to vocational qualifications. The strong links with community organisations and businesses provide good career opportunities for students. Leisure and tourism students work closely with charitable community projects. There is an extensive enrichment provision including sports teams for men and women.

75. Students appreciate the good support they receive from staff. Some teachers are particularly effective at using initial assessment to establish the individual learning needs of students. At tutorials, there are good reviews of students' progress and effective setting of learning targets to improve student performance.

Leadership and management

76. Leadership and management are satisfactory for sport, leisure and travel, but unsatisfactory for hospitality. Course teams work closely together and communicate effectively. Regular minuted meetings pay attention to course issues. Course reviews link effectively to the self-assessment process. Findings from surveys of students' views are followed up and have led to improved facilities for students. However, strategies to improve retention rates have been ineffective and lesson observations have not identified unsatisfactory teaching in hospitality practical lessons.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates for NVQ level 1 hairdressing and NVQ level 3 beauty therapy

- good development of students' occupational skills

- much good teaching and learning

- good standard of resources to support learning

- good support for students

- effective curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for NVQ level 2 beauty therapy

- poor achievement of framework on work-based learning programmes

- insufficient clients in college salons.

Scope of provision

77. The wide range of hairdressing and beauty therapy courses meets local employer and individual needs. The college provides courses from NVQ level 1 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty therapy and a modern apprenticeship programme. Courses are also available in hairdressing for men, aromatherapy, body massage, manicure and advanced nail techniques. NVQ 2 beauty therapy courses are available on a modular basis. Progression opportunities are good. Many students continue to the next level or take additional subjects. The college enrolls pupils from local schools, aged 14 to 16 on to introductory programmes for hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are 354 students, of whom 44% are aged 16 to 18; 5% of students are male. There are 28 foundation modern apprentices.

Achievement and standards

78. Pass rates for NVQ beauty therapy and body massage at level 3 are outstanding and have remained significantly above the national averages for the three years to 2003. The pass rates for NVQ hairdressing at level 1, although declining, have remained above the national averages. The pass rates for NVQ beauty therapy at level 2 declined significantly between 2002 and 2003 to well below the national average. The retention rate, however, was very high and was significantly above the national average. Retention rates on NVQ hairdressing at level 1 and 2, manicure and NVQ level 3 beauty therapy were similar to the national average. The number of work-based learners who successfully complete all aspects of the framework is low; between 1998 and 2003 only 10% of those who started completed successfully.

79. Students make good progress and their occupational skills are of a high standard. NVQ level 1 beauty therapy students can carry out treatments on face and hands after only eight weeks on their course and give detailed and accurate explanations for their choice of techniques and products. School pupils on an introductory course were particularly proficient in practical treatments. Students use good health and safety practices. They respond well to questioning and have a strong understanding of theory. Most students' assignments are word-processed and make good use of photographs. Students use research to develop their work effectively. Students' key skills are at an appropriate level. Work-based learners attendance at college for theory lessons is unsatisfactory.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	75	45	59
		% retention	72	67	71
		% pass rate	96	93	90
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	68	82	59
		% retention	60	59	66
		% pass rate	66	69	79
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	82	58	86
		% retention	65	69	84
		% pass rate	91	93	71
Manicure certificate	2	No. of starts	*	58	21
		% retention	*	81	95
		% pass rate	*	81	85
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	16	15	*
		% retention	100	80	*
		% pass rate	88	100	*
Body massage certificate	3	No. of starts	53	35	33
		% retention	79	77	79
		% pass rate	95	100	100

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

80. Most teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a wide variety of effective teaching and learning approaches. Lesson plans have clear, measurable objectives and take account of students' different learning styles. Lessons effectively build on students' prior knowledge and skills. Teachers develop a good rapport with students using humour and constructive comments to motivate and build confidence. Good demonstrations of technical skills are accompanied by clear explanations. There is good use by teachers of their own commercial experience to illustrate key learning points. In practical lessons, teachers pay careful attention to individual student needs to help them develop good hairdressing and beauty therapy skills. Teachers make good use of theory to develop students' vocational skills. They use questioning well to check student understanding. There is good development of students' key skills and the teaching of key skills is occupationally relevant. Teaching places a clear emphasis on health and safety and client care. Teachers provide challenging commercial targets for students, who are expected to work to commercial timings. However, students are not always stretched to achieve these targets. Students are encouraged to develop independent study skills and evaluate their own work.

81. Resources are good. There are six well-designed salons and a nail technology workshop with a high standard of commercially relevant equipment. Most teaching rooms have audio visual equipment to show a wide range of training programmes. Client reception is equipped with a computer for bookings and client records. There is good access to computers within the key skills workshop, but there is insufficient ILT within classrooms and salons. Teachers are vocationally qualified, and have assessor and verifier awards. Most have recent commercial experience. There are good opportunities for staff development.

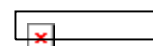
82. There are insufficient clients in college salons. This slows some students in achieving vocational competences and progressing towards their qualifications. Work-based learners undertake most assessments in college. Few are up to date with their assessments. There are too few work-based assessors to undertake assessment in salons. Assessment and verification procedures are satisfactory. Assessment of students' written work is constructive. Assignment briefs are clear and include good advice on presentation.

83. Support for students is good. At initial assessment, individual student and group additional support needs are assessed and teachers use this effectively to support students with their work. For example, a group of NVQ level 1 hairdressing students who need help with literacy and numeracy skills have permanent support in theory lessons. Work-based learners have additional help in key skills to assist the development of literacy and numeracy skills and to help them achieve the key skills qualifications. The NVQ level 1 beauty therapy course was introduced for students with lower levels of prior attainment to allow them to build knowledge and skills over a longer period and to help them progress to level 2. All students have individual tutorials. Students value the good support provided by tutors and those aged 16 to 18 appreciate being treated like adults. Reviews of students and work-based learners' progress are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

84. Leadership and management are good. There is effective teamwork between staff and with managers. Staff are committed to continuous improvement. There is effective sharing of good practice and staff monitor students' performance regularly. Quality assurance processes are effective in recognising key strengths and weaknesses, setting action points, targets for improvement and developing actions to resolve issues. For example, it was recognised that retention rates on NVQ hairdressing courses at level 2 were unsatisfactory and declining. Staff and managers developed a strategy to improve retention rates for this course. This was successful and retention rates have improved. Teachers are involved in self-assessment, target setting and action planning. Regular staff meetings have a clear focus on consistency, the curriculum and students' progress. There is effective use and deployment of resources to the benefit of most students.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- good development of skills for employment

- much good teaching

- good internal and external progression

- o productive links with community providers.

Weaknesses

- o low and declining retention rates for the GNVQ foundation and certificate in counselling courses
- o low pass rates for some courses in 2003
- o weak aspects of curriculum management on some courses

Scope of provision

85. There is a wide range of courses in health, social care and public services from pre-entry level to HE level. These include GNVQ at foundation and intermediate level in health and social care, national certificates and diplomas in caring services and health studies, NVQ in care, basic, intermediate and diploma courses in counselling, training courses in first aid and door supervision, and courses in pre-uniformed services at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are approximately 769 students in total.

Achievement and standards

86. There are high pass rates on many courses. GNVQ foundation and intermediate health and social care, NVQ care level 2, and preparation for entry to uniformed services levels 2 and 3 all had pass rates well above national averages in 2002 and 2003. Three pass rates declined to figures well below national averages in 2003. These were the certificate in counselling skills level 2, the first diploma in caring and the national diploma in health studies. Retention rates are consistently high for GNVQ intermediate health and social care, and NVQ care level 2. The retention rates for the preparation for entry to uniformed services courses increased between 2002 and 2003 from below national averages to well above national averages. For GNVQ foundation and the certificate in counselling level 2, retention rates are declining and were low in 2003.

87. Students make good progress and their personal and practical skills are effectively developed. There is also very good development of skills for employment. Two students from the pre-uniformed services course were awarded 'best recruit' of their respective armed forces intake in 2003. Progression both within college and to HE and employment is good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and public services, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	28	17	16
		% retention	79	71	69
		% pass rate	95	92	91
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	42	**	16

health and social care		% retention	88	**	100
		% pass rate	46	**	100
First diploma in caring	2	No. of starts	*	23	19
		% retention	*	57	84
		% pass rate	*	92	56
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	46	26	73
		% retention	83	85	95
		% pass rate	79	95	83
Preparation for entry to uniformed services	2	No. of starts	60	76	50
		% retention	65	64	80
		% pass rate	97	84	88
Certificate in counselling skills	2	No. of starts	28	**	24
		% retention	82	**	75
		% pass rate	82	**	50
Preparation for entry to uniformed services	3	No. of starts	30	17	18
		% retention	87	71	89
		% pass rate	96	100	100
National diploma in science/health studies	3	No. of starts	31	31	29
		% retention	68	48	55
		% pass rate	81	100	69

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course did not run

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

88. Most teaching is good. Lessons are thoroughly prepared with a good variety of learning activities to engage students in learning. Teachers make effective use of learning materials. Students discuss key learning points, add their own personal notes and use them for further independent study. Teachers are good at promoting vocational values and practices. Teaching is effective in meeting the needs of individual students. Students are well motivated, participate well in lessons and make good progress. Relevant case studies help students to apply their learning in a realistic context. There is good use of practical demonstrations. In a health studies lesson, an anatomical model was used in create a game which enabled the students to understand and explain how oxygenated blood circulates around the body. The game captured the attention of the students, developed their technical understanding and was fun to play.

89. Teachers are suitably qualified. Teaching rooms are satisfactory. Good use is made of students' work in displays. Specialist resources are used in the teaching of first aid and health-related modules. On the pre-uniformed services courses, outdoor equipment such as kayaks and climbing equipment is used in off-site lessons. Occasionally, students have difficulty in gaining access to computers, particularly at periods of high demand. Assessment is rigorous and meets the requirements of awarding bodies. Assignment briefs are clear. There is good collaboration with employers for the assessment of NVQ competences.

90. There are productive links with a range of employers and community partners. There are well-established work placements in primary schools, nurseries, residential homes for people with learning disabilities, nursing homes and NHS settings. Collaborative work with the local care homes

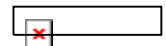
association has resulted in increased enrolments on NVQ courses and the registered managers award. The health professional cadet scheme is delivered in conjunction with the local NHS Trust. In the pre-uniformed services courses there are good links with the armed forces with regular visits to the college by personnel, including former students. The professional advisory panel includes officers from all the major uniformed services. Students in health and social care achieve relevant additional qualifications such as first aid, and acquire skills in the lifting and handling of clients. Pre-uniformed services students undertake the community sports leaders award and improve their fitness and team building skills through well-structured residential experiences. For counselling students, weekend workshops provide the opportunity for personal development and counselling skills practice.

91. Support for students is good. All students are assessed early in their course for preferred learning styles and additional support need. Teachers use this information to plan lessons. Additional support is effective. Entry level students on the caring for others course are supported by a learning support worker in lessons. Where needed, students receive support for dyslexia, disabilities and hearing impairment. There is good tutorial support for full-time students.

Leadership and management

92. Leadership and management are good. Much course management is effective. Course reviews and self-assessment are focused on the need to raise retention and pass rates. Performance is monitored and evaluative judgements are made. Equality of opportunity is a taught module on most courses and is promoted well in lessons. Some aspects of curriculum management on some courses have been weak. For example, the failure to respond quickly to changes in awarding body criteria for certification had an adverse effect on retention and pass rates on some courses in 2003. Managers are taking action to resolve the problem.

Childcare



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

Strengths

- much good teaching
- high pass rates on most courses
- excellent progression
- good learning resources
- effective links with external agencies and placement providers

- effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- decline in pass rates for the diploma in childcare and education in 2003.

Scope of provision

93. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in early years care and education. These include the certificate and diploma in childcare and education, national diploma in early years, and NVQs in early years care and education. Courses are also offered for teaching assistants and playwork. There are part-time courses during the day and in the evenings. The college has a joint CoVE with Bury College in childcare and early years education. Courses are developed in response to requests from local partners and the college delivers training in community locations. Students are able to progress within college and to employment or HE. There are currently 212 students on full-time courses and 148 part-time students.

Achievement and standards

94. There are high pass rates on many courses. The introductory certificate in working with children and the national diploma early years both had 100% pass rates in 2002 and 2003. In 2002 and 2003, pass rates were also above national averages for the foundation award in caring for children and NVQ level 2 in early years care and education. Pass rates for the diploma in childcare and education declined by 15% between 2001 and 2003. Retention rates are also high for many courses including the foundation award in caring for children, and NVQs in early years care and education at levels 2 and 3. Students' attendance during the inspection was 78%. Progression from level 2 courses to level 3 and from level 3 to HE is very good. For example, 80% of students from the national diploma in early years progressed into HE in 2003. There are many individual successes. For example, a mature student who began voluntary work with a playgroup completed a classroom assistant course and then gained a diploma in nursery nursing, after a break from education of 17 years. She gained distinction in most modules and went on to achieve a higher national diploma in early childhood studies. She is progressing to a degree course.

95. Students demonstrate levels of knowledge and understanding at an appropriate level in their lessons and written work. For example, students in a level 2 lesson were able to discuss the potential hazards in food preparation and storage. Students on the diploma in childcare and education course were able to work well on a design activity when asked to create a positive environment for children. Childcare students develop good interpersonal and vocational skills in the workplace.

A sample of retention and pass rates in childcare, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Foundation award in caring for children	1	No. of starts	25	28	25
		% retention	84	86	88
		% pass rate	95	92	100
NVQ in early years care and education	2	No. of starts	24	37	30
		% retention	88	84	83

		% pass rate	86	87	80
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	36	44	47
		% retention	83	95	89
		% pass rate	97	98	79
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	48	33	31
		% retention	69	52	75
		% pass rate	94	88	79
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	*	31	31
		% retention	*	97	97
		% pass rate	*	100	100
NVQ in early years care and education	3	No. of starts	57	54	37
		% retention	89	85	89
		% pass rate	96	80	62

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course not offered or did not run

Quality of education and training

96. Most teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and schemes of work are comprehensive. In the most effective lessons, teachers link theory to current work practices and make good use of students' experiences in childcare settings to reinforce learning. In a national diploma lesson on professional practice, students discussed principles of confidentiality citing examples from their work placements. In a lesson on managing conflict and anti-social behaviour, students discussed how to deal with an aggressive parent who had been abusive to nursery staff. In a lesson about sick children, students drew on their own experiences of taking children's temperatures and the use of inhalers. In the less effective lessons, learning activities do not motivate and challenge all students. For example, in one lesson, students were set the task of copying a large amount of text from an overhead transparency.

97. Resources to support teaching and learning are good. Teaching rooms are appropriate and are equipped with audio-visual equipment which is used regularly. Teaching staff have relevant qualifications and experience. Teaching and learning resources include anatomical models, children's books and toys, and craft materials. Students have access to a good range of textbooks and journals in the college learning centres. Access to IT is good.

98. Assessment is managed well. Students receive appropriate feedback on their work. This is particularly effective in helping them to improve on the foundation course in caring for children, where it results in student work developing to a high standard. Workplace assessments are professionally managed. Individual learning plans are used to motivate students and provide targets for assessments. Some NVQ assessments are not timely, and have led to delays in students completing awards.

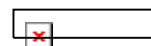
99. Links with external agencies are extensive and provide a wide range of work experience opportunities. Students can study for additional qualifications such as first aid and food hygiene. Support for students is effective. Tutorials are valued by students and individual learning plans are used to good effect to help motivate students and provide targets. All students are screened to assess their literacy and numeracy levels, preferred learning styles and learning support needs and these are used to inform lesson planning. One student with dyslexia was provided with a laptop computer and a dictaphone to support her studies. A student with a hearing impairment was supported by a signer.

100. The college CoVE was approved in November 2002. There are plans to use capital funding to establish a training suite in a local early years centre of excellence which will enable more courses to be delivered within the community. One CoVE target set by the college, to increase enrolments by 10% on childcare courses at level 3, has already been met. There are excellent links with a wide range of early years professionals and organisations in the local community and the college is proactive in responding to community needs. Courses have been provided for teaching assistants in local primary schools. Courses in playwork for staff of after school clubs are also being developed. Modern apprenticeship programmes are being expanded and a foundation degree is planned for 2004.

Leadership and management

101. Leadership and management are good. Communication within the staff team is good. Teachers are mutually supportive. Course documentation and planning are thorough and rigorous. There are effective staff development arrangements. For example, a special educational needs co-ordinator from a local primary school provides updates on issues in primary education. Regular course team meetings allow effective sharing of good practice and problems and issues are resolved. The self-assessment report is evaluative and accurate with an appropriate emphasis on retention and pass rates. The management of work-based learning has not yet successfully tackled the low framework achievements for modern apprentices. Management of the CoVE is good. The action plan is well documented and progress is being made towards achieving the targets set.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for GCE AS fine art

- good teaching in many lessons

- extensive teaching and learning resources in art and design

- effective enrichment and enhancement opportunities

- good formative assessment

- wide range of courses leading to good progression.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some courses

- low pass rates on some courses

- underdeveloped drawing from observation on some level 3 courses

- some unsuitable accommodation.

Scope of provision

102. The college offers a good range of full-time courses at level 3, including national diplomas in graphics, textiles, fine art, media, performing arts and music and the foundation diploma in art and design. GCE AS and A-level courses are offered in art and design, performance and media. Full-time level 2 courses include first diplomas in performing arts, media, music and GNVQ intermediate art and design. A GNVQ foundation course in art and design is offered at level 1. There are also non-vocational courses for adults. There are 178 students aged 16 to 18 and 89 adults.

Achievement and standards

103. Few courses have consistently high or improving pass rates with the exception of GCE AS fine art, which had pass rates well above national averages in 2002 and 2003. GNVQ intermediate art and design pass rates were high in 2001 and 2003, but low in 2002. The national diploma in design also had high pass rates in 2001 and 2003. In 2003, pass rates were significantly below national averages for the first diploma in performing arts, national diplomas in drama and fine art and the diploma in foundation studies. Retention rates are also variable. The first diploma in performing arts has had a consistently high retention rate for the last three years and the retention rate for GCE AS fine art has increased to a high figure in 2003. GNVQ intermediate and national diploma design both have consistently low retention rates, well below national averages. The retention rate for the second year of GCE A-level media was low in 2002.

104. Students on performing arts courses develop effective skills in assessing their own performance and the work of their peer group and are able to make astute well-considered observations. The work produced by graphic design students is good and students are skilled in their use of software packages. Music students are knowledgeable and develop good analytical skills. The standard of the observational drawing and life drawing produced on some level 3 art and design courses is unsatisfactory with very little reference made to the formal elements of form, scale proportion and tone and no reference to measured drawing. Progression to higher level courses within college and to HE is good. The average attendance during inspection was 79%.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts and media, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate art	2	No. of starts	24	**	24

and design		% retention	63	**	71
		% pass rate	93	**	88
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	16	21	27
		% retention	94	86	81
		% pass rate	93	72	73
GCE AS fine art	3	No. of starts	49	26	23
		% retention	76	62	96
		% pass rate	78	94	95
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	31	33	18
		% retention	55	91	83
		% pass rate	100	93	93
National diploma in drama	3	No. of starts	*	26	25
		% retention	*	65	72
		% pass rate	*	88	83
National diploma in fine art	3	No. of starts	*	17	17
		% retention	*	65	76
		% pass rate	*	64	69
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	41	49	56
		% retention	63	55	54
		% pass rate	96	85	93
Diploma in foundation studies art and design	3	No. of starts	39	38	39
		% retention	85	87	90
		% pass rate	88	94	83

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course not offered or did not run

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Note : retention rate for GCE A-level courses measured over two years in 2001, but over one year in 2002 and 2003

Quality of education and training

105. Most teaching is good. Many lessons are lively and enthusiastic and teachers effectively motivate students. Schemes of work are comprehensive and lesson plans include innovative and creative assignments. There is a strong emphasis on independent learning. In many lessons, teachers use examples from their own vocational experience to strengthen the links between theory and practice. A range of teaching and learning strategies are used to meet the needs of the full range of abilities. In a textiles lesson, students made effective use of experimental printing techniques to help develop ideas for decoration. Challenging extension tasks are set for more able students. Teachers encourage students to analyse problems, express opinions and think for themselves. In a performing arts lesson, students were challenged to be critical and evaluative of a recent public performance. They actively discussed their views with their peers and good progress was made. Good use is made of technology in the teaching of graphics. In one graphics lesson, students' knowledge of specialist software was enhanced by the use of a digital projector to illustrate the development of individual websites. The examples provoked animated discussion among

students. In the minority of less effective lessons teachers did not have clear aims and objectives, they failed to establish a productive working atmosphere and students were uncertain and confused and unable to make progress.

106. Accommodation for art and design is good. Most studios are spacious and well lit. There are facilities for ceramics, fine art, print, textiles, fashion and photography. Other resources include television studios and graphics facilities with modern technology. Students' work is displayed and used in teaching. Workshops for three-dimensional work and media rooms are too small for the number of students attending the lessons. Some accommodation for performing arts lessons is unsatisfactory, but the college has plans to address this in the near future. At the time of the inspection, the music technology studio was undergoing refurbishment and students did not have sufficient access to appropriate recording resources. Many teachers have broad subject and industrial knowledge and appropriate subject qualifications, but a few are not qualified teachers.

107. Assessment and internal moderation are effective for most courses. Assignment briefs are clear, identifying the tasks to be completed and the assessment criteria. Students receive regular verbal and written feedback on their work which identifies areas for improvement. On the foundation diploma course in art and design, students are not sufficiently challenged to improve the standard of their work and external moderation led to the lowering of some grades.

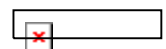
108. There is a comprehensive programme of educational visits for all students which includes visits to galleries, theatres, television studios and European cities. Practising artists in residence and performers provide workshops for students. Students can also gain additional qualifications, which add breadth to the main course of study.

109. Students are well supported by their teachers. Specialist support is available for students with additional needs. For example, in a media lesson, a hearing impaired student was supported with two signers. This enabled him to make an important contribution to a discussion on relationships. In a minority of cases, additional learning support is not provided quickly enough after a need has been identified.

Leadership and management

110. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications are effective. Teaching staff are well supported and are encouraged to develop their professional skills. Good teamwork promotes a spirit of co-operation across the curriculum area. The organisation and planning of courses are good, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of students. Course documentation is comprehensive with examples of good practice. The self-assessment report failed to identify weaknesses in retention and pass rates and the action plan does not address these. Some data cited in the self-assessment report differed from that held on the management information system.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCSE and GCE A-level psychology

- much good teaching

- o very good pastoral system and tutorial programme
- o good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- o declining pass rates for part-time GCE A-level students
- o limited access to ICT facilities.

Scope of provision

111. The college offers a good range of courses. This includes GCE AS, and GCE A levels in general studies, geography, history, law, psychology, philosophy, religious and Islamic studies and sociology for full-time and part-time day students. History, law, psychology and sociology are available during the evening. Psychology and sociology are offered as part of the GCSE programme. The access courses at levels 2 and 3 include a range of humanities subjects, and some options are available in the evening. There are 528 students and, of these, 431 are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

112. Overall pass rates for GCE A-level psychology are high and were above the national averages for the three years to 2003. Pass rates for GCE AS general studies were also above national averages between 2001 and 2003. GCSE psychology A* to C pass rates are also consistently high. Overall pass rates for GCE AS subjects fell by 13% in 2003. Retention rates were high for GCSE psychology, GCE A-level law and GCE A-level psychology in 2002 and 2003. The overall retention rate for GCE AS humanities subjects improved to well above national average in 2003. The retention rate for GCE AS general studies was very low in 2002 but this rose by 30% in 2003, when it was well above national average. The retention rate on the access certificate course fell in 2003. Retention rates for part-time students are satisfactory overall, but pass rates have declined. In 2003, retention and pass rates in most subjects declined from the previous years.

113. Many students have low levels of prior attainment at the start of their programme and come from groups under-represented in traditional education. In some subjects, they make particularly good progress and their achievements are better than their grades at GCSE would predict. These subjects include GCE A-level psychology, GCE AS sociology and GCE AS law. In GCE AS geography, students do less well than would be expected. In 2003, progression to HE was good. The standard of student work in lessons is good. Students have a positive attitude to their work, they are industrious, and most enjoy the learning in lessons. Student attendance during the inspection averaged 79%.

A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE psychology	2	No. of starts	61	77	89

		% retention	59	62	71
		% pass rate	78	77	63
GCE AS general studies	3	No. of starts	150	165	162
		% retention	89	51	81
		% pass rate	72	99	78
GCE AS humanities subjects	3	No. of starts	217	391	241
		% retention	84	76	83
		% pass rate	81	90	77
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	44	29	40
		% retention	50	90	90
		% pass rate	86	92	81
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	22	23	26
		% retention	77	96	92
		% pass rate	88	95	83
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	75	40	61
		% retention	68	90	97
		% pass rate	90	97	93
Access certificate	3	No. of starts	135	130	150
		% retention	84	99	80
		% pass rate	*	95	79

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* data unreliable

Note : retention rate for GCE A-level courses measured over two years in 2001, but over one year in 2002 and 2003

Quality of education and training

114. Most teaching is good; none is unsatisfactory. The planning of lessons is thorough. Plans include clear teaching and learning objectives, which link carefully to the awarding body requirements. Teaching methods take account of students' individual learning needs. For example, two students whose first language was not English were given additional support before the lesson. The lesson required students to develop their understanding of different ways of processing information. One form of processing required students to rhyme words. Problems posed for students whose first language was not English were recognised and they were given the opportunity to translate parts of the experiment into their own language in order to participate fully in the lesson and consolidate their understanding. There is good rapport between staff and students. Classroom management is good and students are expected to work hard in class. Teachers produce high-quality learning materials. History and sociology staff produce very good study guides which include a broad range of support materials including self-assessment activities. In the very few examples where teaching was only satisfactory, group discussions were not always managed well. In some lessons, inappropriate personal examples were used to illustrate academic theory and social reality.

115. Teachers use resources effectively to improve learning. For example, there was a very imaginative use of a model to describe and explain the battle of Little Bighorn. In a GCE AS lesson, video material was used effectively to illustrate theories of a child's psychological development. Staff

are well qualified. The learning resource centres have a broad range of books and specialist journals and good access to the Internet to assist students in research and completion of assignments. Students on the Middleton campus do not have adequate access to private study facilities. Many classrooms are equipped with audio-visual facilities and overhead projectors, but there is a lack of ICT equipment.

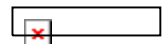
116. Students receive clear guidelines on assessment. Student work is marked thoroughly and returned promptly with written feedback clearly identifying areas for improvement. Teachers provide very good informal feedback on student progress in lessons. Good initial assessment identifies students additional support requirements. There is a range of enrichment opportunities to support learning. These include visits to a local museum and magistrates' court. There is little use of visiting speakers.

117. Guidance and support are good. Tutors are hard working and enthusiastic. There is good, impartial pre-course advice and thorough induction. There is effective guidance and support at all stages of the course including confidential personal and financial support for students. Effective communications between academic and pastoral staff assists the provision of good support for students.

Leadership and management

118. Leadership and management are good. Managers work effectively with staff to identify and implement strategies to improve student achievement and the quality of learning. Weaknesses identified in teaching and assessment at the last inspection have been successfully resolved. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. There are effective quality assurance procedures. Teachers set themselves high standards and plan well to achieve these standards. Newly qualified staff are supported in the development of their teaching skills through a well-organised programme of classroom observations and mentoring. Good communications are maintained through a well-planned calendar of staff meetings. Regular newsletters keep staff well informed about college, local and national events, including issues affecting retention and pass rates and progression. Teachers are fully involved in the self-assessment process and monitoring the effectiveness of strategies to improve teaching and learning.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- very good teaching

- good achievement in spoken skills test

- high retention rates in 2003

- good development and integration of students IT and English language skills

- effective widening participation.

Weaknesses

- insufficient audio-visual and ICT resources
- inadequate assessment and recording of progress.

Scope of provision

119. The college provides day and evening courses for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). There is a wide range of courses available from the pre-entry level to level 2. The college offers courses at its two campuses and at local community venues. Most courses in the community are for women. There are 363 students altogether, studying on full-time and part-time courses. Around 90% of the students who are studying ESOL are adults, these include refugees and asylum seekers.

Achievement and standards

120. Most pass rates are significantly above the national averages. The pass rates for spoken skills tests are particularly high and well above the national averages. For the basic level spoken test provision in 2003, the pass rate was 100%. However, a number of pass rates have declined between 2002 and 2003. For the higher intermediate Pitman full award the decline was significant, to well below the national average. Retention rates in 2003 were high, with some at a particularly high level. Most were well above the national average. Some retention rates have increased significantly between 2002 and 2003. Some retention rates in 2003, at 100%, were outstanding.

121. Students work well to extend their familiarity with written and spoken English. They enjoy their lessons, are motivated, attentive and take part in discussions particularly effectively. For example, in one very good lesson, the students became very lively when describing and discussing souvenir objects as part of their exam preparations. Students make good progress in developing their personal and social skills as well as their language and ICT skills. Standards of written work are mostly good. Students work well in groups and individually. Student punctuality is good and their attendance is similar to the national average for this curriculum area. There are examples of students successfully finding employment after their studies. Six ESOL teachers are former students at the college.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English for speakers of other languages, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
College certificates	entry	No. of starts	136	364	411
		% retention	90	93	100
		% pass rate	100	98	74
Pitman basic full award	entry level 1	No. of starts	97	41	35
		% retention	42	83	91

		% pass rate	29	79	63
Elementary Pitman full award	entry level 2	No. of starts	51	29	35
		% retention	55	93	97
		% pass rate	54	81	59
Elementary Pitman spoken	entry level 2	No. of starts	*	43	46
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	95	57
Intermediate Pitman spoken	1	No. of starts	*	80	53
		% retention	*	95	98
		% pass rate	*	57	54

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course not offered or did not run

Quality of education and training

122. All teaching and learning is good or better at the college main campuses and at community venues. Some teaching is excellent. Teachers are enthusiastic, confident and knowledgeable about their subjects. Teachers conduct lessons at a brisk pace and sustain students' interest by a variety of good teaching and learning approaches. Teachers make particularly effective use of humour to engage students in discussion to develop communications and grammar skills. There are detailed lesson plans and thorough schemes of work with clear links to national standards. Teaching has a strong emphasis on equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity. In one excellent lesson for students at the beginning of their studies, teachers used a discussion on deafness awareness and signing to improve literacy and spelling. In all lessons, teachers make very good use of students' cultural backgrounds and knowledge. This helps students to build and improve their learning based on their own personal experiences. Teachers make good use of ICT in lessons to develop students' learning skills. For example, students using computers produced Eid cards with personal greeting messages to develop both their ICT and language skills. There are good ESOL IT handbooks with appropriate language-related activities to develop students' reading and spelling skills. The college offers a wide range of additional activities to develop students speaking of English. These include theatre and other visits, reading literary texts, and a deaf awareness session by a visiting speaker.

123. Most teachers are well qualified and have specialist training in the teaching of ESOL. Well-presented written materials offer a range of language activities and tasks that are relevant to the learning needs of students. Teaching accommodation at the college sites is good, with well-furnished rooms with attractive displays. Accommodation in the community is of a variable standard. Learning centres have a good range of graded reading material and language textbooks. However, there are inadequate resources available for lessons. There are insufficient computers and software for the growing number of students and audio-visual equipment is not always available. In one community centre, the students did not have access to printers or the Internet.

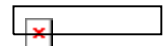
124. The college has taken effective action to widen participation from under-represented groups on ESOL courses. Students are from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including refugees and asylum seekers, and those who are resident of the United Kingdom who have been unable to develop their English language skills. The college has developed courses, which are culturally and religiously acceptable, particularly for women. These courses give women the opportunity to learn new skills that are immediately useful and develop confidence by working with other women. Many of the students have never participated in any form of education before attending the community ESOL course. To encourage students to participate on ESOL programmes, the college provides a range of useful introductory courses on topics, which are familiar to students; for example, cooking, sewing, driving and ICT. Many teachers are women from a minority ethnic background who provide useful role models for students.

125. There are established arrangements for initial assessment and target setting. Occasionally, students are wrongly placed on the wrong level course. Individual learning targets are set for each student. Progress towards target is monitored and reviewed every six weeks. However, the targets do not always contain enough detail or are sufficiently challenging and most portfolios do not have records of any assessment taking place. Tutorials are offered to both part-time and full-time students. Students appreciate the support they receive from tutors.

Leadership and management

126. Leadership and management of provision for ESOL are good. A team of full-time and part-time teachers work well together and share responsibilities for curriculum management. There is not sufficient day-to-day support of the teachers on the college site. Good communications, regular formal meetings and training keep staff well informed and help to share good practice. Staff are up-to-date with current developments in ESOL. Not all teachers are involved in the self-assessment process. There are regular and effective observations of teaching. There are good links and collaboration between the college and the provision in the community.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning in key skills level 1
- good staff development which has improved teaching and learning
- effective initial and diagnostic assessment which supports learning.

Weaknesses

- failure to meet some students' literacy and numeracy learning needs
- insufficient use of ILT
- insufficient discrete basic skills provision.

Scope of provision

127. The college offers discrete literacy and numeracy courses, literacy and numeracy support for students studying for other qualifications, and key skills at levels 1 and 2 in application of number and communication skills. The college provides basic skills tuition for Jobcentre Plus programmes for employment training. Provision is available at both campuses. There are a few discrete literacy and numeracy courses in the community. There are 178 students on discrete provision. Additional literacy and numeracy support is available to all students, on an individual basis or in groups. At the time of the inspection, 202 students were receiving additional literacy and/or numeracy support.

Achievement and standards

128. Students make good progress on discrete courses. There is successful achievement of individual learning goals and, if appropriate, students are entered for open college credits at entry levels 1 and 2. Jobcentre Plus clients on the basic employability training programme successfully achieve the City and Guilds adult literacy and numeracy certificates at entry 1, 2 and 3. Overall, there are very few achievements in adult literacy and numeracy at entry level 3 and level 1. In 2003, of the 98 students in adult literacy only 16 achieved the certificate. In adult numeracy, in 2003, 20 out of 86 students achieved the certificate. Retention rates are good and improving for discrete programmes. On the certificate in adult literacy course, the retention rate in 2003 was 78% and for the certificate in adult numeracy, it was 71%. Student punctuality is good and average attendance at lessons is above the national average for this curriculum area. Many students cannot use their files effectively as they are poorly organised.

Quality of education and training

129. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory or better. Teaching in key skills lessons at level 1 is good. The teaching is imaginative and motivates students to take a keen interest in their learning. In an application of number lesson at level 1 on data, a teacher used information gathered from the students at initial assessment to build a pie chart on learning styles. The relevance and importance of data came to life as the students picked out their preferred learning style. In the better lessons for discrete provision, students are particularly interested in their studies, learning activities link closely to the students' own experiences and interests and teaching takes account of individual learning needs. Other successful teaching strategies include learning tasks for small groups of students to improve their communication skills and the good use of questions to check learning. In one very good lesson, a teacher taught across a wide ability range of adult students developing the oral skills of the students through skilful use of questions.

130. Teachers are particularly effective at encouraging student participation in lesson. The successful integration of literacy and numeracy support on some vocational courses including motor vehicle, pre-uniform services and construction motivates students particularly well to improve their basic skills. In the weaker lessons, teachers use a restricted range of teaching methods. The learning for students is dull and does not stimulate their interest. Some learning fails to meet the literacy and numeracy needs of students. For example, teachers complete students' work for them without an adequate explanation of what they were doing. These students were unable to repeat the task or to recall previous skills logged as successfully completed in their record of learning. In some lessons, teachers are ineffective at developing students' independent learning skills.

131. Key skills teachers are well trained. However, some teachers are not appropriately qualified to teach on the full range of literacy and numeracy courses. In some areas, there are insufficient basic skill teachers. This restricts the amount of literacy and numeracy the college can offer to students, particularly for discrete courses. Resources and general accommodation are good, but some rooms are too small. Teachers use significant amounts of paper learning materials. This material is attractive, clear and links to the basic skills national curriculum. However, there is insufficient use of ILT to develop learning. For some students, there is no access to hardware and other students have insufficient opportunities for using ILT software. ILT access for discrete provision is poor and timings of lessons with ILT are inappropriate for many students.

132. Teachers use the results of initial and diagnostic assessment for all full time students to place students on the right level of courses, and prepare individual learning plans which include short and long-term learning targets, and to plan learning and the activities of support tutors. Targets are linked

to the vocational area of work and the basic skills curriculum. In the better examples, students are fully aware of the content of learning plans and targets. However, other students do not make effective use learning plans and rely on teachers to update the paper work without understanding the process. In lessons, there is some good use of positive verbal feedback, but teachers' comments on students' written work are not constructive and do not provide them with clear guidance on the how to improve their performance.

Leadership and management

133. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear strategic direction and planning for the provision of literacy and numeracy. Local partnership arrangements are starting to resolve issues around participation in basic skills. Communications are effective. There are regular team meetings and clear arrangements for staff to share good practice. Quality assurance arrangements are mostly effective and staff are involved in self-assessment. Managers have developed an effective programme of staff development to improve the standard of teaching and learning and additional support. Those who have taken part in this programme provide students with good or better teaching and learning. College managers recognise that good teaching and learning is not strength across all literacy and numeracy provision and that much is satisfactory. They have reinforced the established staff development plans to improve the standards teachers provide for all students in this area.

Part D: College data

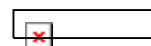
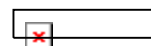


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	30	37
2	45	29
3	20	12
4/5	0	12
Other	5	10
Total	100	100



Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	2,269	805	14



Land-based provision	14	54	0
Construction	97	74	1
Engineering, technology and manufacture	249	374	3
Business administration, management and professional	474	838	6
Information and communication technology	1,666	1,315	13
Retailing, customer service and transportation	61	149	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	643	386	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	215	213	2
Health, social care and public services	441	2,538	13
Visual and performing arts and media	255	76	1
Humanities	741	512	6
English, languages and communication	2,007	576	12
Foundation programmes	820	565	6
Unknown area of learning	1,483	2,290	17
Total	11,435	10,765	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	1,502	1,070	1,092	2,304	1,833	1,197
	Retention rate	59	78	76	73	70	76
	National average	74	75	75	70	73	74
	Pass rate	66	73	74	49	61	62
	National average	64	64	66	65	68	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,506	1,653	1,416	1,622	1,636	1,705
	Retention rate	68	69	70	71	77	76
	National average	69	70	70	70	70	69

	Pass rate	78	71	79	77	77	84
	National average	66	67	68	65	65	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,359	2,436	2,280	1,236	1,205	1,264
	Retention rate	62	72	68	66	75	71
	National average	62	67	75	67	67	70
	Pass rate	76	79	82	73	80	86
	National average	69	70	73	63	65	69

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 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 2002: 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)	70	25	5	129
Level 2 (intermediate)	63	29	8	72
Level 1 (foundation)	73	19	8	37
Other sessions	74	22	4	27
Totals	69	25	6	265

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2004. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).