

Ofsted

Office for Standards in Education

ADULT LEARNING

City College Brighton and Hove

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Basic information about the college

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| Name of college: | City College Brighton and Hove |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Type of college: | General further education college |
| Principal: | Ann Smith |
| Address of college: | Pelham Street |
| | Brighton |
| | East Sussex |
| | BN1 4FA |
| Telephone number: | 01273 667788 |
| Fax number: | 01273 667703 |
| Chair of governors: | Martin Perry |
| Unique reference number: | 130663 |
| Name of reporting inspector: | Bob Cowdrey ALI |
| | |

13-23 October 2003

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Part A: Summary

Information about the college

The city of Brighton and Hove has a population of about 250,000 people and young people aged 16 to 19 represent 5.6% of the population. It has a strong service sector economy and only a small number of people employed in manufacturing industries. The unemployment rate, at 3.2%, is higher than the national average and more than twice the south-east regional rate. The educational performance of the local population is below the national average. Approximately 20% of the population have no qualifications but, despite this, nearly 30% have a qualification at level 4, which is a higher proportion than the average in Great Britain. Some 6% of students at the college are from minority ethnic groups compared with 3.5% of the local population. The college's mission is: to work with partners to maximise local and wider community engagement in educational achievement and the development of skills for today's and tomorrow's workforce.

How effective is the college?

Inspectors judged the provision to be good in four curriculum areas, and satisfactory in nine others. The quality of work-based learning was considered to be unsatisfactory in the one curriculum area inspected. The college's main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- o increased enrolments
- o improved retention rates
- o very good links with organisations in the wider community
- o effective support for students with good use of support workers

- o effective additional learning support
- o good financial management.

What should be improved

- o the quality of teaching and learning
- o pass rates
- o resources for literacy and numeracy provision
- o the management of work-based learning
- o quality of provision in some curriculum areas
- o sharing of good practice.

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

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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. Teaching is at least satisfactory and is often good. Few | |

| | teachers, however, use information and communications technology (ICT) in lessons. Most retention and pass rates are satisfactory. Retention rates are high for General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) chemistry and the national certificate in science and pass rates are high on the diploma in anatomy and physiology course. Students are well supported. |
|--|--|
| Construction | Satisfactory. Most teaching is satisfactory and key skills are well taught. Retention rates are high on most courses. Pass rates are high for plumbing but low for electrical installation and painting and decorating at level 1. The achievement of work-based learners is poor. The management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory. |
| Engineering | Satisfactory. The majority of teaching and learning is satisfactory or better. Retention rates are high on all courses. Pass rates on most courses are satisfactory but they are low and declining on computer-aided design courses. There are some weak aspects of curriculum management, particularly for work-based learning. |
| Business administration, management and professional | Satisfactory. The teaching of students aged 19 or over is satisfactory or better, but some lessons for students aged 16 to 18 are unsatisfactory. Retention rates are high on most courses. Pass rates are high on some business and management courses but low on part-time accounting and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses. Work-based learning is poorly planned, especially the teaching of key skills and the introduction of technical certificates. |
| Information and communications technology | Satisfactory. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but some is uninspiring. Classes are not always well managed. The flexible learning provision is well organised and of high quality. Retention and pass rates are generally satisfactory and have improved on many courses. There is good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. |
| Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel. | Good. Teaching is good in the majority of lessons and none is unsatisfactory. Most retention and pass rates are high. The curriculum area is well managed. There is a broad range of courses in travel and tourism, but the range of hospitality courses is narrow. |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | Satisfactory. There is some excellent teaching in beauty therapy and aromatherapy. Retention and pass rates are high on beauty therapy and aromatherapy courses, particularly at level 3, and on hairdressing National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2. There are poor professional practices in hairdressing teaching. The teaching and assessment of key skills is poor. |
| Health and social care | Satisfactory. Most teaching is at least satisfactory and some is good. However, there is often insufficient reinforcement of learning and opportunities to develop key skills are missed. Retention rates are generally high, but pass rates are low on most courses. There is good support for students although the range of social care courses is narrow. |
| Visual arts | Good. Teaching is very good. Students produce work of a high standard and some portfolios are outstanding. Pass rates on the majority of courses are high, but retention rates on two-year diploma courses have fallen for the last three years and are low. Progression to higher education (HE) is very good |
| Performing arts and media | Good. The majority of teaching is satisfactory or better, with a good balance between theory and practical work. Some retention and pass rates are high, particularly on the national diploma in performing arts and media and the National Council for the Training of Journalist (NCTJ) courses. Retention rates are low on national diploma courses. |

| | Enrolments on performing arts courses are low and declining. |
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| English and modern foreign languages | Good. Teaching is good in the majority of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and modern foreign languages lessons, where teachers are of native or near-native speaker standard. Retention and pass rates are generally high and improving. Retention rates are very high on courses in Spanish and key skills. Students are well guided and supported. |
| Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities | Satisfactory. Most teaching is satisfactory. Retention rates are high on most courses. Initial assessment is thorough, but target setting does not always reflect individual learning needs. There is a good range of part-time programmes for adults and a well-planned and well- delivered work preparation programme. Resources are insufficient in some areas to support learning. |
| Literacy and numeracy | Satisfactory. The majority of teaching is satisfactory or better. Pass rates are high on most courses but retention rates are low on entry level literacy courses. Progression from literacy and numeracy courses to academic and vocational programmes is good. There is also very effective literacy, numeracy and personal support for students. Resources are insufficient in some areas |

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers have set a clear strategic direction to meet local and national priorities. Students' enrolments have increased significantly over the last three years, and the college has established strong links with local schools and external organisations. Retention rates have improved and are just above national averages. Pass rates have improved and are at or just below national averages for many courses. Standards of teaching are satisfactory overall, but the proportion of lessons graded good or better is significantly lower than the average for colleges of the same type. Curriculum management is satisfactory or better in all areas. There are, however, significant weaknesses in aspects of the management of work-based learning. Clear quality assurance systems are in place but have yet to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievements. Self-assessment is thorough and effecting. In the majority of areas, grades awarded in the self-assessment report match grades awarded by inspectors. Financial management is good. The college provides value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Large numbers of asylum seekers and immigrants are well served by a carefully organised language provision for speakers of other languages. Significantly large numbers of international students can access a wide range of provision to help them progress to professional courses. All students are well supported and there is good specialist literacy and numeracy provision for students with hearing impairments. The college has a large and growing provision for adults. It has good links with local schools and provides effective vocational experiences for pupils at Key Stage 4. Publicity material is available in audio and large print format, and there are translation facilities. There is a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. The college is making good progress to meet the requirements of the Special Educational

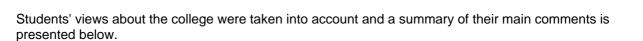
harassment and bullying policies for staff.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

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Support and guidance for students are good. A well-managed and comprehensive range of services is provided. Students receive detailed information and advice, which they value highly. The learning needs of full-time students are diagnosed effectively during the initial screening process and during their courses. However, part-time students, students in the flexible learning centre and work-based learners are not always aware that they can ask for screening. The effective links with external agencies give students opportunities to access support outside of the college. Students who attend courses away from the main site benefit from regular visits from support staff and tutors. Weekly group tutorials and quarterly individual tutorials are effective, but not all tutors ensure that students value them. The opportunity to link the tutorials on preparing for work with the programme of work experience is not always taken.

Students' views of the college



What students like about the college

- o environment and ambience of the main site
- o choice of courses
- o excellent personal and educational support from staff
- o the library, drop-in centre and information and learning technology (ILT) resources
- o choice of food and drink in the canteen
- o breakfast club and study buddies.

What they feel could be improved

- o earlier notification of response to application/interview
- o better computers in some areas
- o quality of accommodation and resources away from the main site
- o recreational facilities, smoking areas, lockers, changing rooms, showers, car parking
- o more accessible and wider range of enrichment activities
- o number of lifts.

Other information

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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 | 55 | 37 | 8 | |
| 19+ and WBL* | 59 | 35 | 6 | |
| Learning 16-18 | 49 | 40 | 11 | |
| 19+ and WBL* | 58 | 37 | 5 | |

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 drawn from the individualised student records (ISR) for 2000 to 2002 were provided by the LSC. Inspectors also used data for 2002/03 provided by the college and additional data to help them form their judgements, particularly in relation to work-based learning. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses.

2. The college offers a wide range of courses, which may be followed through full-time or part-time study, at various levels in all 14 areas of learning as defined by the LSC. The inspection sampled provision in 12 curriculum areas. Between 2000 and 2002, retention rates improved slightly. In 2001/02 they were above the national averages at level 2 for both age groups and at levels 3, 4 and 5 for those aged 19 and over and similar to the national average in other cases. Provisional figures show that for 2002/03, retention rates improved further at most levels for both age groups. College data show that those receiving learning support are more likely to remain on their courses than those who do not take up the support. Between 2000 and 2002, pass rates declined and were below the national average for the sector at almost all levels, for both age groups. Provisional figures for 2002/03 show that pass rates improved but remained at or below national averages in the majority of curriculum areas. Retention rates for key skills qualifications in application of number, communication and ICT are generally high, but pass rates are very low. The proportion of students, therefore, who start key skills qualifications and achieve them is significantly lower than national averages.

3. Work-based training is currently provided in seven areas, with the largest numbers of trainees in construction, business, engineering and catering. In 2002/03, the college had 220 work-based learners. Some 35 were advanced modern apprentices, 116 were foundation modern apprentices and 69 were on NVQ training. The achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor across all the curriculum areas inspected. Few modern apprentices achieve the full qualification within the expected time. In many cases, this is because of the poor levels of achievement of key skills but there are also cases, for example, in engineering, where the achievement of the NVQ qualification has been poor.

4. The overall level of attendance in lessons observed by inspectors was 79%, which is about the sector average as reported in the Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2001/02. Attendance rates have improved significantly since the last Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspection in June 2000. They were at or above the national average in 9 of the 13 areas inspected. In three areas, attendance was significantly lower for students aged 16 to 18 than for adults. Some students aged 16 to 18 arrive late and disrupte lessons.

5. In science, students use mathematical and scientific terms confidently. Most students in engineering, ICT, hospitality, beauty therapy and holistic therapies develop their practical skills well. However, in construction, adults develop better practical skills and understanding of subject knowledge than those aged 16 to 18. Students in English and visual, performing arts and media produce work of a high standard and carefully research and critically evaluate topics. Portfolios produced by carpentry and joinery and hospitality students are well presented, with good use of photographic evidence. Those in visual arts are excellent. On professional business and performing arts courses, students work well together, share experiences and exchange ideas. Hospitality and beauty therapy students develop good social and interpersonal skills but, in hairdressing, some students aged 16 to 18 show little respect for teachers and other students. Most students' assignments in health and social care are satisfactory. Overall, however, too many students' work is satisfactory rather than good. Progression from discrete literacy and numeracy programmes to academic and vocational programmes is good. Few students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress from entry level to level 1 courses in the college.

16 to 18 year olds

6. In 2002/03, about 20% of students were aged 16 to 18. Nearly 75% of these students were on fulltime courses. The majority were on level 2 courses. In 2001/02, retention rates were just below the national average for the sector for the 16 to 18 age-group at all levels except at level 2. The provisional figures for 2002/03 show that retention rates were above the national average at all levels except level 3. In 2001/02, pass rates were significantly below the national average for the sector at every level. For example, the pass rate on level 1, at 53%, was 18% below the national average. The provisional figures for 2002/03, however, show that pass rates improved but remained at or below national averages in the majority of curriculum areas. The college makes very little use of value added data on students' achievements to compare the performance of its students with the national average. However, in science, students perform mostly above the predicted grades based upon their prior attainment and mathematics students perform less well than expected.

Adult learners

7. In 2002/03, approximately 80% of students were adults. Almost 94% of these students were on part-time courses. The majority of enrolments were on level 1 courses. Large numbers of adults enrol on short courses. For example, in 2002/03, nearly half of the college's adult students were enrolled on short courses. In 2001/02, retention rates were at or above the national average at all levels. Provisional figures show that, for 2002/03, retention rates were above the national average at most levels. In 2001/02, pass rates were at the national average for the sector at level 1 but significantly below at all other levels. For example, at level 2, the pass rate was 60%, compared with the national average of 72%. The provisional figures for 2002/03, however, show that pass rates improved but remained at or below national averages in the majority of curriculum areas.

Quality of education and training

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8. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. Of the 251 sessions observed by inspectors, teaching was good or better in 57% of these, satisfactory in 36% and less than satisfactory in 7%. It was excellent or very good in only 16%. Adults are better taught than students aged 16 to 18. In lessons for adults, teaching was good or better in 59% compared with 55% for students aged 16 to 18. The proportion of teaching that was good or better is lower than the average for the sector for colleges of the same type. Lessons are better taught by full-time teachers than part-time teachers.

9. The highest proportion of good or very good teaching was on business administration courses for students aged 19 or over, catering, travel and tourism, beauty therapy, visual and performing arts, and English, languages and communication courses. In five curriculum areas, teaching was less than satisfactory in over 10% of lessons observed. There was some poor practical teaching in

engineering. Some 50% of practical sessions were graded excellent or very good on visual and performing arts courses. On courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the proportion of good or better lessons was low, at 25%, although 69% were satisfactory.

10. In the majority of curriculum areas, teaching in practical lessons was of a much higher standard, whether taught separately or mixed with theory lessons. Learning and attainment were similarly graded. In 10% of the lessons which were solely theory, less than 45% of teaching, learning and attainment were graded good or better. Generally, adults learn more effectively than students aged 16 to 18 with the exception of level 2, where the students aged 16 to 18 learn better.

11. Many lessons are well planned with well-structured schemes of work and lesson plans. Teachers set students stimulating and challenging work, particularly on visual and performing arts courses. On these courses, learning is focused on developing thinking and creative skills. This leads to very high standards of students' work on visual arts courses.

12. On beauty therapy courses, much of the teaching by experienced and well-qualified teachers is excellent. Their lessons reflect current commercial practice and motivate students so that they develop the relevant skills to meet industrial standards. In motor vehicle engineering, practical training aids were used effectively in theory lessons to support teaching and learning. Students learn well and achieve a high level of attainment in most English classes. They undertake challenging and enjoyable activities which successfully extend their ability to analyse and evaluate text. In one lesson, students explored their sensory experience of a boiled sweet as a successful introduction to the use of figurative language in poetry. Students on travel and tourism courses benefit from overseas educational visits, while those on hospitality courses have the opportunity of a residential stay at a college in Paris. They value this experience designed to enrich their learning.

13. Several lessons were predominantly teacher centred with too much talking by the teacher and not enough discussion between the teacher and the students. The quality of learning materials is generally good, although there are insufficient resources for literacy and numeracy courses. On courses for business and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, lessons are sometimes poorly planned and students are often taught in rooms which are cramped and cluttered. In several hairdressing lessons, students were taught examples of poor professional practice. There is little use of information technology (IT) resources to stimulate learning on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there is a good range of options to meet their needs, but on the full-time courses there is insufficient co-ordination of activities to ensure that learning is linked and opportunities taken to develop students' skills and abilities.

14. Classroom management is poor in some curriculum areas. In construction, students are often late for lessons. This causes disruption to the lessons and inhibits learning. There is often poor attendance in the afternoons. During a few lessons, poor student behaviour went unchallenged, particularly in ICT classes, where students used typing chairs to slide around the room.

15. Work-based learning is poorly co-ordinated. It is delivered at the college by teachers who are responsible for the whole of the work-based programmes in their areas, including assessment and review of students in the workplace. In engineering and some areas of construction, there are not enough staff to visit the workplace. Some trainees had not been visited for up to a year. In business administration, teachers have not paid enough attention to technical certificates and key skills as part of the modern apprenticeship frameworks. Students have made little progress through their frameworks and achievement of modern apprenticeships is low.

16. Staff development is carefully planned and involves all of the college's full-time and part-time staff. Financial incentives are offered where appropriate. Particular attention is given to succession planning. There are effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of well-qualified and experienced teachers and to address areas of skills shortage, such as plumbing. Almost all staff take up the good professional development opportunities. Part-time teachers are paid to attend important events such as the annual self-assessment day.

17. The college's learning resources centres are well managed. They provide pleasant and comfortable learning environments with good areas for group and individual work. There is good access to a wide range of learning materials. Each curriculum centre has an allocated, well-qualified, link librarian. There are particularly good facilities for learning in performing arts and professional-standard music resources. The spacious and well-designed student refectory on the main site provides a good choice of food and drink.

18. The college has invested heavily in its ICT-based learning facilities. They are of a high standard and are well used by students. Students have satisfactory access to networked computers which provide Internet access and e-mail. There are effective procedures for the central purchase, installation, and maintenance of the network and a continuous programme of updating is in place. However, ICT facilities at outreach centres are limited. The college has purchased wireless linked laptop computers to support students in some of these centres.

19. The standard of accommodation is generally satisfactory, but there are wide variations between centres. Where accommodation has been re-designed and refurbished, it is very good. In the Pelham Tower building, specialist accommodation for hospitality and media students is of a high standard. Central facilities for student services, the students union, basic skills and the learning resource centre are very good. The college uses a range of additional buildings which are often old, difficult to maintain and of an inappropriate design. In a minority of instances, learning is limited by poor environmental conditions. Cramped rooms and the poor layout of furniture and equipment restrict students' interaction. Some teaching areas are hot, stuffy and poorly ventilated. There is limited access for students with restricted mobility at some centres. There is no lift access to the upper floors of art buildings on the main site. Accommodation at the Connaught outreach centre is of a poor standard but it is well managed and provides a vibrant and well-utilised learning environment.

20. Assessment in the college is mostly satisfactory, although there is poor practice in a few curriculum areas. Vocationally relevant initial assessment is used effectively for all full-time and some part-time students. Learning support needs are identified and, where required, support is effectively arranged. There is no overall guidance on assessment although there is a policy on internal verification. Assessment is in most cases carefully linked to the standards required by the awarding bodies. The assessment of work-based learners varies considerably from good, frequent assessment in the workplace in carpentry and joinery to poor and infrequent in plumbing and hairdressing. In areas of good practice, most work is marked and returned promptly. Teachers provide constructive feedback with helpful guidance to students on how to improve the quality of their work. In areas of weaker practice, comments are vague and do not refer sufficiently to the assessment criteria. In a few areas, formative feedback is either not given, or inadequately recorded to help students.

21. Internal verification is generally satisfactory but inconsistently applied. It is particularly good for key skills but in a few areas has failed to identify weaknesses in assessment practice. To address this weakness, the college has introduced internal verifier forums to share good practice. These actions are new and have had little impact on verification and assessment.

22. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in most curriculum areas at levels 1 to 3. In some areas, there are pre-entry and higher national diploma courses. Many students successfully progress through and on to relevant further study or employment. In subjects where there is very low enrolment, the college works with students to transfer them either to other similar courses or to other institutions that offer the courses.

23. The college has very good links with the community and business. Their needs are successfully identified in a variety of ways. The college works closely with local employers to provide customised courses that develop the skills of their employees. A course validation panel uses local employment data effectively to look at potential new courses. The process includes discussion about the viability of running the courses prior to giving approval. In several areas, good work experience placements are organised, although in others there is little provision of work experience for full-time students.

24. The college has developed some very successful strategies to widen participation. These include increasing the adult provision through outreach work. Increased flexibility funding has enabled the

college to build effective links with local schools, who between them send around 200 students for training in a range of vocational courses. These are offered at NVQ level 1 and 2, and there is one Vocational General Certificate of Secondary Education (VGCSE) in manufacturing/engineering. The developing community provision is particularly strong in creating opportunities for asylum seekers and people with hearing impairment. The college also offers support to the Foyer project for the rehabilitation of homeless people. Six franchise agreements extend the college's breadth of expertise and coverage of local needs. Three of these franchises relate to the arts and media, the others extend the college's reach into community. Development managers have helped to set up over 40 community projects. The area has a large number of international students whose needs are well served by a wide range of language provision.

25. The curriculum is enhanced through speakers, visits, residentials and additional qualifications and the use of international funds to sponsor foreign visits. The students' union organises many enrichment activities and course representatives ensure that the activities offered reflect students' interests and needs. These include links with Brighton and Hove Albion football club and Brighton Bears basketball team to provide coaching. The students' union also heavily subsidises gym membership at two local gyms to overcome the lack of sporting facilities in the college.

26. The college provides good support to its students which is highly valued. The majority of students have good access to a comprehensive range of support services, including counselling, help with accommodation, advice and guidance, learning support and financial support. Not all part-time students, however, are aware of the wide range of support on offer.

27. Potential students aged 16 to 18 receive good information and advice about the courses offered by the college, but adults are not always so well informed about their possible options. The learning needs of full-time students are diagnosed effectively, both during the initial screening process and during the courses. Part-time students, students in the flexible learning centre and work-based learners, however, are not automatically screened and are not always aware that they can ask for screening.

28. Students get good academic and pastoral support through tutorials. The weekly group tutorials and quarterly individual tutorials are particularly effective and well taught. The quality of the majority of tutorials observed was good. The links between learner support tutors and curriculum staff are particularly effective. There are good tutorial materials on identifying learning styles, which students enjoy. Not all part-time students have tutorials.

29. The training provided for tutors and support staff is good. It covers a wide range of topics such as dyslexia and differentiation in teaching. Tutors and personal advisers can take a college-devised nationally accredited qualification in active listening skills. The college has recently piloted a system of managers observing tutors. There is good emphasis on preparing for HE, although there is no college-wide policy on accrediting students' previous learning and experience.

30. Support and guidance are thoroughly planned, reviewed and evaluated. Data on the usage of the service and student retention rates are regularly reviewed by the team. Reviews have led to the appointment of additional staff, such as the disabilities coordinator and a tutor to support students with mental health needs. Communication between student support staff is good and there are regular meetings and much sharing of good practice on the best way of responding to the needs of students and how to extend the service. Support staff also work with students on community projects and at the various college sites.

31. There are good networks with external agencies including schools, colleges and the local university, the LEA, the Connexions service and community projects. The Connexions service fund an adviser at the college for three days a week and there is some innovative work to manage effectively the transition of students from school to college, and the participation of students aged 14 to 16. The Increasing Flexibility Programme for school students has support staff from local schools attending each lesson.

Leadership and management

32. Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Over the last three years, the college has increased student numbers, completed a major refurbishment of one of its main centres and introduced a new management structure. Senior managers and governors have a clear vision for the strategic direction of the college. The mission reflects national and local priorities. The strategic plan is reviewed and updated annually and reflects the college's strong commitment to working in partnership with a range of organisations. The college plays an important role in the needs of the workforce in Brighton and Hove through the Colleges for Business initiative. Retention rates have improved and pass rates are low but improving in the majority of curriculum areas. Communication within the college is good. Senior managers are approachable, keep staff informed and involve them in decision making.

33. Governors clearly understand their responsibilities. They contribute effectively to the annual strategic planning process and ensure that management decisions reflect the college's priorities. They have changed the mission of the college to reflect a stronger commitment to the community. To help them oversee the college's academic performance, governors receive and thoroughly discuss results of student satisfaction surveys and the annual complaints report. The standards committee and the full board receive information about retention and pass rates.

34. Following a review of its sub-committees and their terms of reference, the board has made changes to its operation. For example, the strategic working group is now a sub- committee of the board. There have been several recent changes in the membership of the governing body and a new chair has been appointed. The corporation is actively working to ensure its membership reflects the diversity of the community. Individual governors are linked to curriculum and business support areas but many of these links are not yet fully developed. However, where they are effective, they are valued by governors and staff. Although governors have six performance indicators to monitor their own performance, the use of these is underdeveloped.

35. There have been changes to the management of the curriculum. Regular meetings with individual curriculum directors and senior managers examine opportunities for new programmes to be introduced and to address issues about retention rates and achievement. Programme managers meet during staff development activities but there are insufficient opportunities for them to meet as a group. Curriculum management is generally satisfactory. In the better-managed areas, performance against targets for retention and pass rates is routinely monitored. However, in many curriculum areas, there is insufficient use of data to analyse and improve performance and course reviews lack rigour. Work-based learning is poorly managed.

36. All staff are involved in producing the college's self-assessment report. The process is effective and well managed. Prior to the completion of the self-assessment report, lessons are observed and focus groups of students and staff are interviewed. Part of a college-wide day on self-assessment concentrates on the college theme for the year. For example, the most recent day considered cultural awareness and differentiation. Inspectors broadly agreed with the grades awarded for curriculum areas in the self-assessment report but found that some strengths were overstated and weaknesses understated, particularly in teaching and learning.

37. A quality improvement handbook includes the policy and procedures for achieving continuous improvement and the roles and responsibilities for various individuals and groups. Many of the procedures have been recently revised, including the college's lesson observation scheme. In 2002/03, the college judged 72% of teaching and learning to be good or better and 4% unsatisfactory. Inspectors judged 57% of the teaching to be good or better and 7% to be unsatisfactory. Advanced practitioners support teachers through peer observation but their impact has been limited during their first year of operation. A new framework for teaching and learning has yet to impact upon the quality of teaching. Course reviews are completed twice during the year, although these do not always lead to improvement. Part-time teachers have little involvement in

course reviews.

38. The college has improved the accessibility and reliability of data, which were weaknesses identified in the last inspection. The senior management team receive weekly reports monitoring enrolments by age-group, curriculum areas and levels of qualifications. Recently they have included a comparison with the previous year. Although curriculum teams can monitor applications, enrolments and retention rates, using reports on the college's intranet, the majority make little use of this information to improve teaching, learning and pass rates. The college has had difficulties in reporting the achievement of work-based learners and there is not enough attention to monitoring the effectiveness of this work.

39. Staff promote equality of opportunity effectively. They are engaged in a number of consultative and working groups considering, for example, widening participation, equality and diversity, and access to college premises. The college has clear policies setting out its commitment to equal opportunities, a race relations policy, a student entitlement policy and a policy on the employment of people with disabilities and action plans to implement them. These are monitored by governors and senior managers. Although participation is monitored in terms of the profile of the students enrolling at the college, the achievements of students from particular groups or categories are not analysed to see if they perform better or worse than those from others.

40. Financial management is good. During the last three years, the college has increased student numbers and undertaken a major accommodation project. Curriculum plans, which show trends in recruitment, retention and achievement, are examined by senior managers as part of the budgeting process. Budget holders receive regular and accurate reports on income and expenditure. Retention rates have improved since 2001/02 but pass rates in the majority of curriculum areas remain at or below national averages. The average class size during inspection was above the sector average at 12.8. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Science and mathematics

Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- high pass rates on the diploma in anatomy and physiology
- high retention rates on GCE AS chemistry and national certificate in science courses
- o good levels of personal support for students

o good facilities in science.

Weaknesses

- o limited use of ICT especially in mathematics
- o inadequate use of data to set targets for improvement
- o insufficient engagement of individual students
- o insufficient attention to diverse learning needs.

Scope of provision

41. The college offers General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and GCE AS A2 courses in science and mathematics and an access course in environmental life science vocational courses in science include the national certificate in science and a diploma in anatomy and physiology. At the time of the inspection, there were 48 full-time mathematics students, 6 of whom were adults, and 161 part-time students, of whom 132 were aged 19 or over. Some 211 students were studying science, of whom 147 were part time and 62 were aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

42. Retention and pass rates are mostly satisfactory. Value added data indicate that the majority of students on GCE A2 and GCE AS science subjects perform slightly above predicted grades based on their prior achievement. Few students progress to take GCE A-level mathematics and those that do perform less well than expected. There are high retention rates on the national certificate in science course but low retention rates for GCE AS biology. There are high pass rates in the diploma in anatomy and physiology but low pass rates for GCE AS human biology. The percentage of high grades for GCE AS chemistry and biology courses are significantly above national averages.

43. Most students' work is of a high standard. Students use mathematical and scientific vocabulary confidently. For example, GCE AS students explained the term collinear whilst GCSE students used a variety of correct terms to describe the relations between fractions and decimals. Students work well in laboratories and pay particular attention to health and safety. Target setting for retention rates and achievement has been put in place for each course but this has yet to be embedded or have an impact on success rates.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| GCSE mathematics | 2 | No. of starts | 208 | 168 | 190 |

| (one year) | | % retention | 78 | 68 | 75 |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|----|----|----|
| | | % pass rate | 39 | 42 | 38 |
| GCSE science | 2 | No. of starts | 53 | 51 | 34 |
| | | % retention | 68 | 71 | 71 |
| | | % pass rate | 69 | 42 | 46 |
| GCE AS chemistry | 3 | No. of starts | * | 29 | 22 |
| | | % retention | * | 97 | 91 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 64 | 70 |
| GCE AS human biology | 3 | No. of starts | ** | 34 | 39 |
| | | % retention | ** | 76 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | ** | 50 | 34 |
| GCE AS pure | 3 | No. of starts | 46 | 40 | 46 |
| mathematics | | % retention | 61 | 80 | 54 |
| | | % pass rate | 14 | 38 | 48 |
| National certificate in | 3 | No. of starts | * | 17 | 15 |
| science | | % retention | * | 88 | 93 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 67 | 93 |

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

44. Teaching was good or better in more than half of lessons observed by inspectors. Lessons are well planned and, in the best lessons, teaching activities are suitably varied and include exposition, question and answer, individual and group work. Teachers know their subjects well and teach them enthusiastically. There are good relationships between students and teachers. Students are well motivated, work productively, and make effective contributions to their learning. For example, students in a GCE AS human biology lesson devised their own experiments to determine the level of saturated fats in butter, margarine and lard. This enabled them to become entirely at ease with independent and dependent variables and constants by week six of the course. Laboratory activities are well organised and careful attention is paid to health and safety practice. In practical lessons, teachers link theory and practice clearly and effectively. For instance, in a GCE A2 chemistry lesson, the teacher used an observation of the characteristics of transition metals to expand on the theory. The lesson concluded with a discussion of the students' findings and these were related to the demands of the final assessment.

45. There is an over-emphasis on verbal input in many classes. Student interaction in these classes is limited. Little use is made of CD-ROMs or the Internet in the classroom. Students value the ready access to the Internet through the learning resource centre and are referred to appropriate websites by their teachers. In one lesson, the teacher used a CD-ROM effectively to demonstrate the change in molecular structure in a condensation reaction in the production of carbohydrate macromolecules. Although there is evidence of students using IT in their assignments, students were not observed using IT in their lessons during the inspection.

46. Teachers are approachable, friendly and supportive. Support on academic matters is given on an individual basis or through breakfast clubs, `balcony staff' and homework clubs. Students' progress is effectively monitored and good constructive feedback is given to help them improve the

quality of their work. However, predicted outcomes of achievement are not regularly discussed with students. Attendance rates are satisfactory and a late book is used effectively in lessons to monitor students' punctuality. Individual students' needs are not always taken into account in lessons, for example, learning styles information, whilst collected by tutors, is not always shared with subject teachers. However, in one instance, high-quality additional support helped two visually impaired students to learn effectively.

47. Accommodation and facilities to support science are good. Teachers effectively share good practice and resources. This is helped by the location of science laboratories close together. The arrangement of furniture in the laboratories allows students to move easily between theory and practical sessions. Students are well served by a dedicated team of technicians. The lack of specialist mathematics rooms limits the opportunities to use mathematics resources and classroom displays. Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic about their teaching. There are good library resources and students can access journals through the college's links with Sussex University.

48. A wide range of science courses is offered but there is little provision at level 1. Some students progress from level 2 to level 3 but there is a lack of progression courses from level 1 to 2. GCSE mathematics provides only limited options for progression.

Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management in science and mathematics are satisfactory. Managers show good understanding of equal opportunities issues, for example, the timetable is adjusted to take account of religious festivals. Course reviews for mathematics and science inform the college self-assessment process. Some actions for improvement are identified but they have yet to fully impact on teaching. However, data is not yet widely used to set targets for improvement. Curriculum development and innovation is limited.

Construction

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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory (grade 4)

Strengths

- o high retention rates on many courses
- o high pass rates on plumbing courses
- o effective teaching of key skills
- o good support for individual students

o effective initiatives to widen participation.

Weaknesses

- o low pass rates for painting and decorating and electrical installation at level 1
- o poor achievement and monitoring of progress for modern apprentices
- o inadequate workshop accommodation and equipment
- o poor punctuality and attendance of students
- o insufficient work experience opportunities for full-time students.

Scope of provision

50. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time construction craft courses in carpentry and joinery, plumbing, electrical installation, painting and decorating, interior design and furniture making from levels 1 to 3, and the national certificates in building and civil engineering. It also provides work-related learning and opportunities to gain vocational qualifications for pupils at Key Stage 4. HE courses are provided in collaboration with a nearby university. At the time of the inspection, there were 250 students, of whom 45 studied full time. Some 82 students were aged 16 to 18, 19 were female and 30 were on work-based learning programmes.

Achievement and standards

51. Pass rates on level 2 and level 3 courses in plumbing are high. For example, in 2003, they were more than 20% above national averages. Electrical installation and painting and decorating, however, have poor pass rates. On electrical installation courses, the pass rates have declined over the past two years and for painting and decorating they have been nearly 50% below the national average over the same period. Retention rates on most courses are above national averages and many are high. Few modern apprentices meet all the requirements of the apprenticeship framework.

52. Generally, adults develop better practical skills and understanding of subject knowledge than students aged 16 to 18. Many employed adults use their site experience to help other students in practical sessions and to contribute constructively to theory lessons. Portfolios for carpentry and joinery students are good, containing many photographs and descriptions of jobs they carry out in the workplace. Students' attendance and punctuality is poor in many lessons. Students often arrive late and morning classes have significantly more students than those in the afternoon.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| City and Guilds 2360 | 1 | No. of starts | 51 | 58 | 62 |
| part 1 electrical installation (two year) | | % retention | 59 | 64 | 55 |
| inotaliation (the year) | | % pass rate | 100 | 57 | 54 |
| City and Guilds 2360 | 2 | No. of starts | * | 29 | 32 |
| part 2 electrical installation (two year) | | % retention | * | 93 | 75 |
| inotaliation (the year) | | % pass rate | * | 74 | 58 |
| NVQ plumbing (two | 2 | No. of starts | 36 | 38 | 52 |
| year) | | % retention | 58 | 71 | 67 |
| | | % pass rate | 86 | 41 | 91 |
| NVQ carpentry and | 2 | No. of starts | 43 | 56 | 40 |
| joinery (two year) | | % retention | 63 | 68 | 68 |
| | | % pass rate | 81 | 21 | 81 |
| NVQ painting and | 2 | No. of starts | * | 16 | 14 |
| decorating (two year) | | % retention | * | 44 | 43 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 29 | 33 |
| NVQ plumbing (two | 3 | No. of starts | ** | 17 | 24 |
| year) | | % retention | ** | 94 | 75 |
| | | % pass rate | ** | 63 | 94 |

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

53. The majority of teaching is good or better, with a small proportion being unsatisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers encourage students to set themselves higher goals than they initially considered. For example, students on an interior design course considered perspectives, how plan views differed from front elevations and the ergonomics of furniture as well as the cultural and social influences on furniture designs. The work produced at the end of the lesson was of a high standard and showed considerable learning for a course that had run for six weeks. Key skills are well taught and applied to individual crafts. For example, in one painting and decorating lesson, students selected topics related to their occupation for a communications presentation. The class chose innovative topics such as graffiti, use of colour to influence moods and advanced decorative finishes.

54. In the less effective lessons, students are reluctant to work on the tasks they are set and spend much of their time talking to each other. Some students become easily bored and distracted. At the end of one lesson, many students had little learnt little, despite the fact that the topic prepared by the teacher was particularly relevant to their occupation.

55. Resources are generally poor. Many workshops are too small for the number of students present. In some crafts, there are not enough tools and some equipment does not function effectively. For example, the extraction system in plumbing which removes lead fumes for the welding bays does not meet current health and safety requirements. The joinery workshop is too crowded for the number of students who use it. Students work too close to each other, especially when they are using power and hand tools.

56. Students' progress is satisfactorily monitored and displayed on regularly updated wall charts. Students know what they have achieved and what they need to do to complete their qualification and improve the quality of their work. Work-based learners in carpentry and joinery and brickwork benefit from frequent visits and assessment in the workplace. However, at the time of the inspection, work-based learners in plumbing and painting and decorating had not been visited for progress reviews for more than 13 weeks and some had not been visited for over a year. There is poor communication with students in the workplace in these trades and, for example, they did not receive information on the days of attendance and assessment planning before the start of term.

57. The college has a good range of provision. School pupils have excellent opportunities to learn craft skills. Pupils on the Increased Flexibility Programme attend the college one day a week to study foundation level qualifications. Other pupils, many close to exclusion or who are disengaged from mainstream education, undertake work-related learning by attending the college three hours a week for a year. As well as construction skills, they develop personal and teamworking skills. Many pupils have subsequently progressed to other courses at the college. There are no arrangements for full-time students to undertake work experience. Students are not able to practice the skills they learn at college in a work context or have the opportunity to link with employers who may be able to take them on at the end of their course.

58. Support for students is good. Potential students are tested to assess their aptitude for their chosen occupation as well to diagnose their additional learning needs. There is good support for those identified as needing it. For example, students can discuss their theory work at additional support sessions with a support tutor. Support for those with hearing impairments is good.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory. Retention rates have improved. The results of initial assessment screening had not been passed to the teachers on one site six weeks after the start of term. Timetables are not well managed. Teachers do not have enough knowledge of data on students' achievements. The management of work-based learning is inadequate. Teachers work well together. For example, the teaching and assessment of key skills in most crafts is now the responsibility of one person. There is regular feedback from students and employers. Teachers meet regularly, but day-to-day communication between sites where construction is taught is weak.

Engineering

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

Strengths

- high retention rates
- \circ $\$ high pass rates on motor vehicle servicing and repair progression award
- o good use of practical training aids in theory lessons

- o good teaching in key skills lessons
- o excellent initial assessment and support arrangements
- o effective strategies to widen participation.

Weaknesses

- o low pass rates on computer-aided design courses
- o poor attendance and punctuality which disrupts lessons
- o poor health and safety practice in motor vehicle workshops
- o insufficient formative assessment and feedback of students' work
- o insufficient resources hampering curriculum management.

Scope of provision

60. The wide range of courses offered includes computer-aided design, electronic servicing, motor vehicle and motor cycle repair and servicing, performing engineering operations, GCSE manufacturing and other vocational certificates in engineering. The area also provides NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are currently 236 students enrolled on engineering courses. Some 142 students are full time and 94 are part time. Over 10% of students are female. About one-third of students are aged 19 or over. There are 25 students under 16 years of age. Training is provided in two separate locations.

Achievement and standards

61. Retention rates on all courses are good and have been above the national averages for the last few years. On a few courses, retention rates are particularly high. For example, in test and certification of electrical installation courses, retention rates have been 100% over the past three years. Pass rates on the majority of courses are satisfactory. On test and certification of electrical installation courses rate in 2002/03. Pass rates on computer-aided design courses have fallen significantly in the past three years, from 91% to 57%. On other courses, pass rates are around national averages.

62. During practical workshop training, students produce high-quality work and demonstrate high levels of practical skill when operating engineering machinery. They particularly enjoy these lessons. The attendance rate in lessons observed was poor, at 75%, and students often arrived late. This disrupted the lesson and the teacher had to start the lesson again.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Progression award / | 1 | No. of starts | 28 | 34 | 30 |
| 4100 motor vehicle servicing and repair | | % retention | 82 | 76 | 83 |
| oon non ig and i op an | | % pass rate | 70 | 42 | 96 |
| Test and certification of | 2 | No. of starts | 22 | 41 | * |
| electrical installations (short) | | % retention | 100 | 100 | * |
| | | % pass rate | 64 | 66 | * |
| Computer-aided | 2 | No. of starts | 61 | 53 | 45 |
| draughting and design | | % retention | 70 | 85 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 91 | 76 | 57 |
| National certificate / | 3 | No. of starts | 18 | 17 | * |
| AVCE engineering | | % retention | 67 | 47 | * |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 50 | * |

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

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

63. Teaching is effective, with the majority of lessons being good or better. A small proportion is unsatisfactory. Teachers make effective use of practical training aids in theory lessons where a wide range of fully operational engineering components and system rigs is readily available. Some external component parts have been removed allowing the inner workings to be more easily observed. For example, a motor vehicle gearbox assembly is used to demonstrate gearing movements and the interaction of each component part when gear selections are made. A sectionalised catalytic converter allowed easy identification of the honeycomb structure used to convert the harmful and toxic emissions from the motor vehicle engine.

64. The quality of teaching is variable. In the best lessons, there is innovative teaching, for example, visual perception with colours and symbols being used to represent differing resistor values during electronic lessons. Some lessons, particularly in motor vehicle engineering, are uninspiring. There is little variety in teaching styles, insufficient checking of understanding and poor quality handouts. Lesson support material is predominately text documents of a highly technical nature. Many staff fail to engage students in discussion and debates during lessons. There is good teaching of key skills and good use of occupationally specific material. Activity sheets have been well designed. An example being where motor vehicle students are asked to calculate fuel consumption figures during an application of number lesson.

65. There are poor health and safety practices in workshops. Gloves or barrier creams are not routinely used and safety glasses are not always used when working underneath motor vehicles. Students do not always wear protective overalls. Classrooms and workshops in the technology centre are cramped. Classrooms have standard desk layouts in addition to a significant number of IT workstations in the room. This limits space and causes problems to students in accessing areas. With the addition of video and television resources the space available is further limited. Some staff

rooms are poorly lit and cramped.

66. There are good IT resources available for students' learning. Students easily and frequently access the college intranet system and email allocations allow good access for students working from home. This is a particularly useful facility to students in allowing them to complete assignments.

67. A number of employer and community forums are well established and contribute to programme development. The department offers a good range of programmes from level 1 to 4. This includes GCSE, NVQ levels 1 to 3, intermediate and advanced certificates of vocational education and higher national certificate and diploma courses. A good range is also available for the students aged 14 to 16, including GCSE and NVQ level 1 in work-related training. Modern apprenticeships are available in motor vehicle engineering.

68. The assessment of some students' practical work is poor. Inspectors found some inconsistencies with the grading given by teachers and the actual quality of work produced by students. There is also little formal feedback to students on areas for improvement.

69. There are excellent student support arrangements in place. Individual programmes have been analysed to identify terminology and activities that would be commonly used by students. This information is adapted and introduced into the initial assessment process. The initial assessment leads to effective action planning and support. Students' progress is frequently monitored. Each time a student attends support sessions or is given classroom support the details and improvements they make are recorded. There is then an annual re-assessment of the individual's support needs.

70. Insufficient use is made by curriculum staff of the training programmes offered by the college support services. The college support services offer a wide range of basic skills, dyslexia awareness and differentiation awareness training. Engineering and motor vehicle staff are not sufficiently accessing these professional development sessions compared with other departments of the college. Lesson support material in most lessons is inappropriate for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

71. Management of the curriculum area is satisfactory, with satisfactory reinforcement of equal opportunities. In each tutorial session, equal opportunities is a topic for discussion and staff have a reasonable understanding and awareness. There are effective strategies in place to widen participation. For example, on engineering programmes, 12% of students are female. There are good links with schools and GCSE courses have been developed to support pupils. Work-related training courses have also been introduced.

72. However, an increasing workload is placed upon teaching staff. Where new initiatives are introduced, there is insufficient analysis regarding the implications on current resources. There has been insufficient planning for work-based learning programmes. Internal verification and workplace assessment arrangements are not yet fully established. The current workload on teachers provides little flexibility to allow sufficient management time. These concerns have been highlighted numerous times previously in external verifier reports and in the college's own analysis of the curriculum area. There has been very little action to address these concerns.

Business administration, management and professional

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Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- o high retention rates on the majority of programmes
- high pass rates on General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation and intermediate, certificate in personnel practice and first line management courses
- o much good teaching for adults
- o good personal support for students with diverse needs.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on part-time accounting courses at levels 2 and 3, and AVCE business
- o unsatisfactory teaching on some students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses
- o low-quality accommodation in some areas
- o insufficient planning to meet the needs of level 2 students and work-based learners.

Scope of provision

73. Full-time courses range from foundation level GNVQ to AVCE business. There is also a diploma in administration. Full-time students have the opportunity of working towards key skills awards at level 2. Part-time courses consist of management and professional qualifications such as marketing, first-line management and accounting at levels 2 and 3. There are 469 students in the business administration, management and professional area, with 116 students on full-time courses. These are predominantly aged 16 to 18 with some adults on the AVCE business courses. There are 252 students on part-time courses, with 40% studying through the flexible learning centre. There are 30 work-based students working towards modern apprenticeships and NVQs. Some aspects of provision are subcontracted to a local training provider, including key skills training for these apprentices.

Achievement and standards

74. Retention rates are high on NVQ accounting level 3, certificate in marketing and GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses. The certificate in marketing and GNVQ foundation courses

were significantly above the national average for the last two years. Pass rates are high on GNVQ foundation and intermediate, certificate in personnel practice and first line management courses. Pass rates are low and decreasing on NVQ accounting levels 2 and 3, which includes the flexible learning provision. The AVCE business one-year course and double award are below the national average and have been for the last two years. In 2002/03, one-quarter of students on foundation GNVQ and first-year AVCE achieved their key skills awards. Students on the GNVQ intermediate, diploma and AVCE second year achieve better results. The standard of adult students' learning is good, with all lessons at least satisfactory and the majority good or better. Learning for students aged 16 to 18 is of a lower standard. Attendance stands at 76%.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| English for business | 1 | No. of starts | 29 | 33 | 18 |
| communication | | % retention | 69 | 76 | 100 |
| | | % pass rate | 55 | 56 | 39 |
| GNVQ intermediate | 2 | No. of starts | 15 | 25 | 19 |
| business | | % retention | 80 | 76 | 84 |
| | | % pass rate | 58 | 74 | 88 |
| AVCE business (two | 3 | No. of starts | 34 | 25 | 20 |
| year) | | % retention | 62 | 72 | 35 |
| | | % pass rate | 76 | 50 | 57 |
| Certificate in personnel | 3 | No. of starts | 36 | 36 | 20 |
| practice (one year) | | % retention | 89 | 100 | 90 |
| | | % pass rate | 94 | 86 | 100 |
| NVQ accounting (one | 3 | No. of starts | 42 | 44 | 87 |
| year) | | % retention | 95 | 89 | 85 |
| | | % pass rate | 50 | 38 | 38 |
| Certificate in marketing | 3 | No. of starts | 29 | 26 | 17 |
| (one year) | | % retention | 83 | 85 | 94 |
| | | % pass rate | 8 | 32 | 36 |

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

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

Quality of education and training

75. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory or better. Inspectors observed the best teaching in classes for adults. Lessons were well structured with detailed session plans, high-quality resources and a good variety of teaching methods. In one example, some good video clips were used to engage students and stimulate high-quality discussion. Students used a marketing website to test their knowledge of business analysis through on-line assessment. On some of the professional courses, students work well, particularly in groups, exchanging ideas and thinking through topics. Equality and diversity was promoted particularly well on the adult professional courses.

76. There is unsatisfactory teaching in a small number of classes for students aged 16 to 18. Students' attention is easily diverted and in some cases they leave the class having produced very little work. More advanced students are not catered for adequately. For example, materials used for key skills teaching were at too low a level for the advanced students who quickly became bored.

77. Assessment is planned in advance and students' handbooks clearly set out assessment criteria. Students receive detailed guidance on how to complete assignments. Teachers provide constructive feedback to students and clearly identify what they need to do to improve. Students on the AVCE business two-year course work hard to improve their assignment grades to better their chances of entering university. Keyskills are mentioned in the assignments but not in sufficient detail and are not assessed at the same time. Assessment and internal verification take place too long after the work is completed and not enough evidence from the workplace is used in the NVQ accounting qualifications.

78. There is an adequate range of courses offered to students. Students study additional qualifications such as the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in e-business for AVCE students and GCSEs in maths and English for students who wish to retake examinations. There is no work experience for full-time students. Students visit local employers as part of their assignment work, professional guest speakers visit the college and there are trips aboard for some students.

79. Students are very well supported by their subject and personal tutors. The personal advisers for students are extremely knowledgeable about financial support and specialist help for students. Some adult students receive financial support for child care arrangements. Students have tutorials and termly individual progress reviews and part-time students have tutorials each week as part of their lessons. Students with additional learning needs have the support of a classroom assistant. In one foundation class, a student worked closely with an assistant to complete a business quiz. The assistant worked quietly and studiously with the student and complemented the work of the teacher. Inspectors observed some students who needed additional support but did not receive it. These students did not complete their work and became frustrated.

80. Some accommodation for students is poor. The classrooms are hot and noisy and, in some cases, too small for the size of groups. Some of the handouts used are poorly copied and some are very old. The materials for professional part-time students are very good, properly produced and up to date. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their areas of learning. Some part-time staff are specifically employed for their specialist expertise.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff development is comprehensive, with teachers observing each other in lessons. Teachers also provide mini-demonstrations of their subject areas to other staff. The management of work-based learning is weak. The work-based students' entitlement to technical certificates is not being met. Some 14 students joined as foundation modern apprentices from January 2003 and have yet to receive training or assessment for their technical certificates. During the last two years, 18 students withdrew from the apprenticeship without completing their key skills awards. Students' key skills achievement is not monitored regularly throughout the courses.

Information and communications technology

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Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

 high retention rates for GNVQ intermediate ICT and key skills at levels 2 and 3, modern computer technology stage 1 and short courses

- high pass rates for second-year AVCE and GNVQ intermediate ICT
- o good ICT resources for teaching and learning
- o good support for students with learning difficulties.

Weaknesses

- Low pass rates for key skills at level 2 and 3;
- Low pass rates for some short courses;
- o Poor teaching in classes containing adults and full-time students.

Scope of provision

82. ICT is offered in three curriculum centres: technology, business and management, and in the flexible learning centre. There is a range of courses, including GNVQ intermediate ICT, and Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) ICT, and modern computer technology (systems support). Higher level software courses include website design. There are a number of `drop-in' courses including European computer driving licence (ECDL) and computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) which are also available through the flexible learning centre. There are 544 students in this area. Of these, 116 are full-time and 428 are part-time students. Some 441 students are aged 16 to 18 and 103 are adults, with nearly twice as many male students as female students. Approximately 587 students follow short courses through the flexible learning centre.

Achievement and standards

83. Retention rates are high on the GNVQ intermediate ICT course and the key skills programmes at level 2. There are good retention rates for some short courses, for example, CLAIT. Retenion rates on many courses are well above national averages. There are high pass rates on some full-time courses for 2002/03: for example, second-year VCE ICT and GNVQ intermediate ICT, where both are well above the national average. Pass rates are improving across several other courses. However, there are low pass rates, below national averages, for all key skills programmes at level 2 and some short courses. There is good achievement of practical computing skills. Overall coursework is satisfactory, with some examples of a higher standard observed by inspectors. Attendance is satisfactory, with the average attendance at lessons similar to the national average.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-----------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| CLAIT stage 1 (short) | 1 | No. of starts | 496 | 487 | 213 |
| | | % retention | 94 | 84 | 92 |
| | | % pass rate | 66 | 61 | 51 |
| GNVQ intermediate IT | 2 | No. of starts | 15 | 21 | 35 |
| (one year) | | % retention | 80 | 76 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | 42 | 19 | 74 |
| ECDL (short) | 2 | No. of starts | 197 | 703 | 646 |
| | | % retention | 90 | 76 | 87 |
| | | % pass rate | 61 | 55 | 35 |
| Key skills (one year) | 2 | No. of starts | 304 | 171 | 317 |
| | | % retention | 82 | 94 | 85 |
| | | % pass rate | 24 | 16 | 4 |
| Key skills (one year) | 3 | No. of starts | 32 | 55 | 79 |
| | | % retention | 91 | 96 | 92 |
| | | % pass rate | 31 | 2 | 1 |
| AVCE (two year) | 3 | No. of starts | * | 24 | 29 |
| | | % retention | * | 75 | 38 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 56 | 91 |
| GCSE AS IT | 3 | No. of starts | ** | 15 | 25 |
| | | % retention | ** | 47 | 80 |
| | | % pass rate | ** | 57 | 60 |

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

** course not running

Quality of education and training

84. The majority of teaching and learning are satisfactory or better. Students' work is generally of a satisfactory standard. The majority of lessons are well planned and resourced. Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly, and the schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive. There is good use of teaching aids in most classes. In the best lessons, for example, teachers use text processing and spreadsheets with students to enable them to develop diagnostic skills. Data projectors, overhead projectors and screens are available in rooms, and are often used well to support teaching and learning.

85. Teaching practice is poor in some lessons. Many lessons are teacher-centred, with focus on presentation of information and there insufficient reinforcement of learning other than by some nondirected questioning. There is some poor classroom management, with students inattentive and noisy and instances where students are not sufficiently challenged about late completion of work.

86. Resources for teaching and learning are good. The college intranet site has resources for students on computing courses, and for ICT courses the college network provides students with good access to programme and learning support materials. There is a wide range of current books on computer technology and applications in the college library. Most rooms are of a high standard,

clean, light and well furnished with new equipment, although there are poor teaching classrooms on one site. Staff are professionally qualified and competent, with some staff having qualifications up to masters degree standard.

87. Initial assessment is effective. Key skills assessment is carried out and used to inform students' learning plans. There is also pre-assessment of students prior to enrolment for higher level computer courses. Taster sessions are used to evaluate students' capability and interest. The system for verifying certified courses is thorough and well documented. There is good assessment in many lessons and students receive detailed and prompt feedback. Students have individual tutorials four times each year to review their progress against agreed targets, although in some instances students on computing and ICT courses are not set sufficiently challenging targets.

88. There is satisfactory progression for students. The college offers a range of courses from level 1 to level 4, and approx 50% of current GNVQ students have progressed from entry level courses. Some GNVQ intermediate ICT students have progressed to VCE ICT. However, there are few full-time courses available. Only 6 of the 39 courses offered are full time. Students have access to a wide range of courses available in the flexible learning centre.

89. There is good support for all students. For example, during week one, students have a full session developing their understanding of equality of opportunity. Students with disabilities are well integrated into the classes and teachers provide effective support to meet individual needs. There is also an extended personal development programme for full-time students. Relationships between students and tutors are good and support for students with sensory impairments is particularly effective. Specialist support includes scribing and signing. One example is where notes are kept by tutors at the end of lessons on ways of managing learning and communication for students with Asperger's syndrome. These notes are then used to identify further support.

90. Students are robustly challenged on poor timekeeping and late slips are held on file, analysed and action taken. Few students take part in enrichment activities, and do not appear to be aware which enrichment opportunities are available.

Leadership and management

91. The leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory. At present, computing is the responsibility of technology and courses on the application of ICT lie within the remit of business and hospitality. Most managers are enthusiastic and manage well but have a large teaching commitment as well as management duties. The flexible learning provision has a separate business management structure. There is little sharing of good practice or further development of the curriculum. However, additional training is provided and managers encourage staff members to gain additional qualifications, for example, certificate of education, and also to take part in additional programmes to enhance their competence, such as specialist training in management and communication with students with hearing impairments. All staff participated in the production of the self-assessment report.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel.

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Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Strengths

o good retention and pass rates

- o high standards of teaching and learning
- o highly qualified and experienced staff
- o a wide range of enrichment activities.

Weaknesses

- o lack of rigour in assessment processes in hospitality
- o inadequate development key skills in travel and tourism.

Scope of provision

92. Courses offered in this curriculum area include: NVQs at levels 1 to 3 in food preparation and food service; AVCE travel and tourism; Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) certificate for resort representatives; City and Guilds take off into travel certificate; international travel and tourism diploma, primary and advanced; and International Air Transportation Association (IATA) fares and ticketing. Progression to HE is good. Some 212 students are enrolled on hospitality, travel and tourism courses. There are 129 full-time and 83 part-time students, with 137 students aged 16 to 18 and 75 adult students. There are 97 female and 115 male students. Innovative 14 to 16 school links provision at level 1 in hospitality includes some industry experience. The small work-based learning provision in hospitality and sport has 25 students on modern apprenticeship frameworks.

Achievement and standards

93. There are very good retention and pass rates which are above national averages in most cases on hospitality courses at level 1 and 2, Association of British Travel Agents Certificate (ABTAC) primary and IATA fares and ticketing courses. Pass rates for AVCE travel and tourism for 2002/03 have improved to above the national average. Retention and pass rates for the NCFE certificate for resort representatives has been consistently above national averages for the past three years. There is good achievement of craft standards on hospitality courses and good development of social and interpersonal skills across the provision. Hospitality students are entered for competition work and students gain additional experience through local and overseas placements and work shadowing. There are good examples of students' work in portfolios. On hospitality courses, particularly good use is made of photographic evidence.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| NVQ catering and | 1 | No. of starts | 24 | 39 | 43 |
| hospitality (one year) | | % retention | 83 | 90 | 79 |

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

| | | % pass rate | 90 | 74 | 83 |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------|----|----|-----|
| IATA | 1 | No. of starts | 28 | 34 | 46 |
| | | % retention | 93 | 82 | 98 |
| | | % pass rate | 88 | 96 | 65 |
| NVQ food preparation | 2 | No. of starts | 33 | 22 | 23 |
| and drink service (one year) | | % retention | 79 | 91 | 78 |
| , , | | % pass rate | 92 | 80 | 100 |
| Travel agents certificate | 2 | No. of starts | 44 | 49 | 32 |
| | | % retention | 91 | 80 | 97 |
| | | % pass rate | 75 | 85 | 68 |
| NCFE certificate for | 2 | No. of starts | 29 | * | 56 |
| resport representatives | | % retention | 67 | * | 96 |
| | | % pass rate | 92 | * | 72 |
| AVCE travel and | 3 | No. of starts | ** | 17 | 18 |
| tourism | | % retention | ** | 53 | 72 |
| | | % pass rate | ** | 44 | 92 |
| NVQ food preparation | 3 | No. of starts | * | 19 | 17 |
| and cooking (one year) | | % retention | * | 79 | 65 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 67 | 64 |

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

** course not running

Quality of education and training

94. There is a lot of very good teaching with an effective balance between theory and practical work. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Lessons are well planned, interesting and challenging. Staff make good use of students' individual learning styles by using a variety of teaching methods and resources including specialist manuals and, in cookery classes, a very good range of commodities. Students are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and make confident, lively and well-informed contributions in lessons. They enjoy their learning and work purposefully throughout the lessons. Assignments are well designed and stimulating.

95. Teachers make detailed written comments on assignments that help students develop new ideas and more easily understand complex information. Students on hospitality courses work in good realistic work environments. There is a strong emphasis on the development of professional standards and awareness of the requirements of the hospitality industry. Staff are highly qualified and experienced, and are able to give students an overview of various sectors of the industry. Courses and training events provide professional updating. Staff meet on regular basis and there is effective sharing of ideas and good practice. An extensive range of visits and visiting speakers enrich learning. Travel and tourism and hospitality students have overseas educational visits and hospitality students have the opportunity of a residential stay at a college in Paris. Visiting speakers from industry include local travel agencies, tour operators, hoteliers and celebrity chefs. Travel and tourism students also benefit from work experience placements in the industry.

96. There is a range of up-to-date textbooks, journals, travel trade papers and CD-ROMs in the library and students have good access to IT and the Internet. General classroom accommodation is

uninspiring and unsuitable for some teaching and learning styles.

97. Assessment in hospitality lacks rigour. Initial assessment outcomes and support requirements are not always fully recorded and there is limited use of individual learning plans. Some fast tracking is taking place but there are missed opportunities to acknowledge prior achievement or learning taking place outside the college. Internal verification systems are being strengthened in response to issues raised by the external verifier. Travel and tourism course assessment practices are satisfactory and there are regular and effective reviews of progress. In travel and tourism opportunities are missed to develop key skills using naturally occurring evidence from classroom activities. Students are well supported through both curriculum and personal tutorials and college counselling and advice services. There is also good classroom support, through specialist support workers working with both individuals and groups.

Leadership and management

98. Management of the curriculum across the provision is good, with very effective teamwork. Staff are enthusiastic and communication is good. Course reviews are completed at programme level but these are not always evaluative.

99. The college quality assurance systems are not being used robustly enough to effect continuous improvement within this area, however, changes and improvements have taken place. There have been significant changes in the overall management structures of both the travel and tourism and the hospitality provision, which are now currently located within the same centre of learning. The self-assessment report used in the inspection for this area of learning was generic and did not fully identify specific strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum sub-areas. Previous self-assessment reports used before the relocation of the curriculum areas did, however, identify strengths and weaknesses with which the inspectors agreed.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- high retention rates on beauty therapy level 3, aromatherapy and sports massage courses
- o consistently high pass rates on sports massage courses
- o some excellent teaching on beauty therapy and holistics courses.

Weaknesses

o poor professional practice in hairdressing teaching

- o weak assessment practice in hairdressing
- poor management of key skills.

Scope of provision

100. The hair and beauty department offers NVQ hairdressing and beauty therapy courses on a fulltime and part-time basis. The department also offers part-time courses in holistic therapies and sports massage. There are intensive courses for mature students in hairdressing or beauty therapy. There is a vocational programme for school pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend the Increased Flexibility Programme for one day each week and work towards NVQ level 1 in hairdressing and also undergo training for manicure and cosmetic make-up. There are 173 beauty therapy students, 158 hairdressing students, 244 holistic therapy students and 18 sports massage students. Three students are on a work-based learning programme. Some 483 students are on NVQ courses, the rest are on a range of part-time beauty or holistic therapy certificate or diploma courses. In total, 137 students are aged 16 to 18 and 399 are adults.

Achievement and standards

101. Retention rates on beauty therapy courses at level 3 and on aromatherapy programmes. On the sports massage course, retention and pass rates have been consistently well above the national average. Beauty therapy students meet challenging and tight deadlines for the completion of written work. The standards of work produced by students in beauty therapy and holistics are very high. Beauty therapy students are encouraged to develop interpersonal skills and work effectively in teams, displaying respect and courtesy for staff and peers. This is also evident with adult hairdressing students. In the hairdressing sessions, students aged 16 to 18 often act inappropriately, showing little respect for staff and their peers. Attendance varies from very good on some courses to poor on others.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| NVQ beauty therapy | 2 | No. of starts | 26 | 22 | 22 |
| (two year) | | % retention | 54 | 68 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 79 | 87 | 79 |
| NVQ aromatherapy | 3 | No. of starts | 31 | 33 | 34 |
| (one year) | | % retention | 97 | 88 | 76 |
| | | % pass rate | 90 | 90 | 100 |
| NVQ beauty therapy | 3 | No. of starts | 24 | 27 | 30 |
| (one year) | | % retention | 83 | 93 | 97 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 64 | 93 |
| Diploma in reflexology | 3 | No. of starts | 31 | 33 | 34 |
| (one year) | | % retention | 97 | 88 | 76 |
| | | % pass rate | 93 | 90 | 77 |

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

| NVQ hairdressing (two | 2 | No. of starts | 29 | 28 | 35 |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|-----|-----|-----|
| year) | | % retention | 41 | 50 | 71 |
| | | % pass rate | 83 | 71 | 84 |
| Sports massage (one | 3 | No. of starts | 18 | 16 | 18 |
| year) | | % retention | 78 | 94 | 100 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 100 | 100 |

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

Quality of education and training

102. Teaching is excellent in beauty therapy and holistics lessons. These are attended predominantly by adult students. In the best lessons, staff effectively reinforced current commercial practice and students were seen to develop a high level of practical skills in a relatively short time. Lessons are well planned and structured, with clear aims and objective which are shared with students. A variety of teaching strategies and techniques are used to maintain the motivation and interest of the students. Teachers use challenging, directive questioning techniques well to check students' knowledge and understanding. Classroom management is particularly good and students are fully engaged throughout the session. Highly experienced staff provide excellent demonstrations which are clear, explicit and informative. The style of language and the information given during the demonstration is adapted to suit the needs of the students.

103. There are some poor professional practices in hairdressing teaching. For example, students fail to sterilise tools and equipment before and after use on clients. Insufficient emphasis is placed on using personal protective equipment around chemicals, and clients are not adequately protected. Some clients are inadequately gowned prior to and during hairdressing treatments and services. Students often use inappropriate tools and tutors fail to correct them. For example, a fine-toothed comb was used to untangle chemically treated, long hair. When practising on each other, students often fail to treat their partner with the same level of care they would be expected to use on a client.

104. The accommodation in hair and beauty is satisfactory. However, the hairdressing salons are dated and the reception area is too small for clients to congregate prior to their treatments therefore clients have to wait in the salons. There are insufficient retail products in hairdressing to meet the occupational standards and insufficient personal protective equipment. For example, in practical hairdressing sessions, there were insufficient aprons to protect the students' clothes when using chemicals.

105. There is weak assessment practice in hairdressing. One group of students, many of whom have been employed in the industry for up to two years or have extensive weekend experience, have yet to be assessed on areas in which they are already competent. The college has a broad client base, but students who could be assessed are still working on each other or completing block work. Management of key skills is poor. They are not integrated within the teaching and assessment of the NVQ. This means that opportunities for the integration, teaching or assessment of key skills are missed.

106. A broad range of courses is offered from entry to level 3. Students can take individual diplomas in holistics and complementary therapies. Many students make good progress to employment. However, there are few students on work experience. The college has recognised the need to forge links with employers and a member of staff has been nominated to visit students on work placement and at the same time build links with the salons.

107. There is satisfactory support for students from teaching and tutorial staff. Initial assessment is carried out using an occupationally specific literacy screening test and students identified as needing support are offered additional support sessions.

Leadership and management

108. Overall management is satisfactory. There is a clear management structure within the service industries for the hair and beauty department, with two programme managers. There is good support for new staff, which includes assistance in course planning. The college offers a good staff development programme. Some hairdressing students have challenging behaviour. While continuing professional development is encouraged, there has been insufficient support and development offered to staff in dealing with this in the classroom. Most of the part-time staff still work in industry, which reflects in their technical knowledge when teaching. There is regular observation of teaching practice, however, this has not been sufficiently rigorous to inform the self-assessment process and the weaknesses in teaching in hairdressing were not identified. There is a lack of sharing of good practice across the programme areas.

Health and social care

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Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- o high pass rates on the diploma in childcare and education
- o high retention rates on many courses
- o comprehensive and effective range of support for individual students
- o effective introduction of new courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on most courses
- o insufficient reinforcement of learning in some lessons
- o missed opportunities for integrating key skills for teaching
- o narrow range of provision in social care.

Scope of provision

109. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses from foundation to level 3. Early years and health and social care courses are offered in the service industries centre. Full-time provision includes the introductory certificate in health and social care, the certificate and diploma in child care and education, and the national diploma in early years. Part-time programmes consist of NVQ levels 2 and 3 in early years care and education and the introducing, extending and developing childminding practice courses. The business and management centre provides the full-time first and national diplomas in public services. The adult and continuing education centre provides the part-time national certificate in dental surgery nursing. A total of 242 students are enrolled, of whom 130 are full time. Students on full-time courses are predominantly aged 16 to 18. All students on the care and dental surgery nursing programmes are female, whereas on the public service courses approximately two-thirds are male.

Achievement and standards

110. Retention and pass rates are high on the diploma in child care and education course. The retention rate stands at 78%, well above the national average. Pass rates are 95%, against a high national average. Retention rates are high on many other courses. Of particular note are the improvements on the NVQ early years care and education and national certificate in dental surgery nursing programmes from below national averages to well above. In 2003, the retention rate on developing childminding practice is 95% against a high national average. On most courses, pass rates are below the national figures. An exception to this trend is NVQ level 2 in early years care and education, which rose to 67% in 2003, just below the national average. Much of the students' assignment work is of a satisfactory standard. Some of it is good and reveals students' ability to relate theoretical concepts to their practice in work placements.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Certificate in child care | 2 | No. of starts | * | 18 | 26 |
| and education | | % retention | * | 78 | 73 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 100 | 79 |
| NVQ early years care | 2 | No. of starts | 27 | 24 | 20 |
| and education | | % retention | 59 | 42 | 70 |
| | | % pass rate | 38 | 40 | 67 |
| Diploma in child care | 3 | No. of starts | 39 | 30 | 27 |
| and education | | % retention | 69 | 67 | 78 |
| | | % pass rate | 89 | 80 | 95 |
| National certificate in | 3 | No. of starts | 43 | 44 | 48 |
| dental surgery nursing | | % retention | 35 | 50 | 81 |
| | | % pass rate | 67 | 40 | ** |
| Developing | 3 | No. of starts | * | 17 | 22 |
| childminding practice | | % retention | * | 88 | 95 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 100 | 43 |

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

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

* course did not run

** data unavailable

Quality of education and training

111. Most teaching is satisfactory. Some lessons are good and many students make above-average progress in their learning. In the more effective lessons, teachers use question and answer skilfully to check learning and to increase students' depth of understanding. They often help students to draw upon their work placement experiences and effectively relate the theory being taught to practice in their work placements. In one lesson, the teacher used humour effectively, conducted the lesson at a lively pace with constant questioning and drew on students' work experiences. These strategies maintained students' interest and concentration in understanding the topics of dental terminology and charting assessment.

112. In another lesson on awareness of sensory experiences, the teacher used a variety of materials found in childcare settings to help students experience the impact of the five senses. Music was used to demonstrate both positive and negative impacts. From these experiences, students in small groups planned activities for children to help them learn more effectively by using all their senses. One group produced a fascinating scenario with a pineapple. In some lessons, the teaching is insufficiently demanding and students lose concentration and make slow progress. The strategy of integrating key skills with the vocational content is not working effectively. There are many missed opportunities of identifying key skills in lessons.

113. Staff are appropriately qualified and professionally experienced. The public services team is relatively new and the care team is very new, following significant staffing difficulties during the last academic year. Accommodation for care and early years courses is good and some rooms are particularly well equipped, although rooms for public services courses are a little shabby. All full-time courses have a base room, which allows for good displays of students' work and other course-related material. Students value highly the new learning resources centre and have good access to computers.

114. Assessment is usually fair and accurate. Comments on students' written work are helpful and constructive and usually contain guidance on how to improve their grades. Students' progress is monitored regularly in individual tutorials, progress reviews and course team meetings. Serious problems on early years courses in meeting awarding body criteria during the last academic year have been resolved.

115. New courses have been carefully introduced in the last 12 months and have recruited well. These include the first diploma in public services, reasonably successful in its first year, the national diploma in public services and the introductory certificate in health and social care. Care provision is heavily weighted towards child care courses and reduces the range of choice for students for future progression. Plans are in place to rectify the gap in social care provision with the introduction of NVQs in direct care in the next few months. Public services have established effective links with a wide range of agencies who make a significant contribution to the courses. The college is an active member of the early years partnership and direct care consortium. Links with early years providers are effective in producing high-quality work experience placements for students.

116. The range of support for individual students, both full time and part time, is comprehensive and effective. Students value highly the academic guidance they receive from tutors and their accessibility and willingness to help. Students are thoroughly assessed at the beginning of the course for additional learning needs and effective support is quickly provided through individual sessions and in class. Adult students are making increased use of these services. There is a well-considered tutorial programme designed to meet the particular needs of different courses. Students vividly recalled the recent assessment of their individual learning styles and the ways in which tutors attempt to accommodate these.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff regard the quality of students' experience as their main priority. They are aware of the need to improve pass rates, having achieved an improvement in retention rates, and to fill the gaps in social care provision. Strategies to tackle these issues are not yet fully developed. Communication in the new course teams is good and staff support each other well. Leadership of the public services courses is strong. Courses are reviewed annually and address all the key questions in the inspection framework.

Visual arts

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Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Strengths

- o very good teaching
- o high standard of students' work
- o very good progression to HE
- o challenging project briefs
- o well-organised courses.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates over two years on the national diploma and GNVQ intermediate courses
- unsuitable accommodation and equipment which restricts students' learning activities.

Scope of provision

118. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in visual arts at levels 1 to 3 and a small amount of higher level work. Accredited courses include GNVQ intermediate, national diploma and diploma in foundation, offered predominantly on the main site. There is also a range of Open

College Network (OCN) and leisure classes offered under the adult and community education programme. Most of the part-time day and evening provision takes place at the Connaught Adult Education Centre in Hove. The whole visual and performing arts area accounts for 3,495 enrolments. Some 2,271 students are enrolled on visual arts provision. Of those, 294 are on photography courses, 251 on foundation programmes and 1,725 on art and design courses. Approximately 860 visual arts students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

119. Pass rates on many courses are at or above the national average. Retention rates on two-year diploma courses have declined over the last three years and retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate course are below national figures. Current retention from first year to second year of the national diplomas shows improvement. Progression to HE is very good from the foundation and from national diploma courses in textiles, three-dimensional design and graphics, with many students being offered places. In photography, however, few students progress to either HE or related employment. There is a high standard of students' work. The best work demonstrated effective research and evaluation, a creative approach to problem solving and good visual skills. In classes, the majority of students produces work above the standard expected and some portfolios, sketchbooks and finished work are outstanding. Attendance is good, at 83%, with a high average class size of 15.8.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|----------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| GNVQ intermediate art | 2 | No. of starts | 25 | 34 | 23 |
| and design | | % retention | 68 | 65 | 61 |
| | | % pass rate | 77 | 77 | 100 |
| NOCN starting | 2 | No. of starts | 38 | 42 | 20 |
| photography | | % retention | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | | % pass rate | 87 | 69 | 80 |
| National diploma in | 3 | No. of starts | 73 | 55 | 38 |
| design | | % retention | 68 | 67 | 63 |
| | | % pass rate | 78 | 76 | 96 |
| National diploma in | 3 | No. of starts | * | * | 21 |
| photography | | % retention | * | * | 57 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 100 |
| Diploma in foundation | 3 | No. of starts | 22 | 40 | 32 |
| art and design (part time) | | % retention | 68 | 65 | 97 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 85 | 100 |
| Diploma in foundation | 3 | No. of starts | 166 | 188 | 183 |
| art and design (full time) | | % retention | 89 | 91 | 91 |
| | | % pass rate | 96 | 89 | 99 |

| A sample of retention and | pass rates in visual arts. | 2001 to 2003 |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
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Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* data unreliable

Quality of education and training

120. Teaching is very good, with a clear emphasis on the teaching of the fundamentals of visual language, mark making, line, tone and colour. Project briefs are challenging. They are well thought through and the content engages students. Students produce interesting research and innovative worksheets. They manipulate ideas fluently, moving between two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials. One student produced innovative worksheets and models from looking at surgical instruments and another, from looking at farm machinery.

121. In the best sessions, there were lively debates and a free exchange of personal experience, particularly in adult sessions. One student shared with the class his difficult experiences of trying to gain permission to take photographs in a local commercial building. In another photography lesson, the students were led in the analysis of a range of published images projected on to a whiteboard. The tutor demonstrated excellent communication skills and asked a member of the class to annotate the projected image with marker pens. The student quickly became part of the teaching process, debating with colleagues the relative merits of the images. In the weaker sessions, students are often passively involved with little interaction with the teacher.

122. Students' work is satisfactorily assessed. Examples of marked work are appropriately graded and helpful written feedback is provided. Effective verbal feedback is also provided to students.

123. Support for students is good. Screening is effective in identifying additional support and in diagnosing learning styles. Early one-to-one reviews identify students at risk and information is entered on students' profiles. The learning styles information is particularly well used to allow students to take control of their own learning through the tutorial process.

124. Teachers are well qualified. Many part-time staff teach in the area. Part-time contracts are often offered so that staff can continue to practise as artists in their own right. Staff set high standards and bring to the students' experience a professional and commercial context as well as valuable contacts. Students, however, have few opportunities for work experience and few students progress directly to employment.

125. There is some unsuitable use of accommodation. Studio and classroom areas are often cramped and cluttered. The photographic studio, while adequate for the small group size observed using it, is also used in part as a conventional teaching area. The space is partly filled with chairs, which hinder movement, and light levels are reduced. Where standard classrooms are used, some are cramped, with a high number of computers making group interaction difficult. Some students do not have base areas or lockers in which to store work and materials. Equipment and facilities in textiles and graphics is limited or out of date.

126. The standard and range of conventional photographic equipment are good, and the equipment well maintained. The darkrooms provide enlargers for a wide range of industry-standard formats, and automated colour print processing facilities are available. The college provides access to highquality medium and large format cameras and follows normal practice in expecting students to use their own small format equipment.

Leadership and management

127. The visual arts area is well led and effectively managed. Staff have good access to managers at all levels and internal communications are good. Communication between teaching staff and technical support staff is also good. Staff share a clear vision about the students' experience. Course teams regularly review delivery, sometimes on a daily basis. Course review documents provide a sound basis for improvement. All full-time and part-time staff attend the self-assessment day held each year and have the opportunity to contribute to and own the judgements of the resultant report. All full-time and substantive part-time staff are regularly appraised, and the outcomes inform planned staff development activities.

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Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Strengths

- o high pass rates on national diploma in drama and national diploma in media courses
- very good vocational context for teaching and learning
- o widening curriculum offer through partnerships
- o good support and preparation for progression for students
- o students' work reflects professional practices.

Weaknesses

- o low retention from first to second year of national diploma programmes
- o some unsuitable use of accommodation.

Scope of provision

128. Full-time courses are offered at levels 3 and 4 for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. They are BTEC national certificates in music technology and national diplomas in performing arts, media studies and multimedia studies. The college also offers part-time courses in journalism, music technology and desktop publishing. The curriculum offer is extended through partnerships with external organisations. A level 4 professional development certificate in songwriting for adult students is offered in collaboration with Brighton Institute of Modern Music (BIMM). No level 1 or 2 courses are available. There are currently 131 full-time students, 65 of whom are aged 16 to 18, and 318 part-time students, 308 of whom are adults.

Achievement and standards

129. Pass rates are high on the majority of programmes. On the national diploma in media, they have been 100% for three consecutive years. Retention on all three national diplomas has declined in 2003/04 for students progressing from the first year to the second year of the course. The standard of students'work is good in all areas and very good in some lessons. For example, students on the national diploma in multimedia demonstrate technical competence with industry-standard

equipment and combine practical skills with their own creative imaginations to achieve effective image manipulation. In the best work, there is evidence of careful research and planning. Professional development certificate drumming students learned, practised and refined their control of `rhythmic fills' in the space of one inspiring lesson. Performing arts students worked in a demonstrably collaborative way to explore the physical features of epic theatre. Attendance for lessons during the inspection was 82%, with an average group size of 13.8

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Community drama | X No. of starts | | * | 21 | 16 |
| | % retention | | * | 71 | 75 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 67 | 83 |
| National diploma in | 3 | No. of starts | 41 | 29 | 17 |
| drama | | % retention | 61 | 59 | 59 |
| | | % pass rate | 80 | 88 | 100 |
| National certificate in | 3 | No. of starts | * | * | 22 |
| music technology | | % retention | * | * | 68 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 80 |
| National diploma in | 3 | No. of starts | 15 | 16 | ** |
| media | | % retention | 40 | 44 | ** |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 100 | ** |
| Pre-entry certificate in | Н | No. of starts | 21 | 20 | 18 |
| journalism (newspaper) | | % retention | 90 | 90 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 50 | 56 |

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

* course not running

** fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

130. Most lessons are very good or excellent. Lessons are well designed to engage students quickly and involve them in tasks that challenge their thinking. There is very effective use of stimuli to provoke personal responses to tight design, performance and product briefs. For example, in one lesson, students were shown a range of objects photographed from unusual angles. After discussing how a viewer perceives form and texture, they were invited to select an object from a prepared box and to shoot and edit a short animated sequence. Students are skilfully guided in the practices of collaborative working. They thrive in an atmosphere built on trust and corporate confidence. For example, a class of mixed-ability singers on the song-writing programme demonstrated to the group their attempts to invest emotion in a song through physical and vocal techniques. They received immediate critical analysis from both the teacher and their peers, and the underlying competitive dimension to the activity was constructively used by the teacher to drive up expectations and standards.

131. In a few lessons, opportunities are missed for more active engagement of students and their learning is consequently inhibited. For example, on one occasion a well-motivated group lost attention and interest because the teacher taught research almost entirely from detailed notes.

132. Resources are good, and for digital multimedia they are very good. Accommodation is well planned, with industry-standard equipment and software which supports up-to-date learning. The recent CoVE status for the digital design work has already seen good investment by the college in new IT suites and these are also available for some media and music technology work. Accommodation for performing arts is in a large hall and adjoining studio: there is a sprung floor for dance but the hall is in need of upgrading to offer professional theatre capacity. Journalism is taught in rooms with individual desktop computers sited in such a way as to make classroom interaction between students difficult. Some accommodation is inappropriate for the purpose. IT rooms that are used for theory classes are difficult to manage for group discussion. Most staff have recent, very extensive industrial experience and are well qualified as teachers.

133. There are clear assessment policies. Assignment briefs are comprehensive and offer both structural guidance on how to work as well as giving target outcomes and differentiation criteria. Written and oral feedback to students is timely, consistently good and helps students to improve their learning. Internal verification processes are rigorous.

134. Students learn subject and life skills through coursework and are actively encouraged to complement their formal studies with further activities such as gallery and exhibition visits, additional specialist short courses and trips to see professional performances, and end-of-year performances and exhibitions. The studio and performance facilities are made available to students for individual and group work outside formal timetabled hours. The close college links with independent performance schools BIMM and the Academy of Creative Training provide some opportunity for exposure to current professional working practices.

135. Students are well supported and prepared for progression. Support for students is very good and highly effective. Teachers and tutors provide students with excellent guidance and help. There is a centrally managed tutorial group programme, which is taught by subject staff to discrete vocational year groups, and this offers excellent developmental and remedial support to students.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership and management are very good. There is both a clear vision and a supporting strategy. There is a staff ethos of high professional standards in both education and vocational training, and an appetite to share good practice. Teachers work closely together and communications strategies largely overcome the challenge of having a significant number of fractional and part-time staff. Management practices are thorough and transparent. Staff place high value on the support they receive from curriculum and programme managers and consequently their morale is high. A full programme of lesson observations supported by sharp self-appraisal has been used to improve the overall quality of teaching.

English and modern foreign languages



Overall provision in this area is good (grade 2)

Strengths

- o high pass rates for GCSE and GCE AS French and GCSE Spanish
- o much stimulating teaching with good attainment in lessons

- o good use of foreign languages in lessons
- very good support for language development in the library resource centre
- o good progression
- o very effective curricular management.

Weaknesses

- o low pass rates on the certificate in proficiency course
- o low retention rates on some courses
- o inappropriate accommodation for group work in some lessons.

Scope of provision

137. The college provides full-time and part-time courses in English, creative writing, modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language (EFL). There are GCSE and GCE AS and A2 courses in English and modern foreign languages. EFL is offered at levels 1 to 3, using OCN accreditation and the college's own certificates. The access to HE programme includes an option in English literature. There are 831 students on courses, of whom 166 are full time: 89 full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Of the 438 students on EFL courses, 95 are full time. Some 157 students are preparing for GCE AS or A-level examinations and 139 students are preparing for GCSE examinations in English or modern foreign languages.

Achievement and standards

138. On some courses, pass rates are significantly above national averages. The pass rate on the NVQ Spanish for leisure and tourism course is 100% and it was 93% for GCSE Spanish 2002/03. For level 3 communication key skills, the pass rate is 32%. There is a lot of good attainment in the majority of lessons. Retention rates are below the national averages on some courses. For GCE AS English and French, the trend is improving, but there is a downward trend for key skills at level 3 in communication and for Spanish courses. In English classes, students undertake challenging and enjoyable activities which successfully extend their ability to analyse and evaluate texts. In modern foreign lanugages and EFL classes, students generally speak with levels of fluency and accuracy equal to or slightly above expectation. Levels of comprehension are good in these subjects.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|----------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| First certificate in | 2 | No. of starts | 126 | 163 | 100 |
| English | | % retention | 74 | 79 | 76 |
| | | % pass rate | 69 | 47 | 53 |
| GCSE French | 2 | No. of starts | 30 | 15 | 19 |
| | | % retention | 60 | 40 | 63 |
| | | % pass rate | 72 | 100 | 83 |
| GCSE English | 2 | No. of starts | 141 | 99 | 89 |
| | | % retention | 68 | 83 | 78 |
| | | % pass rate | 79 | 83 | 80 |
| GCSE Spanish | 2 | No. of starts | 36 | 60 | 23 |
| | | % retention | 72 | 73 | 61 |
| | | % pass rate | 81 | 80 | 93 |
| GCE AS Spanish | 3 | No. of starts | 17 | 35 | 19 |
| | | % retention | 82 | 89 | 68 |
| | | % pass rate | 64 | 26 | 77 |
| GCE AS French | 3 | No. of starts | 20 | 32 | 18 |
| | | % retention | 55 | 66 | 67 |
| | | % pass rate | 45 | 24 | 83 |
| GCE AS English | 3 | No. of starts | * | 18 | 30 |
| literature | | % retention | * | 44 | 70 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 50 | 81 |
| Key skills in | 3 | No. of starts | 36 | 89 | 62 |
| communication | | % retention | 81 | 97 | 71 |
| | | % pass rate | 0 | 2 | 32 |

A sample of retention and pass rates in English and modern foreign languages , 2001 to 2003

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

139. Much teaching in English is very good or excellent. Teachers provide stimulating lessons and students respond enthusiastically. In a creative writing class, students were encouraged to describe ordinary objects as if they had encountered them for the first time. This led to some vivid and humorous writing. All teaching in EFL is at least satisfactory; it is often good. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that students speak as much as possible, often in pair work. Students make good progress during this activity and work collaboratively, growing in confidence, fluency and accuracy. In all modern foreign languages lessons observed, teachers were of native or near-native speaker standard. Very little English is used by modern foreign language teachers, who provide students with excellent oral role models. All teachers plan lessons well and include strategies that effectively address the diverse learning needs of individuals.

140. All teachers have appropriate qualifications. Their expertise is well matched to the needs of the

curriculum and their skills are further enhanced by the college's well-planned professional development programme. Many activities, such as those organised by advanced practitioners, have considerable impact on the experience of students. The extent to which foreign languages are routinely used by teachers in class is an example of this. The library resource centre offers very good multimedia support for language development across the area of learning. The language laboratory, despite a long-standing maintenance need, is still fit for its purpose. The best use of both facilities is made by teachers and students of EFL, who are also at the forefront of the college's innitiative to successfully develop computer-aided language learning. Some rooms are drab and uninspiring. Others are inappropriately used, for instance, when lessons primarily based on discussion are held in the language laboratory or computer room, students are not allowed to use the language laboratory for private study. Part-time EFL and most modern foreign languages students do not have regular access to the language laboratory and timetabling limits its availability.

141. Assessment is satisfactory. Students undergo an initial assessment. In EFL, commercially produced assessment materials are supplemented by materials developed by the college. This, and the relatively large number of courses available, results in students being placed in an appropriate group to meet their needs and aspirations. All courses are accredited. In English, there are regular standardisation activities. EFL students regularly correct their own work, under the teacher's direction, in accordance with good EFL practice.

142. There is a satisfactory range of EFL, modern foreign lanugages and English courses available as day or evening classes. The curriculum provides opportunity and progression to a wide range of students, including a particularly large group of international students. Programmes are enriched through a variety of activities. A creative writing group makes regular visits to local poetry events. Level 3 students on English courses attend study days. However, there is little enrichment activity for level 2 English students.

143. Overall, guidance and support are good. For instance, international students considering an EFL course benefit from highly informative course description leaflets. EFL and modern foreign languages students receive a helpful introductory leaflet from the library resource centre. This complements the comprehensive induction given by staff of the Centre. Teachers and students adhere to the very effective college policy against poor punctuality. Attendance rates are not good. Procedures to offer guidance in response to telephone enquiries do not always satisfy potential students. For example, students in a modern foreign language class had experienced considerable difficulty prior to enrolment.

Leadership and management

144. Curriculum management is very effective. It is bringing about improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and attainment. Strategic objectives are understood and supported by teachers, for instance, in respect of planned developments for EFL. Teachers are consulted and feel able to contribute ideas for improvements. Arrangements for quality assurance are good. For example, teachers make full use of good lesson-planning techniques and schemes of work. Those who observe lessons are able to evaluate what they see against what they might expect to see. Realistic targets for retention and pass rates are set and monitored. The potential to use data further to improve the quality of learning is not fully understood. Resources are not always used to best effect. There is currently a vacancy for a modern foreign languages programme leader.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- o thorough initial assessment and sharing of information
- o good practical training in catering
- o well-planned and well-delivered work preparation programme
- o broad range of accredited part-time programmes for adults.

Weaknesses

- o insufficient focus on targets to inform individual learning
- o inadequate range of resources to support learning
- o insufficient co-ordination of the learning activities on the full-time entry programme.

Scope of provision

145. The college offers programmes for students aged 16 to 18 and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For students aged 16 to 18, the two-year full-time entry course has 17 students preparing for entry to other courses through literacy and numeracy sessions and vocational taster options. There are 13 adults on the two-year adult entry programme. Seven adult students are following a work preparation programme in partnership with the community employment team who support work experience placements. There are 120 adults on a range of accredited part-time programmes including practical and personal development courses located at the main college site, at the Connaught Road site and at Stanmer Park. The college also holds a contract for an entry to education (E2E) programme. At the time of the inspection, there were 20 students on the E2E programme, which was not graded separately.

Achievement and standards

146. Retention rates are high and attendance is good on all programmes. On the foundation for work programme, which preceded E2E, 63% of students were retained and 50% progressed to employment or further training. In 2002/03, all six students on the full-time entry programme for students aged 16 to 18 were retained for the second year. Achievement is satisfactory. Entry level qualifications were introduced for the part-time adult programmes in 2002/03 and 77% of students achieved a qualification. The standard of students' work in sessions and students' development of personal and social skills is satisfactory. However, some learning targets are insufficiently challenging and are too general for the progress of students to be effectively measured. There is insufficient review and evaluation of students' overall individual progress and achievement. Few students progress to level 1 courses in the college. In 2001/02, 55% of students progressed to level

1 programmes and in 2002/03, no students progressed to level 1 programmes.

Quality of education and training

147. The college has worked with a local consortium of training and support agencies to identify students' needs and to develop an appropriately broad range of accredited part-time programmes that meets the needs and interests of adults. There is a stimulating range of practical courses, such as nature and conservation and photography, and interesting personal development courses, such as women's issues and self-advocacy.

148. The work preparation programme is well planned and delivered. There are relevant modules to enable the students to gain appropriate knowledge and skills, such as health and safety and customer service. A broad range of teaching and learning strategies are used well to promote learning. To enable the students to have a good understanding of customer services, the students visit the college library and the college hairdressing salon. The students had prepared questions to ask, interviewed staff and customers and took photographs, which were used as the basis for discussion, literacy work and the production of a poster to reinforce learning.

149. There is a thorough initial assessment process where literacy and numeracy skills are formally assessed. Speaking and listening skills and social and behavioural skills are also assessed. This information is used to form a detailed individual student profile that is shared amongst all staff.

150. Teaching is generally satisfactory and teachers have good working relationships with their students, which fosters learning. However, there is insufficient focus on setting targets to inform individual learning. Individual learning plans are insufficiently detailed. Teaching is sometimes dull, with an over-emphasis on the completion of tasks or worksheets. There is much whole-group teaching and some students are insufficiently challenged. Some lessons have inappropriate content for the level and needs of the students. In the poorer sessions, teachers use an insufficient range of teaching strategies to engage all students. In one lesson, worksheets were too difficult for the students to understand, with no practical resources to help them understand number concepts. Whilst tutorials are regular, they are not used effectively to measure and review progress or to set learning objectives. Tutors talk with the students about what they have done, what they have enjoyed and what they might like to do next.

151. There are insufficient resources to support learning in some areas. Computers are not available in some classrooms. Some classrooms are cramped, making it difficult for support staff and tutors to move between students. There is insufficient use of dictionaries to promote independent learning. There is no dedicated accommodation for the development of independent living skills.

152. Learning activities are inadequately co-ordinated on the full-time entry programmes. The programme lacks coherence and there is insufficient emphasis on all elements of the programme working together consistently towards shared learning goals. For example, vocational tasters are sometimes repetitious. Students on business administration and on health and social care options are covering basic health and safety with insufficient subject specialism or differentiation between first-year and second-year students.

153. Support for students is satisfactory, with good staff to student ratios and good support for sensory impaired students.

Leadership and management

154. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent changes have been made in the programme offer and in the use of individual learning programmes. Well-developed partnership arrangements inform curriculum and programme development and have increased enrolment. Managers have a good understanding of the issues they need to address and actions towards some weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report have already been instigated. Informal systems of communication between managers and staff are satisfactory, as is staff development although not all relevant staff have undertaken training in the core curriculum. Management of the E2E

programme is poor. There is little understanding of the changes from the foundation to work course to the aims of E2E. Students who have been on the programme for six weeks do not have an individual learning plan and have not had a review. The elements of their programme are not adequately brought together to make a coherent programme.

Literacy and numeracy



Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- o high retention rates on level 1 key skills application of number and basic literacy
- high pass rates for ESOL key English test and level 1 key skills application of number;
- o good achievement on non-accredited programmes
- o good progression from discrete literacy and numeracy courses
- o very effective literacy and numeracy support
- o good personal support for students with diverse needs.

Weaknesses

- o low retention rates on entry level literacy programmes
- o low pass rates for the preliminary English test
- o a lot of unsatisfactory teaching

- o inadequate resources
- o late marking of screening tests by staff in some curriculum areas.

Scope of provision

155. The college provides part-time entry and level 1 literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes for adults and one full-time ESOL course for students aged 16 to 18 at its main centre in Brighton. Three-hour taster sessions are offered every fortnight. One numeracy class and a small drop-in literacy facility are offered in a small college centre in Hove: there are 251 enrolments on this programme. Some 134 students aged 16 to 19 on vocational courses are enrolled on key skills application of number, 98 are enrolled on key skills communication and 212 students on vocational or academic programmes receive individual literacy or numeracy support from the college's learning support unit.

Achievement and standards

156. Retention and pass rates on most literacy and numeracy programmes are good. Retention rates on application of number level 1 are significantly higher than national averages. Retention rates are low on entry level literacy courses. There are high pass rates for some qualifications and students on non-accredited programmes make good progress. Progression from discrete programmes to academic and vocational programmes is good. Attendance at classes is poor.

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Adult literacy (one year) | Е | No. of starts | 48 | 168 | 43 |
| | | % retention | 63 | 88 | 70 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Preliminary English test | 1 | No. of starts | 90 | 148 | 155 |
| (one year) | | % retention | 53 | 74 | 76 |
| | | % pass rate | 35 | 60 | 29 |
| Key English test (one | 1 | No. of starts | 49 | 43 | 23 |
| year) | | % retention | 45 | 67 | 74 |
| | | % pass rate | 36 | 62 | 71 |
| Key skills application of | 1 | No. of starts | 439 | 218 | 98 |
| number (one year) | | % retention | 79 | 93 | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | 15 | 12 | 48 |
| Key skills | 1 | No. of starts | 413 | 189 | 134 |
| communication (one year) | | % retention | 78 | 93 | 78 |
| Joury | | % pass rate | 19 | 17 | 40 |
| Basic literacy course | 1 | No. of starts | * | * | 28 |
| (one year) | | % retention | * | * | 96 |

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

| % pass rate 100 | | | % pass rate | * | * | 100 |
|-----------------|--|--|-------------|---|---|-----|
|-----------------|--|--|-------------|---|---|-----|

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

157. Approximately half of all teaching is good or better. Both adults and younger students are lively and interested students. They challenge and help each other and enjoy their learning. Some teaching of key skills level 1 and on discrete programmes is unsatisfactory. Less effective lessons are inadequately planned. They do not capture students' attention and make little contribution to their literacy and numeracy skills. Some teachers do not understand basic teaching and learning principles and the importance of moving students forward in short, easy stages.

158. Additional literacy and numeracy support for students on vocational programmes is very good. Staff are well qualified and experienced and support sessions are carefully planned and recorded. There is good support for students with hearing impairments. Special tutorial sessions for deaf ESOL students are run. Deaf awareness sessions are attended by many staff. New literacy and numeracy students attend the three-hour taster session involving initial assessment and an introduction to the college. However, publicity about opportunities for improving literacy and numeracy skills is unimaginative and ineffective. Many courses have unfilled places.

159. Assessment of students is satisfactory. Students on discrete literacy and numeracy programmes take a nationally recognised screening test. A diagnostic period of six weeks follows, in which teachers use a variety of different methods and materials to identify students' skills and needs. Targets are then set for students' personal learning plans and progress against these is reviewed every six weeks. The system is new and its effectiveness has yet to be proved. Some ESOL students joining programmes later in the year are not assessed on entry. Full-time students on vocational courses undergo screening followed by a vocationally relevant literacy and numeracy assessment. The results are conveyed in a well-designed report addressed to the student. This identifies which of the student's skills are `fine for the course' and which need the student's particular care. Skills that the student needs support to develop are noted and the report is copied to the learning support unit. However, staff in some curriculum areas do not prioritise the marking of literacy and numeracy assessments. Students with literacy and numeracy needs in these areas are not referred early enough for learning support.

160. Potential students have access to a small but adequate range of part-time literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses at the college's main centre in Brighton. Only one numeracy and one drop-in literacy session are held in another of the College's centre at Hove. There is good provision to meet specific needs. For example, a women-only ESOL course runs on one morning a week in response to demand from students. Dedicated literacy and numeracy courses for deaf people are held in the evening. The college has, in previous years, run a variety of courses in the community although none were running at the time of inspection. Community courses are scheduled to run in 2004 from January to July.

161. Teaching and learning resources are inadequate. Most teachers on discrete programmes and many key skills teachers are employed on a sessional basis. There are insufficient salaried staff to support sessional teachers and to develop programmes. Plans are in place to increase the salaried staffing on discrete programmes. Teaching rooms used by literacy, numeracy and ESOL students do not have enough computers. There is a shortage of computer-based learning resources and too few of the recently published resource materials link to the core curriculum.

Leadership and management

162. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New posts to take forward the skills for life agenda have recently been created. There is a good staff development programme related to

disability. An effective course review process feeds into the self-assessment report. However, there are insufficient teaching observations for discrete programmes and key skills level 1. Some new staff have not been observed. Staff without specialist training in literacy, numeracy or ESOL are sometimes deployed to teach key skills level 1 and ESOL. The good practice in all three strands is not sufficiently shared. Race and gender issues do not have the same high profile as disability.

Part D: College data

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Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

| Level | 16-18 | 19+ |
|-------|-------|-----|
| 1 | 29 | 32 |
| 2 | 42 | 21 |
| 3 | 19 | 12 |
| 4/5 | 0 | 1 |
| Other | 9 | 36 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

| | | | × |
|---|-------|-------|----------------|
| Curriculum area | 16-18 | 19+ | Total |
| | No. | No. | Enrolments (%) |
| Science and mathematics | 399 | 949 | 6 |
| Land-based provision | 14 | 349 | 2 |
| Construction | 230 | 430 | 3 |
| Engineering, technology and manufacture | 78 | 283 | 2 |
| Business administration, management and professional | 169 | 629 | 3 |
| Information and communications technology | 531 | 3,400 | 17 |
| Retailing, customer service and transportation | 12 | 40 | 0 |
| Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel | 366 | 842 | 5 |

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| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | 233 | 514 | 3 |
|---|-------|--------|-----|
| Health, social care and public services | 70 | 1,911 | 8 |
| Visual and performing arts and media | 571 | 2,924 | 15 |
| Humanities | 110 | 827 | 4 |
| English, languages and communication | 499 | 1,598 | 9 |
| Foundation programmes | 494 | 682 | 5 |
| Unknown areas of learning | 756 | 3,558 | 18 |
| Total | 4,532 | 18,936 | 100 |

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

| | | | | | | | · | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|------|-------|---------|----------|-------|------|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Level (Long | Retention and | | | Complet | ion year | year | | |
| Courses) | pass rate | | 16-18 | | | 19+ | | |
| | | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | |
| 1 | Starters excluding transfers | 503 | 409 | 533 | 1,424 | 1,169 | 1,54 | |
| | Retention rate | 83 | 74 | 75 | 71 | 59 | 6 | |
| | National average | 76 | 75 | 76 | 73 | 69 | 7 | |
| | Pass rate | 65 | 57 | 53 | 63 | 67 | 7 | |
| | National average | 65 | 69 | 71 | 66 | 68 | - | |
| 2 | Starters excluding transfers | 752 | 988 | 764 | 1,911 | 2,302 | 2,39 | |
| | Retention rate | 71 | 73 | 73 | 75 | 62 | - | |
| | National average | 72 | 70 | 72 | 70 | 68 | (| |
| | Pass rate | 72 | 62 | 60 | 68 | 65 | 6 | |
| | National average | 67 | 69 | 71 | 64 | 68 | 7 | |
| 3 | Starters excluding transfers | 760 | 690 | 710 | 1,823 | 1,666 | 1,79 | |
| | Retention rate | 70 | 73 | 74 | 69 | 71 | 7 | |
| | National average | 67 | 71 | 77 | 69 | 68 | - | |
| | Pass rate | 75 | 69 | 65 | 74 | 74 | 6 | |
| | National average | 75 | 77 | 79 | 66 | 69 | 7 | |
| 4/5 | Starters excluding transfers | 17 | 17 | 19 | 86 | 78 | 1(| |

| Retention rate | 82 | 88 | 68 | 71 | 79 | 86 |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| National average | 66 | 73 | 71 | 67 | 67 | 67 |
| Pass rate | 86 | 40 | 23 | 74 | 65 | 28 |
| National average | 65 | 54 | 53 | 58 | 55 | 56 |

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 | - | No of | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Good or better % | Satisfactory % | Less than satisfactory % | sessions observed |
| Level 3 (advanced) | 62 | 37 | 1 | 95 |
| Level 2 (intermediate) | 56 | 30 | 14 | 77 |
| Level 1 (foundation) | 46 | 49 | 5 | 33 |
| Other sessions | 54 | 35 | 11 | 46 |
| Totals | 57 | 36 | 7 | 251 |

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