



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Boston College

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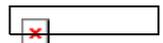
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Basic information about the college



Name of college:	Boston College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	David Pomfret
Address of college:	Boston College Rochford Campus Skirbeck Road Boston Lincolnshire PE21 6JF
Telephone number:	01205 365701
Fax number:	01205 310847
Chair of governors:	Peter Cropley
Unique reference number:	107641
Name of reporting inspector:	Colin Evans HMI

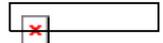
Dates of inspection:

13-17 and 21-23 October 2003

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Boston College is a medium-sized general further education (FE) college situated in the market town of Boston, in South-East Lincolnshire. The closest of the other three FE colleges in Lincolnshire is 30 miles away. Recruitment is chiefly from South and East Lincolnshire including the Boston, East Lindsey, and South Holland districts and parts of North and South Kesteven. The population of the area is approximately 460,000. The area served is geographically large, rural and sparsely populated. Half of the college's full-time students are reliant on local education authority (LEA) provided transport, which is free to students aged 16 to 19. Some employment is seasonal, particularly in agriculture, food processing and tourism. The school system is selective, with grammar schools and some secondary high schools providing 11 to 18 tuition and other secondary high schools 11 to 16 tuition. In Lincolnshire, 18 schools enrol pupils aged 11 to 16 and 12 enrol pupils aged 11 to 18.

The college offers work-based learning in five areas of learning, college-based FE and, in collaboration with four universities, some higher education (HE). Courses are offered in all areas of learning except the land-based area, and retail, customer service and transportation. Vocational, general vocational and academic courses are available. The college is in the process of completing its first year as a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in early years provision.

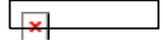
In 2002/03, the college enrolled 6,292 students; 1,480 full-time students, 80% of whom are aged 16 to 18, and 4,810 part-time students, 94% of whom are adults. There is significant recruitment at each of the levels 1 to 3. Over 600 key stage 4 school pupils attend the college one day a week to study vocational courses. There are roughly equal numbers of male and female students aged 16 to 18. Adult students are 60% female. The proportion of the population the college serves which is from minority ethnic groups is small, approximately 0.3%. The proportion in the college is higher, largely due to significant recruitment of students from the Far East on to academic courses and from Europeans who come to the region on a seasonal basis.

The college operates from two main sites close to the town centre, the Rochford and De Montfort campuses. The Sam Newsom centre, in the town, provides for music and the performing arts. Courses are also provided at several community centres in south east Lincolnshire. Partnership arrangements with other colleges have helped establish FE provision in Sleaford and in Skegness and East Lindsey. The college works in partnership with the LEA adult education service to provide community provision in a wide range of centres across the area. A learning bus and two mobile units, equipped with information and communication technology (ICT) are operated by the college to provide for outlying communities.

The college has five directorships for learning and skills, finance and services, client services; business development; and human resources. Six curriculum managers report to the director for learning and skills. Within each curriculum area, programme leaders manage groups of courses. The college mission is to be 'a learning organisation raising aspirations and meeting the skills needs of individuals, communities and employers through high quality education and training'. This mission is based on a set of value statements about learning being a lifelong process requiring the active involvement of the learners, accessibility, quality of service, equality of opportunity, and a supportive

and safe environment. The 2003 to 2006 strategic plan sets five priority areas; learning and skills, standards, business excellence, employment and physical resources.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged teaching and learning and students' achievements to be good in four curriculum areas, and satisfactory in six. In one area, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was unsatisfactory. The three work-based learning areas that were graded, were judged satisfactory. In one curriculum area, art, design and performing arts, part of the provision, art and design was judged unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and weaknesses and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- improving students' achievements which are now mostly at or above the national average
- generally good teaching and learning facilities
- the wide range of provision
- the support provided for students
- the clear and shared vision and strategic direction provided by senior managers
- good financial management
- successfully implemented strategies to widen participation
- productive partnerships with others.

What should be improved

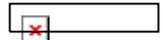
- unsatisfactory provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the art

and design provision in the art, design and performing arts curriculum area

- the quality of teaching and learning in some curriculum areas
- the underdeveloped use of individual learning plans and targets to inform teaching and learning
- careers education and guidance
- the rigour of the quality assurance systems
- the promotion of equal opportunities issues within lessons.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



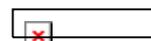
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high in General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) mathematics. Retention rates are high in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) mathematics. Pass rates are low in GCE A-level physics and GCSE mathematics and retention rates in GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) chemistry are also low. Students whose first language is not English receive good support. Teaching on the access to HE course is good. Insufficient use is made of information and learning technology (ILT).
Construction	Satisfactory. Pass rates in 2003 were high. Teaching in practical lessons is good. Assessment practice is good. Retention rates on some courses are low. The rate of achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is low but improving. Too narrow a range

	of teaching methods is used in theory lessons. There are some weaknesses in the use of resources. Equal opportunities issues are insufficiently promoted in work-based learning practices. Work-based learning is satisfactory.
Business	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high on Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) business and on teacher education courses. They are low on GCE AS business. Retention rates on the first diploma in public services are also low. Much of the teaching is good and curriculum management is responsive. Insufficient use is made of ILT in the teaching. The modern apprenticeship pass rate is improving. Work-based learning provision is satisfactory.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high on the first diploma course. Pass rates are high, but retention rates are low on the community ILT programme. Pass rates are low on the GCE AS in ICT. Technology is used well to support learning. The wide range of programmes is responsive to community needs. Teachers and students undertake insufficient commercial experience. Progress monitoring and targets for each student's future learning are inadequate on some community programmes.
Hospitality and catering	Good. Retention and pass rates are high on many courses. Teaching of practical work is good. The realistic work environments are well resourced and well managed. Students gain high levels of skills in food preparation. Some teaching is unsatisfactory.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Retention and pass rates are high on hairdressing courses. Pass rates are high on complementary therapy and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) 2 beauty therapy courses. Students benefit from a broad range of additional activity. Students who need it receive good additional support. Some resources are inadequate. Some students' make slow progress at level 1.
Care and early years provision	Good. Retention rates are high on most courses. Pass rates are high on the national diploma. Both retention and pass rates are low on the diploma in childcare and education. Teaching and teaching resources are good. Students are well supported. There are insufficient short courses and part-time courses. The pass rate of apprenticeship frameworks, although improving, is low. Work-based learning is satisfactory.
Art, design and performing arts	Satisfactory. Pass rates at level 3 are high. Retention and pass rates on the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate course in art and design were low in 2003. Performing arts students produce high standards of work. Teaching in performing arts is good. In art and design, it is unsatisfactory. Resources for music and dance are good. Good use is made of vocational experience. There is insufficient specialist information technology (IT) equipment. Assessment practice and course management are unsatisfactory. Art and design provision is unsatisfactory.
English, foreign languages and humanities	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on GCE A2 courses and on GCE AS English are high. They are low in GCE AS psychology. The teaching of English is good, but in general too much teaching fails to challenge students. Access and GCE advanced level students may choose from a broad range of subjects. Progression rates from some GCE AS subjects to A2 subjects is low.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Much of the teaching is good. Insufficient use is made of vocationally specific learning materials. Retention rates are high. Good initial assessment leads to effective additional support. ICT is

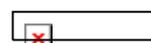
	used well to support learning. Partnership arrangements are used effectively to expand the provision. Individual learning plans are insufficiently precise about future learning needs. Arrangements to verify achievements on non-examined courses are inadequate.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Unsatisfactory. There is a clear curriculum framework which enables progression from pre-entry to entry levels whilst students remain in discrete provision. Individual learning plans are used ineffectively. Much of the teaching is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring of students' progress.

How well is the college led and managed?



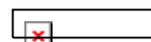
Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. A clear vision and strategy is shared by governors, managers and staff. Governors are strongly committed to the success of the college. Financial management is good and the college provides good value for money. There is a strong commitment to working with the local community through partnerships. Strategies to widen participation in a rural community are effective. Student achievement has improved overall, and is mostly above benchmark. Some courses, however, have persistently low pass or retention rates. Curriculum delivery in some areas is unsatisfactory. The college is fulfilling its commitments under the Race Relations Amendment and Special Educational Needs and Disability Acts (SENDA), however, the promotion of equal opportunities within teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Quality assurance procedures are conducted with insufficient rigour to ensure continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



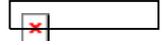
The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Strategies to widen participation are being successfully implemented. Productive partnership arrangements have been formed. There is good quality provision for school pupils aged 14 to 16 and widespread community provision in ICT and basic skills. A high proportion of students who start courses gain their target qualifications. Adult retention rates are improving. The college has appropriate structures and procedures to assure equality of opportunity, but the promotion of equal opportunities within teaching and learning is underdeveloped. The quality of the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is unsatisfactory.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. Literacy and numeracy support across the college is well managed. Students receive good pastoral support from teachers. They have ready access to a comprehensive range of support services. Students' attendance is closely monitored and attendance rates are high. Initial guidance on to courses is good and students are satisfactorily inducted on to courses. The college is in the process of developing its tutorial provision. There is a wide variation in the quality of group tutorials across the college. The provision of careers guidance is underdeveloped.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

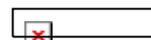
- the friendly and supportive college staff
- refectory facilities
- opportunities to undertake practical work and engage in live performance
- the quality of the library facilities
- opportunities for adults to re-engage with learning
- the helpful student support services

What they feel could be improved

- over large group sizes in a few lessons
- better access to rooms designated for quiet study
- restrictions on access to the Internet which impact negatively on learning
- travel arrangements such as the frequency of the bus services, difficulties with inter-site travel, and the lack of bus shelters

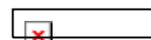
- heating control in classrooms
- the relevance of key skills tuition to the vocational or academic areas.

Other information

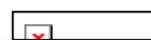


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

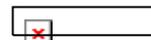


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	53	37	10
19+ and WBL*	56	38	6
Learning 16-18	50	38	12
19+ and WBL*	58	38	4

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. Students of all ages generally work at or above the level expected of them. In a few lessons, mostly in art and design and in lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards are lower than should be expected. Standards of work are highest when students undertake practical work. In construction, beauty therapy, and performing arts, for example, students produce good quality work. Portfolios are generally well organised and contain at least an appropriate range of evidence.

2. The average attendance rate in the lessons observed was 83%. This is 7% higher than the average observed rate in the period 2001 to 2003 for general FE and tertiary colleges. Attendance was highest in science and mathematics, and in lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, at 87% and lowest in visual and performing arts at 78%.

16 to 18 year olds

3. In 2003, students' pass and success rates (the proportion of enrolled students who gain the qualification) were high on courses at levels 1 and 2 and at the national average at level 3. Retention rates were high at level 2 and similar to the national average at levels 1 and 3.

4. Over the four-year period to 2003, retention, pass and success rates have improved significantly at level 1. The success rate, for example, has improved from 7% below the national average to 9% above. At level 2, retention rates have improved steadily and pass and success rates have been well above average in three of the four years. At level 3 these rates fluctuate, but are usually at or above the national averages.

5. On NVQ courses students do particularly well; success rates at levels 1 and 3 have been consistently well above average. At level 2 they have improved in the four-year period and in 2003 were well above average. On other vocational or general vocational courses, pass rates are generally at or above national average.

6. On GCE A-level courses students' retention and pass rates vary from being similar to the national average to below it. Success rates on these courses are usually below the national average. In 2002, the students aged 16 to 18 who entered GCE A levels and vocational certificates of education at advanced level achieved, on average, 194.4 points for each student. This is well above the average of 156 points for the general FE and tertiary colleges in the East Midlands. Many of the college's students who take these subjects are international students. Value added analysis for the students who hold GCSE passes shows that overall performance in 2001 was above that expected, in both 2002 and 2003 it was significantly lower than expected.

7. The higher grade (A to C) pass rate in 2003 for GCSE courses was 28%, slightly better than the rate of 25% achieved in 2002. Both rates are below the national average, for the courses taken, of 31% in 2002.

8. In 2001 and 2002, key skills pass rates were 42% and 50%, respectively, which are above the national averages for similar colleges. Retention rates in these two years were low, at 54%. Preliminary data for 2003 indicate that retention rates have improved to be close to the national average, but pass rates have declined. Success rates have remained steady at around 25% in each of these three years. These rates of success, whilst low, are similar to the national average. Success rates are much better at level 1 where they have improved during these three years and in 2003, at 47%, were well above the national average. In 2003 they were low, 19%, at level 2. Key skills pass rates in the individual curriculum areas vary markedly. For example, in hairdressing and beauty therapy in 2003, the pass rates at level 1 in application of number and communication were both above 90%. In some curriculum areas, for example, visual and performing arts, the pass rates are low.

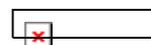
Adult learners

9. Success rates at levels 1, 2 and 3 have been at or above national averages for each of the four years to 2003. Pass rates are high. At levels 2 and 3 they have been well above the national average in the four years to 2003. At level 2, performance is especially strong with pass rates at least 8% above average in this period. At level 1, after a three-year period of very strong performance, the pass rate fell to slightly below average in 2003.

10. In the three years to 2002, retention rates at all three levels have been well below national averages. They have improved at all three levels in 2003. At level 3, the rate is now well above average; at level 1 it is similar to the average and; at level 2, although improved, is still below average.

11. Pass rates on NVQ courses are generally high. For example, at level 2, they have been well above average in all four years to 2003. Pass rates on GCE AS and A2 courses have been at or above average in the four years to 2003.

Quality of education and training



12. Teaching, and learning were graded by inspectors in 186 lessons. The grade profiles for teaching and learning are similar. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 54% of the lessons, satisfactory in 37% and less than satisfactory in 9%. This represents a smaller proportion of good or better lessons than that seen nationally in similar colleges and a slightly larger proportion of unsatisfactory lessons. The proportion of good or better lessons seen in the teaching of adults is similar to that in lessons to students aged 16 to 18. A slightly higher proportion of lessons for students aged 16 to 18 was judged unsatisfactory. Teaching was better at level 3 than at levels 1 or 2.

13. There was considerable variation in the quality of teaching across the different curriculum areas inspected. Teaching was best in care and early years and in business. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in science and mathematics, construction, and care and early years. In four curriculum areas, less than 50% of the teaching was judged to be good or better. The lowest proportion was in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

14. In most cases, the best teaching is well planned. Planning considers, for example, the use of learning materials, how to include an appropriate variety of teaching methods, how teaching should be matched to the needs of all the students and how best to use time. In the poorer teaching, insufficient consideration has often been given to some or all of these, and students become uninterested. In some lessons, for example, in science, business, and art and design, insufficient attention had been given to ensuring that teaching meets the needs of all students in the group. In lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the needs of these students are not clearly identified; much of the teaching suffers from this weakness.

15. Teaching in practical situations is of good quality. Where students are placed under the pressure of real working environments, such as the college Bistro, learning is often good. Learning is enhanced where links are made to industrial practice, for example in business, or related to everyday activity, for example in some teaching for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or to the teachers' professional work, for example in performing arts. In some lessons, for example in art and design, opportunities to make these links are missed. ILT resources are used effectively in ICT, care and early years, and literacy and numeracy. ILT is not well used in some other curriculum areas, notably science and mathematics, business, humanities, and art, design and media studies.

16. The key skills lessons observed by inspectors vary in quality. Overall attendance was 77%, but this varied significantly between the different programme areas; in one area there was low attendance. In the better lessons, teaching is set in a vocational context or in a context which

students find interesting. For example, in one lesson in care and early years, the teaching of application of number was based on the students' work on a vocational assignment. In another lesson on how to summarise reports, construction students were given a passage on football. In these lessons, students worked well and received effective individual support. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the teaching is either insufficiently linked to key skills criteria or fails to involve the students sufficiently or suffers from confusion about which level the students should be working at. In these lessons, students are not kept on task and lose interest.

17. Key skills teaching and assessment are managed by each programme area. A recently appointed development manager, and co-ordinators for each key skill provide overall advice and guidance. Teachers in each curriculum area have been recently designated to lead on key skills teaching within their departments. Work by the development manager has identified the weaknesses in the key skills provision, for example in the previous management arrangements, the low success rates, and the variability in teaching quality. An appropriate plan to address these issues has been written.

18. Teachers are well qualified and have appropriate vocational experience. Teachers on NVQ courses have appropriate assessor and verifier qualifications. There are sufficient qualified technical support staff to help students and teachers and to maintain resources and learning materials. Training needs for each curriculum area are analysed and implemented. Individual training needs are identified through the staff appraisal system. Staff development is appropriately aimed at helping teachers to improve their teaching. However, there is little opportunity for commercial computing updating for teachers of IT. The college has recognised the need for additional training in the use of ILT. Few teachers of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have received specialist training for working with students with complex learning difficulties.

19. The quality of teaching accommodation within the college is good. Most teaching rooms, notably those used by students in the ICT, care, humanities, and literacy and numeracy curriculum areas, are pleasant and spacious. In a few lessons, the rooms used are too small for the number of students attending, narrowing the range of teaching methods that can be used. Some art and design rooms are poorly arranged, negatively impacting on the quality of teaching and learning. Specialist facilities are good in ICT, catering, and music and dance. Some of the hairdressing and beauty therapy specialist facilities are unsatisfactory and in some lessons the presence of too few clients slows the learning. There are some weaknesses in the use of resources in construction. The college is aware of these weaknesses and plans to address them are included in the accommodation strategy for 2002/05.

20. The college's canteen facilities are generally good and staff and students have access to well-equipped sports facilities. Arrangements for carrying out essential maintenance are satisfactory. The college has improved access for students with restricted mobility and nearly all college areas are now accessible to all students. The areas that are inaccessible are general-purpose classrooms which can be substituted for accessible rooms where required.

21. Teaching resources are good in many curriculum areas and very good in care. The college has made significant investment in modern ICT equipment which is maintained effectively. Teachers and students generally have good access to computers, although demand can be excessive at peak times. Mobile ICT resources for use in the community are good and use up-to-date technology with satellite connection to the Internet. Most computers have Internet access and many students use the Internet for research purposes. The learning resource centres provide a good place to work and are well used by students.

22. Internal verification is well established and operates effectively on most courses. Assessment, verification and moderation procedures follow awarding body requirements. Issues raised by external and internal verifiers are addressed effectively by programme teams, and the curriculum managers group and a well-planned programme of staff development also addresses these issues. There are some inconsistencies in the application of the internal verification policy. The college is aware of these and has plans in place to address them.

23. Assessment is well planned in most areas of the curriculum. In the best examples, for example,

in construction, hospitality, and care, assessment plans are used effectively to ensure that students are not overloaded and there is regular assessment in the workplace. Assessment is not well planned in art and design where assignments are insufficiently challenging and assessment is not linked sufficiently to unit or grading criteria. Students do not understand the assessment process and feedback from teachers does not give them clear advice on how to improve. The marking of work is generally thorough with constructive comments on how to improve. For example, in GCE A-level humanities and science and mathematics, teachers mark work accurately and promptly, and work is well annotated with corrections and encouraging comments. In the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, curriculum area records usually record what has been done rather than what has been learned. In many cases, a review of assessment processes, and which areas of performance contribute to student failure, do not inform quality assurance processes sufficiently.

24. The use of individual learning plans and the setting of short-term learning targets for students is underdeveloped in some areas. For example, some targets set are imprecise and some are not sufficiently challenging. In provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, inadequate baseline and initial assessment contributes to the setting of targets which are too general and do not reflect students' individual learning needs. The college policy for the setting of learning targets for GCE A-level students is not being used effectively to help students monitor their progress. Regular reviews of each student's progress occurs on most courses, however, some reviews are not thorough enough to give students a clear picture of what they have achieved and what to do next. College progress review documentation is not used consistently across the college.

25. The college provides a range of programmes and courses that meets most of the needs of students. There is a good range of full-time courses in most curriculum areas. The narrow range of part-time courses and evening classes offered through LSC funding is enhanced by the college's partnership arrangements with the LEA. These arrangements provide a wide range of part-time courses, over 300, for adults. Some of the adult education courses offer progression routes to college courses. There are good progression routes in many curriculum areas within the college, particularly in ICT where a broad range of courses offers progression routes from level 1 to a degree course. Progression from GCE AS to A2 subjects is low on some courses. The college recognises this issue, some of which is due to transfers to other programmes, or to international students attending for only one year, and is seeking to increase this progression rate.

26. There are good links with the local community. These, and a detailed marketing plan, particularly for literacy and numeracy provision, are used to widen participation in education and training. A speaking course guide for non-readers has been produced and high quality leaflets on new courses are regularly sent out to community groups in the local area. A wide range of popular ICT courses is available to part-time adult students across a wide area of the county at a large number of learning centres and community venues. A learning bus and two mobile units travel to many outlying villages to deliver ICT courses.

27. Boston college has energetically promoted its work with Key Stage 4 pupils. It has DfES pathfinder status for 14 to 19 provision and has recently been awarded Beacon status for school colleg partnerships. The provision has grown rapidly and now involves 600 school pupils from eighteen 11-16 schools and one 11-18 school, and is available in a wide range of vocational areas. Courses lead to nationally recognised qualifications from entry level to level 2. Pupils from all ability levels attend. Some schools involve all or a large proportion of their Year 10 and 11 cohorts for up to a day a week. The college works well with its partners. A steering group includes the schools involved, and a wide range of other services and organisations including employers, the local LSC, the LEA, the University of Lincoln and Connexions, education welfare and youth services. The timetable, which is common to all schools, enables pupils to choose from all the options available. School managers commend the college on its partnership approach and the appropriateness and quality of the provision. Lessons are carefully planned. Teaching, which is of good quality, involves an appropriate variety of activity including practical work. Most students are interested in and engaged with the work. Student behaviour is well managed and controlled. Students benefit from the wide range of resources available. Their work is of a good standard and they make good progress in developing vocational skills and knowledge. In one lesson observed, insufficient resources slowed the pace of progress. Attendance is significantly better than that achieved by these pupils when in

school and in many cases is high. The rate of achievement of qualifications and progression rates to FE are high.

28. The college has established effective partnerships with external organisations. Representatives of these organisations are very positive about the way the college works in partnership, the quality of its provision, and its responsiveness. Partnerships are productive in many curriculum areas, particularly in care, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. In business and construction, links with employers are well established but there is little formal consultation on curriculum design. The catering department has good links with golf clubs in Scotland and a large hotel in London, but there are few links with local catering companies. The underdeveloped links with local IT companies limits the opportunities ICT students have for industrial placement. A newly appointed development manager is developing links between the programme area for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and Connexions, special schools and social services. These links are currently underdeveloped. Students are provided with good opportunities to participate in activities that complement their programmes, such as courses which lead to additional qualifications. Students also attend revision courses, field trips and visits to theatres and art galleries. Some engage in international exchanges.

29. Support for students is good. Support for literacy and numeracy across the college is particularly good. All students undergo an initial assessment. Additional learning support is provided promptly. A high proportion of those students who receive this additional support pass their main course examinations. For example in 2002/03, of the 281 students who received support, 74% achieved their main course qualifications.

30. Students receive good pastoral support from their teachers. Many teachers have an 'open door' policy and students are able to contact them easily about personal and academic concerns. Students speak highly of the support they receive. A comprehensive range of other support is also provided, including childcare, counselling, financial advice and disability advice and support. These services are well used.

31. Attendance is effectively monitored. All full-time lessons are monitored twice weekly and absentees are quickly and sensitively followed up. During the inspection, attendance, at 83%, was well above the national average of 76%.

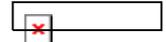
32. The college has recently placed a greater emphasis on the development of its tutorial provision. A new tutor handbook has been devised and staff development provided. Some group tutorials are, nevertheless, of poor quality. The better tutorials are well planned and the students are engaged in purposeful activities. The poorer tutorials focus on information giving and form filling with students taking little part in the class.

33. Admissions and guidance are centrally managed. Initial guidance on to courses is good. Open days, taster courses and recruitment events for Year 9 and Year 11 students and adults are provided throughout the year. Induction is satisfactory. The tutor handbook provides a framework and suggests appropriate induction activity. However, there is some inconsistency across the college and some students remember induction as form filling.

34. The college has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures relating to student support. However, it is not always clear where the responsibility for monitoring these lies. Systems for monitoring the impact of some services on students are underdeveloped and available data is not analysed sufficiently to identify ways of improving the service.

35. The college has satisfactory links with Connexions who provide a specific service for students at risk. However, there is currently weak careers advice for other students. There is no systematic careers educational programme and students experience inconsistent access to advice about their future options.

Leadership and management



36. Leadership and management at the college are satisfactory. A clear vision has been set for the college. The aims and mission are understood by governors and staff and are promoted appropriately by senior and middle managers. The senior management team work well together and are well regarded by other college staff.

37. The recent introduction of a new management structure is intended to place teaching and learning at the centre of college activity. The new structure is departmental with curriculum managers taking responsibility for both resources and curriculum. This has focused attention more clearly on the quality of teaching and learning. Recent improvements in college performance include increased pass rates for both college-based courses, and for apprenticeship frameworks, more effective and stronger links with franchise partners, and the developing provision for school pupils aged 14 to 16. The college has satisfactorily addressed some of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection, including the setting of measurable targets and the scheduling of corporation meetings. The quality of teaching and learning has not improved.

38. The college has fulfilled its responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act and SENDA. The appointment of a disability co-ordinator enables disabled students to have access to specialist advice and guidance. The equal opportunities committee advises on, monitors and updates college procedures relating to diversity and equality. The committee reports to the corporation on an annual basis. There are staff development activities on the promotion of equal opportunities. International students are integrated into the college and the local community through an induction programme which includes cultural orientation.

39. However, the promotion of equal opportunities issues through the content and teaching of the curriculum is not well developed. This is acknowledged in the college self-assessment report.

40. Governors and senior managers set a clear direction for the college. There is strong leadership by the principal in both the college and the local community. Governors, managers and staff have contributed appropriately to the new mission and the setting of priority objectives. These objectives clearly outline key actions and responsibilities. Good use is made of governor expertise in the composition and membership of committees. Relevant staff from all areas of the college make regular and informative presentations to the corporation at the commencement of their meetings. There is a named governor link with curriculum departments. These links vary from effective contact, with governors being acquainted with teachers and students as well as having a good understanding of the key aspects of the curriculum, to limited contact with the designated link department.

41. Staff are appropriately involved in the annual self-assessment and development planning process. Course and service department reviews of provision form the basis of the self-assessment report. When completed, the individual self-assessment reports are validated by a formal validation panel. The governors' standards committee approves the completed document on behalf of the corporation. Quality assurance processes are not succeeding in improving the quality of teaching and learning. At the last inspection, 68% of the teaching observed was judged to be good or better and no teaching was judged unsatisfactory. This is a better profile of grades than this inspection reveals. The grade profile derived from the college's internal lesson observation system was more generous than the profile derived from this inspection. In five curriculum areas the self-assessment process was judged by inspectors to have been conducted with insufficient rigour. The college seeks and is responsive to the views of students and employers through perception surveys. Students are positive about the college and the support they receive

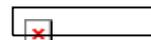
42. The annual staff appraisal system contributes appropriately to the identification of individual staff development needs. Staff development is linked to personal, team and corporate needs. The college has recently been reaccredited with Investors in People status and also holds the Positive about Disabled People award.

43. External partnerships with the college are effective and the college has a strong commitment to working with the local community. Senior managers and other staff are active in representing the college at local educational and business events. The college works well with other organisations to develop strategies for widening participation and to improve local amenities. The development of learning centres in venues across the county as well as the use of a learning bus and mobile units with ILT facilities on board have contributed to meeting the needs of students within a rural community.

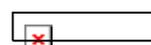
44. Curriculum management is satisfactory or better in nine of the 11 curriculum areas inspected. In two it is unsatisfactory. Teachers are involved in the process of target setting for recruitment, retention and pass rates at programme and course level. In some programmes areas, development planning lacks sufficient detail on how targets are to be achieved. The new management structure has clarified lines of accountability and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Communication within teams is mostly good. In a number of curriculum areas unsatisfactory retention and pass rates on some courses have not improved over the three years to 2003.

45. The college makes accurate and timely returns to the local LSC. Curriculum managers value the quality of information they receive from the college information systems. They use the information to check retention and pass rates at course level. Information on attendance, transfers and withdrawals is up to date. Financial management is sound and the college provides good value for money. The college has achieved its funding target in previous years and is predicted to be on target for 2002/03. A major capital plan is being implemented.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on GCE AS and A2 mathematics courses
- high retention rates in GCSE mathematics
- good support for students who have English as their second language
- good teaching on access to HE courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in GCE AS physics and GCSE mathematics
- low retention rates in GCE AS chemistry
- insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

46. The curriculum area offers science and mathematics courses for students aged 16 to 18 and adult students. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and attend on a full-time basis. The college offers GCE AS and A2 in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, statistics and further mathematics. GCSE human physiology and health is offered in the evenings, GCSE mathematics as both day and evening provision. There are 245 students on GCE and GCSE courses. Approximately half the students on the GCE AS and A2 science and mathematics courses are privately funded international students. There are 79 students on an access to HE course. All students on this access course study mathematics at level 2 and some study biology at level 3. There are 42 international students following an international foundation course to prepare them for entry to HE. There are no vocational science courses on offer and no full-time course in science below level 3.

Achievement and standards

47. Pass rates in mathematics and statistics at GCE AS and A2 are high. They have been between 15% and 40% above the national average for the last three years. In 2003, three GCE A2 mathematics students were placed in the top five in the United Kingdom for the particular awarding body. Pass rates in GCE AS biology and GCE AS chemistry are satisfactory. Pass rates in GCE AS physics and higher grade (A to C) pass rates in GCSE mathematics are low. They have been below the national average for the last three years. Retention rates are high in most areas, particularly in mathematics. However, the retention rate in GCE AS chemistry is low and has been below the national average for two out of the last three years.

48. The standard of students' work is satisfactory and their coursework meets awarding body requirements. The level of attainment in observed lessons was satisfactory or good. Some students in science have above average mathematical skills and they are able to rearrange formulae and perform calculations accurately and quickly. The practical skills of students are less well developed, as is their ability to explain some theoretical ideas. The average attendance rate during inspection was 87% which is higher than normally seen. Punctuality is satisfactory. Over 80% of GCE A2 students progress to HE, with a significant proportion studying mathematics-related courses such as finance and accounting.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	140	100	76
		% retention	80	78	82
		% pass rate	37	31	37

GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	27	19	32
		% retention	81	84	84
		% pass rate	32	69	67
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	26	**	23
		% retention	65	**	61
		% pass rate	41	**	71
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	28	19	33
		% retention	79	84	88
		% pass rate	64	63	59
GCE AS statistics	3	No. of starts	34	35	52
		% retention	76	94	90
		% pass rate	46	73	70
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	46	26	33
		% retention	63	81	79
		% pass rate	52	71	92
GCE A2 mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	22	31
		% retention	*	91	100
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

* course did not run

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

49. A lower proportion of the lessons observed was good or better than is usually the case. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The best lessons are well planned and take into account the needs of the students and their preferred learning styles. In one successful biology lesson, the teacher used cocktail sticks and beads to explain complex biochemical structures to a group of adult students. The students tested their understanding of these ideas with an innovative quiz that confirmed their learning and understanding of the topic. The students were enthusiastic about the subject and what they had learned. Many of the GCE AS and A2 science and mathematics classes include students for whom English is their second language. In the better lessons, teachers helped these students by using careful explanations, displays of mathematical terminology translated into their native language and careful attention to speaking clearly and thoughtfully. This approach benefited all students in the class. In the weaker lessons, teachers did not make sufficient allowance for the range of abilities in the groups they were teaching. They were often too prescriptive and did not provide the students with sufficient opportunities to learn independently. Insufficient attention was given to ensuring that the lower ability students understood the work and to providing the more able with extra work.

50. A satisfactory range of resources is used to support learning. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced, and there is regular, appropriate training to allow staff to update skills and develop their professional expertise. The science laboratories are well equipped and generally offer satisfactory environments for learning. In one laboratory, however, there are sometimes too many students to permit effective practical activities. Other teaching accommodation is satisfactory and the libraries are adequately resourced. Students on GCSE, and GCE AS and A2 courses are issued with a textbook for each course. Access to ICT resources is satisfactory. There is insufficient use of ILT to support learning. Little use is made in lessons and little evidence of the planned use of ILT in schemes of work or lesson plans.

51. The assessment of students' work is generally good. Feedback provides encouragement and useful suggestions for improvement. GCE AS and A2 students sometimes receive a grade for their work which is compared to their target grade. However, there is insufficient use of effective target-setting either at a subject level or with personal tutors for each students' whole programme.

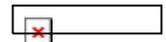
52. The range of science provision offered is relatively narrow. The college has made reasonable attempts to try to widen science provision, but there has been insufficient demand from potential students. In 2002/03, no students were entered for GCE A2 physics, GCE A2 chemistry and GCE A2 further mathematics, except for small cohorts of international students. Some students who do not progress to GCE A2 transfer to other college courses and some of the international students attend the college for only one year. Students have some opportunities for enrichment activities linked to their subjects. Mathematics students take part in an international 'maths challenge' event each year and some science students attend revision conferences.

53. Students receive satisfactory advice and guidance before enrolment to help them to choose their course. Initial assessment is thorough and students who are assessed as needing support receive regular timetabled help. Students speak highly of the support they receive from individual teachers and feel they can ask for, and receive, extra help outside the normal lessons. Adult students on the access to HE course value the workshop support sessions which help them with their assignment work.

Leadership and management

54. Curriculum management is satisfactory. It has improved since the college management restructuring. Teachers communicate well with each other and teamwork is good. Teachers understand their role in the self-assessment process. However, quality assurance processes are not always undertaken with sufficient rigour to ensure continuous improvements to the student experience. Subject teachers are not always sufficiently involved in the setting and monitoring of targets to raise standards. The judgements made about the quality of teaching and learning in internal observations were more generous than those awarded during inspection.

Construction



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high pass rates in 2003
- good teaching of practical skills
- good assessment practices in carpentry, plumbing and electrical installation

- effective strategies to improve retention and pass rates in work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on electrical installation and plumbing courses
- low achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- narrow range of teaching methods in theory sessions
- weaknesses in the use of resources
- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities in work-based learning.

Scope of provision

55. The college offers a range of building craft courses from levels 1 to 3. These include courses in carpentry and joinery, brickwork, plumbing and electrical installation. A small number of students are also enrolled on to technician level courses. In 2002/03, there were 539 students enrolled, of whom just over 75% were aged 19 or over. Some 86% of students were on part-time courses. At the time of inspection, there were also 120 work-based learners, 46 are advanced modern apprentices and 74 foundation modern apprentices.

Achievement and standards

56. Pass rates on most courses were high in 2003. For example, in 2003, the pass rate on the certificate in plumbing programmes was 79%; 26% above the national average. On carpentry and joinery courses, at level 2, the pass rate was a similar percentage above the national average. On NVQ trowel occupations courses at level 1 and level 1 electrical installation courses, pass rates have improved and are now high. Retention rates have improved on several courses, but are still low on some. For example, in spite of significant improvement from 30% to 69% in retention rates on the certificate in plumbing course, the rate is still below the national average. Retention rates on the electrical installation course at level 1 are consistently below the national average.

57. Achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks is improving, but still low. In 2001, 14% of foundation apprentices were successful, rising to 37% in 2002. As these programmes are two years in length, it is not possible to make a judgement on the likely achievement of apprentices enrolled in 2003, but progress currently is satisfactory. Achievement in work-based learning has been affected by the low pass rates in key skills for most learners. However, these pass rates have improved at level 1 in trowel and wood occupations in 2003.

58. Most students undertake practical work enthusiastically and the majority produce work of a high

standard, both in the workplace and in college. The attendance of full-time students is closely monitored and the attendance rate at lessons observed was high, at 86%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	15	15	*
		% retention	62	87	*
		% pass rate	62	31	*
City and Guilds 2360-05 electrical installation part 1	1	No. of starts	15	20	16
		% retention	67	65	69
		% pass rate	20	62	73
NVQ in plumbing	2	No. of starts	30	44	20
		% retention	30	18	80
		% pass rate	56	100	81

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

* fewer than 15 starters

Quality of education and training

59. Most of the practical teaching is good or better. In the best practical lessons, teachers set students assignments that simulate real working tasks, match their abilities well and require them to work to industrial standards. Teachers explain carefully what each student has to do and demonstrations of practical skills are clear and well sequenced. Teachers give detailed and constructive feedback to students during practical sessions and students have a good understanding of technical terms and practical techniques.

60. The range of teaching methods used in theory lessons is narrow. Most theory lessons involve whole class teaching with students spending too much time copying notes from the whiteboard. In these lessons, students are unduly passive for long periods. There is little variation in activity and few visual aids are used to enhance presentations. Whilst these lessons impart knowledge satisfactorily and students made appropriate notes, they are uninteresting learning experiences.

61. Practical workshops are well equipped. Insufficient space restricts practical activity for the larger groups of students and in some cases slows progress. For example, the limited workshop space for trowel occupations necessitates students sometimes having to knock down their work and tidy up for the next lesson before their work has been assessed. Teachers have a good range of industrial experience and hold assessor and verifier qualifications where appropriate. The work-based learning training advisers have a good understanding of the apprenticeship framework requirements in the craft areas for which they have responsibility. The provision for health and safety is satisfactory and students routinely wear personal protective equipment.

62. Assessment is well managed. Student portfolios contain a wide variety of types of evidence, including work-based evidence such as photographs, job sheets and witness testimonies. The feedback from teachers on assignments and assessments provides a clear indication of areas for improvement. Schemes of work and assessment plans are shared with employers. The effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training provides opportunities for employers to plan work allocation. This enables a good collection and use of work-based evidence. Assessors make regular visits to employers to undertake work-based assessment, even where this is not an awarding body requirement. Students are given clear information on their progress at college. This information is shared with employers at reviews and through termly reports. Teachers receive a copy of the review documents which identify work carried out on-the-job.

63. The provision in construction generally meets the needs of students who wish to gain qualifications in the main building crafts. Short courses in gas accreditation are provided to meet the needs of both individual students and employers. The key stage 4 programme is well organised and provides a good taster for prospective students. Full-time foundation students gain experience of both trowel and wood occupations before they specialise in one. Course scheduling restricts access to some employees. For example, in order to maintain group size, in some crafts different levels of provision are offered on the same day each week. Some employers cannot release all the students who need to attend. An exchange programme with German students enhances learning experiences. For example, the different tools used for laying mortar beds in each country provoked a discussion about the benefits of both. A local employer, who received a German female student has altered his previously negative perceptions about the ability of females to work in the industry.

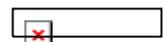
64. Support and guidance for students are satisfactory. Students' basic skills are initially assessed and appropriate support is provided. The training advisers communicate well with learners and trainers, both on- and off-the-job. This support is both vocational and pastoral, and is highly valued by all three parties. Target setting at reviews is sometimes unsatisfactory. General statements such as 'continue to improve' which are sometimes written are not useful. If the student is making slow progress, these targets become more focused.

Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. The self-assessment report identifies most of the key strengths and weaknesses. Quality assurance and improvement procedures are followed. Strategies to improve work-based achievement are being introduced. For example, students have undertaken a residential outward-bound programme. This includes key skill development. Recruitment, retention rates, attendance and achievement are monitored closely.

66. Equality of opportunity is insufficiently promoted in work-based learning. Assessment of whether employers are implementing appropriate policies lacks rigour. Equal opportunities issues are not sufficiently explored during student reviews. There is little positive action to increase the proportion of non-typical students and some language used by college staff reinforces the stereotypical view of construction workers being white males.

Business



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on AVCE business and teacher education courses
- much good teaching
- responsive curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on GCE AS business
- low retention rates on the first diploma in public services
- insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

67. The business provision covers three curriculum areas: business studies, which includes accounting, public services, and teacher education. Programmes range from level 1 through to level 4. NVQ courses are available at all four levels. Full-time first and national diploma courses are offered. There is also a range of other business, management and professional courses. Courses are delivered at a number of centres including Boston, Skegness, Louth and Peterborough. A total of 450 students were enrolled on business courses in 2002/03, of which 59 were full-time and 391 were part-time students. There were 93 work-based learners at the time of inspection, studying mainly business administration and accountancy qualifications.

Achievement and standards

68. Retention and pass rates in the two years to 2003 have been high on AVCE business and teacher education courses. On teacher education courses, in 2003 for example, 85% of the students who commenced the course achieved the qualification. On the AVCE business award, 60% of the students who commenced the course have achieved the qualification in each of these two years; a proportion which is 25% above the national average. Retention and pass rates on the GCE AS business course have been consistently below the national average for the past three years. In 2002, for example, only 43% of the students who started achieved the qualification; a proportion which is 20% below the national average. The retention rate on the first diploma in public service course is also low. In 2003, this rate, at 57%, was 20% below average. Pass rates for foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship frameworks are improving. In 2002, only 23% of students achieved the full framework, whereas 58% did so in 2003. Some apprentices make slow progress.

69. Students arrive promptly for lessons and the attendance rate is high. Standards of work on accountancy and teacher education courses are particularly good. Accountancy students' portfolios contain a well-balanced mix of college and work-based evidence.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
First diploma in public service	2	No. of starts	*	15	21
		% retention	*	60	57
		% pass rate	*	67	83
City and Guilds 7307-03 teacher training	3	No. of starts	83	47	59
		% retention	94	89	95
		% pass rate	71	88	89

GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	35	47	50
		% retention	80	70	78
		% pass rate	68	61	72
GCE A2 and A-level business	3	No. of starts	40	28	11
		% retention	43	57	100
		% pass rate	59	75	82
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	19	15	**
		% retention	84	93	**
		% pass rate	50	79	**

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

***course not running**

**** fewer than 15 students enrolled**

Quality of education and training

70. Most practical and theory classes are of good quality. In the most successful lessons, teaching, learning and assessment are planned carefully and are well structured. Teachers work to detailed lesson plans and schemes of work. They check students' understanding regularly and use up-to-date examples from business to illustrate concepts. For example, in one access to HE lesson, practices drawn from several national and international companies were used effectively to illustrate the advantages and disadvantages of franchising. In some lessons, teachers rely heavily on note-taking and pay too little attention to matching teaching methods to the needs of their students. Sometimes teachers do not check that students have understood important concepts sufficiently. There is insufficient use of ILT in most lessons.

71. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Some have recent industrial experience. Staff training in the use of ILT in lessons is at an early stage of development. Teaching accommodation is generally good. Some rooms lack relevant wall display material. The gymnasium and studio are well-equipped and provide up-to-date specialist resources for students on public service courses. Students' access to ICT outside lessons is sometimes limited by excessive demand. In some accounting rooms, the whiteboards were inappropriate for demonstrating accounting techniques.

72. Assessments are imaginative and cover the requisite competencies and subject material. Marking is fair and accurate. Feedback on students' performance is detailed and helpful, indicating clearly how students can improve their work. Internal verification procedures are implemented satisfactorily, but are not always carried out frequently enough.

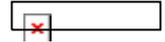
73. Key skills are integrated into the business curriculum for full-time vocational students. Imaginative planning and timetable flexibility, enable students to follow a course of study that has been tailored to suit their individual needs and takes into account their commitments outside college. Teachers provide additional help to students outside lessons. This help is valued by the students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are integrated into lessons. In a few cases, teachers have not been given appropriate training or lack additional support to ensure that the needs of these students are fully met.

Leadership and management

74. The curriculum team has responded positively to the challenges posed by recent staff changes. Communication between staff is good. Students' retention rates and progress are monitored carefully. Teachers meet regularly, both formally at, for example team and programme area

meetings and also informally. Course files are comprehensive and course administration is thorough. The provision is reviewed regularly and students' needs are carefully considered. Self-assessment reporting at both curriculum and course level is rigorous and actions planned to improve provision are implemented. The management of work-based learning programmes has improved. Action is being taken to ensure students make appropriate progress and there is improved co-ordination of off-the-job and on-the-job training.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on the first diploma course
- high pass rates on ILT community programmes
- effective use of technology to support learning
- wide range of courses responsive to local circumstances.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on GCE AS ICT
- low retention rates on ILT community programmes
- inadequate target setting and progress monitoring on the community provision
- little opportunity for commercial experience for staff and students.

Scope of provision

75. The college offers a broad range of ICT courses. At the Boston campus, there are progression opportunities from foundation to advanced level and through to degree-level, in collaboration with universities. The degree courses are delivered at the college's HE centre. Full-time provision includes an introductory certificate in IT and first and national diplomas for IT practitioners. A part-time level 3 diploma for IT practitioners is offered in the evening. Courses in computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), the European computer driving licence (ECDL) course and the Integrated Business Technology (IBT) course are offered in many community venues. In 2002/03, nearly 3,000 students enrolled on part-time courses, mainly at community and franchised centres. There were 181 students on full-time courses, of whom 37 were adults.

Achievement and standards

76. Retention and pass rates are high on the first diploma in IT. In the three years to 2003 the proportion of enrolled students who achieve the qualification has been consistently well above the national average. On the community-based ECDL and IBT II courses, retention rates have been low for the three-year period. Pass rates on these courses have been well above national averages. The retention rate on the GCE AS in ICT has been at or above the national average in the period. Pass rates on this course are consistently low.

77. Full-time students' practical work generally demonstrates appropriate competence. The more able students are suitably extended and produce work of a high standard. Key skills are generally well integrated into the full-time students' main programmes. The average attendance rate in the lessons observed was 83% which is slightly higher than the average for this programme area. Punctuality is generally good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
First diploma IT practitioners	2	No. of starts	35	30	33
		% retention	71	87	82
		% pass rate	88	96	89
ECDL 1 year	2	No. of starts	60	336	238
		% retention	33	34	42
		% pass rate	95	96	84
IBT II	2	No. of starts	283	163	51
		% retention	46	44	63
		% pass rate	84	76	72
National diploma in computing	3	No. of starts	58	48	55
		% retention	53	69	73
		% pass rate	81	97	80
GCE AS ICT (GCE AS computing in 2001)	3	No. of starts	29	28	28
		% retention	79	82	79
		% pass rate	43	48	32

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

Quality of education and training

78. The quality of teaching and learning, overall, is satisfactory. Few lessons are unsatisfactory. The

proportion which is good is similar to the national average for this programme area. Most teachers of full-time courses demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the subject taught and are able to simplify technical content appropriately and use interesting exercises to motivate and stimulate learning. The best lessons are well planned, make good use of time, and of resources to provide stimulation and challenge. Teaching matches the differing needs of students well. For example, one computer programming session on the use of pointers successfully extended the more able students who could use materials from the Internet for their exercises. This allowed the teacher to spend more time with weaker students. Most teachers use questioning techniques well in theory lessons, ensuring all students contribute and checking that all students understand subject development. Practical work is well organised, the students receive good support from the teacher and make appropriate progress. In a few lessons, students are insufficiently engaged in learning.

79. Teachers on full-time courses are appropriately qualified and experienced. There is widespread use of technology to support learning, including the use of web-page resources and digital projectors. The computer rooms and learning centres are well equipped and generally spacious. Mobile resources for use in the community are innovative and use up-to-date technology with satellite connection to the Internet. Technical support for computing provides robust and reliable resources. The necessary controls applied to the use of the Internet sometimes have an inhibiting affect on student research. Delays in accessing legitimate websites had a demotivating effect on students. The learning resource centres provide a satisfactory range of books on computing, IT and related subjects, and appropriate study areas and open access computer resources. Continuous professional development for staff is routinely undertaken to extend knowledge and understanding of a wide range of vocational activities and educational issues. However, there are few opportunities for teachers to engage in commercial or industrial updating.

80. Assessments are generally challenging and motivating, accurately marked and recorded, and promptly returned. Written and verbal feedback is helpful. Assessment at the learning centres in the community is set at the pace of the students and standards are appropriately moderated. In these centres, there is insufficient written feedback to help students improve. Teacher support is generally good. However, in some learning centres there are insufficient checks on progress and understanding. Learning goals, recorded at enrolment are insufficiently precise and challenging and are not updated during the year. No targets are recorded during learning. Students work through books or worksheets and merely log the page at the end of each session. Recording of student progress is inadequate. New systems are being developed to help in this task. The records of progress review meetings with individual students lack sufficient detail to be useful.

81. The college offers a broad range of courses in ICT which are responsive to local circumstances. The range of courses for full-time students offers good progression opportunities from level 1 to degree level. Students on the first and national diploma programmes undertake additional activity, for example certificates for IT practitioners, which enhance their skills and qualifications. Full-time students undertake little industrial experience. Contact with the ICT industry is limited. A wide range of courses is available for part-time adult students throughout a wide area of Lincolnshire at learning centres and community venues. A learning bus and two mobile units travel to many outlying villages to teach courses. This provision is popular with students.

82. Students receive a satisfactory induction. Tutorials adequately support the needs of full-time students. All full-time students have diagnostic and learning-style tests and are placed on the appropriate level for key skills tuition. Learning support needs are clearly documented and the learning support provided is effective. Teachers are well-informed of the additional support needs of students and help them accordingly. There is no systematic assessment of additional learning needs for adults in the community. Adults have to self-refer or wait until a teacher identifies a need.

Leadership and management

83. Curriculum management is good. Staff are appraised and personal targets are set and reviewed by managers. Team meetings are satisfactorily documented and actions implemented. Course reviews are undertaken by teaching teams and action plans are produced. These provide the basis for the self-assessment report which identified most of the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The low participation by women on full-time courses is an issue that has not been

addressed successfully.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses
- students high levels of skill in food preparation
- well-planned and managed teaching of practical work
- well-resourced and realistic work environments.

Weaknesses

- weaknesses in the teaching of theory.

Scope of provision

84. The college provides full-time, part-time and short courses in hospitality and catering. NVQ courses are available in food preparation at levels 1, 2 and 3, and in food service at levels 1 and 2. There are a range of short courses in food hygiene and a certificate in pastry cooking and patisserie. At the time of the inspection, there were 75 college students on hospitality and catering programmes. In addition, the hospitality and catering department works with a number of franchised partners. These partners teach a range of courses in hospitality and basic food hygiene in the local community.

Achievement and standards

85. Retention and pass rates are high, well above the national average for most courses. These rates have steadily improved on NVQ courses in food preparation at levels 1, 2 and 3 and are now high. In 2003, the rates at each level were at or above 95%. Retention rates on the advanced food hygiene course are regularly 100%. Pass rates on this course are also high. Pass and retention rates on the basic food hygiene courses, which are taught under franchised arrangements by other organisations, are also high. The college's full-time catering students also achieve high pass rates on this course. The pass rate for full-time students from other curriculum areas, who take this course as part of their enrichment programme, is low.

86. Students on NVQ food preparation courses achieve high levels of practical vocational skills and social skills. Attendance in the lessons observed was high, at 85%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation	1	No. of starts	25	20	23
		% retention	88	80	91
		% pass rate	91	100	95
Basic food hygiene	1	No. of starts	472	547	948
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	99	99	92
NVQ catering and hospitality	2	No. of starts	15	25	17
		% retention	53	82	100
		% pass rate	71	88	100
Pastry cooks and patisserie basic	2	No. of starts	38	*	22
		% retention	82	*	82
		% pass rate	74	*	89
NVQ catering and hospitality food	2	No. of starts	16	39	27
		% retention	75	79	89
		% pass rate	92	87	100
Advanced food hygiene	3	No. of starts	26	20	*
		% retention	100	100	*
		% pass rate	69	95	*

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

* fewer than 15 starters

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching in most practical lessons is good. Practical work in the college restaurants and bistro is appropriately challenging, presents realistic workplace demands and successfully develops good technical and social skills. Students at different NVQ levels work well together and with the teachers in these situations and are engaged in activities which are appropriate to their level of attainment. Teachers communicate their knowledge and skills to good effect. There is appropriate emphasis on health, safety and hygiene. A few practical lessons suffer from unsatisfactory planning which results in students being ill-prepared for the lesson and being given too much last minute instruction.

88. Most theory lessons are well planned. In the best lessons, theory is linked to practical work and to the students' experiences. Teaching is lively and there is a good rapport with the students. Learning materials such as hand-outs and overhead projector slides are used judiciously. In a few theory lessons, teaching does not succeed in fully engaging all the students in the learning.

89. Teachers are well qualified and appropriately experienced. Teaching resources in the practical catering areas are good. The restaurant and bistro are both good facilities and are open daily to the public, allowing students good opportunities to train and practice their skills in real working environments. The kitchens are of good quality and are designed for commercial catering. Some smaller equipment needs updating. Teaching equipment is satisfactory. Classrooms are well furnished and decorated. Some classrooms are small and do not allow easy changes to class layout

for group work.

90. Assessments are fair and in line with awarding body requirements. Students are advised after each practical session whether the quality of the work undertaken meets the assessment criteria. Assessment methods allow the better students to complete their qualifications more quickly than planned. Internal verification procedures are thorough and meet with awarding body requirements. Teachers and students both monitor progress by maintaining their own records. These are stored in the practical areas and are easily accessible.

91. Students on NVQ food preparation courses at levels 1 and 2 are able to take additional qualifications in basic food hygiene, and pastry cooking and patisserie which broaden their experience and improve their employment prospects. In addition, these students can enrol on the NVQ food service award as an additional qualification. The catering department works with a range of franchised partners to deliver basic food hygiene and a range of other hospitality and catering programmes. The department has good links with prestigious golf clubs in Scotland and a large hotel in London. Students gain a great deal from working in these organisations. This experience has a positive impact on their approach to their studies and subsequent career choices. Links with local catering organisations are limited.

92. Student induction arrangements are comprehensive. Students are issued an induction handbook that outlines their rights and responsibilities. During induction, students' levels of attainment in basic skills are assessed. Additional support is provided where required. Group tutorials are well planned and cover an appropriate range of activities such as equal opportunities, careers, and health matters. An exercise called clairvoyance is used to get students to state and record their aspirations early in the year. These notes are filed and are re-issued near the end of the course. This is a useful exercise in developing students understanding of their personal development.

Leadership and management

93. The catering department is well managed and there are clear lines of responsibility. The realistic working environments are well planned and operate effectively, enhancing students' learning significantly. Department team meetings are clearly documented and actions are clearly identified. New staff receive an appropriate induction. Teachers are appraised once a year and their training needs assessed. They undertake an appropriate range of training activities, including some industrial updating. All teachers are involved in the self-assessment process. The strengths and weaknesses recorded in the self-assessment report are generally accurate, but failed to recognise some poor teaching. The department promotes inclusion. Students from entry level to level 3 work alongside each other and learn from each other in the practical areas. This working arrangement is particularly effective in the bistro.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on hairdressing courses
- high pass rates on complementary therapy and NVQ 2 beauty therapy courses

- a broad range of additional activities and qualifications which enhance students' skills
- good additional support for students.

Weaknesses

- inadequacies in the physical resources
- slow progress by some students at level 1.

Scope of provision

94. NVQ provision is offered at levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and at levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy. In 2002/03, 137 students aged 16 to 18 and 36 adult students studied full time. Some 37 advanced and foundation modern apprentices attended day-release courses during college term time. Five adult students study part-time on hairdressing courses. Some 234 part-time students study on a range of beauty and complementary qualification courses offered as either day-time or evening courses. These include qualifications in reflexology, aromatherapy, head and body massage and nail art. Some promotions and introductory courses are offered at week-ends and during college summer holiday periods.

Achievement and standards

95. Retention rates are high on most courses. For example, retention rates have been well above national averages on the hairdressing full-time courses at NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 in each of the three years to 2003. In 2003, the NVQ 2 retention rate, at 97% was 3% above the national average. Pass rates are also high on full-time hairdressing NVQ courses. They are regularly well above 90% and significantly above national averages. Nearly all the students who start an NVQ course in hairdressing achieve the qualification. On NVQ beauty therapy courses, pass and retention rates are more variable. At level 2 they are high, but at level 3 the pass rate has fallen and is now well below the national average. The retention rate at level 3 fluctuates from well above average to well below. The rate of achievement of apprenticeship frameworks in hairdressing is improving. In 2003, it was 55% for advanced apprentices and 50% for foundation apprentices. These rates are well above national averages. Pass rates on the complementary therapy courses are also high, regularly close to or hitting 100%. Retention rates on these courses are usually close to national averages. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students also achieve high pass rates on key skills qualifications.

96. Standards of work produced by hairdressing students are at least satisfactory. Most students' portfolios are well organised and much of the students' written work contains good examples of the use of ICT. Beauty therapy and complementary therapy students demonstrate good practical skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
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NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	34	54	50
		% retention	85	76	94
		% pass rate	100	100	98
NVQ hairdressing (01=2 year; 02 and 03=1 year)	2	No. of starts	56	29	39
		% retention	66	90	97
		% pass rate	100	92	97
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	17	22	32
		% retention	82	82	88
		% pass rate	100	94	100
Indian head massage (1 year)	2	No. of starts	51	97	41
		% retention	88	85	85
		% pass rate	98	91	100
Body massage certificate	3	No. of starts	45	70	71
		% retention	84	84	80
		% pass rate	95	93	96
Diploma in reflexology	3	No. of starts	46	48	42
		% retention	89	88	79
		% pass rate	100	98	100
Diploma in aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	36	25	22
		% retention	81	76	95
		% pass rate	97	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

97. Teaching is mostly satisfactory or better. Schemes of work are of good quality and these and teaching materials are shared by teachers. The better lessons have clear objectives and are well managed. They use an appropriate variety of teaching strategies and learning materials, and succeed in fully involving students. Some use of resources is innovative and effective. For example, laminated learning resources have been designed to make learning fun. These include technical work cards and diagrams to label. The use of these re-usable resources motivates the students. In an aromatherapy lesson, the regular use of questioning, done with humour and drawing skilfully on the students work experiences, succeeded in fully engaging the students who responded well. There is insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning. In a few hairdressing lessons, there is insufficient attention to aspects of health and hygiene. Due to a malfunction of the chair lift, in one session, a student had to kneel in hair she had cut in order to work effectively.

98. Some inadequate specialist resources and accommodation adversely affect the students' commercial experiences and assessment opportunities. Students mostly work in cramped salon conditions which are noisy at times. A science laboratory used for teaching and assessment on beauty and complementary therapy courses provides an inappropriate environment. Insufficient client numbers adversely affect students' practical activity. Teachers are well qualified and regularly update their technical skills, by working commercially and attending trade events. Some teachers hold qualifications in the teaching of basic skills.

99. Assessment practice is satisfactory overall. Useful formative assessment tests are included in beauty therapy work packs. Records are clear and good use is made of salon diaries to record

activity undertaken and progress made. All hairdressing students start on the NVQ 1 course even though their prior learning and experience may mean they are better suited to start at level 2. Progress targets are insufficiently challenging and some students take too long to achieve the level 1 qualification. During this period, students are taught level 2 skills, but these skills are not assessed until level 1 is completed. The acquisition of knowledge and practical assessment is thus fragmented.

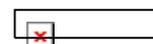
100. Students participate in a broad range of activities that enhance their skills and improve their employment opportunities. Full-time students can achieve up to nine additional qualifications. These include, for hairdressing students, NVQ levels 1 and 2 in ladies hairdressing, NVQ units in gents' hairdressing, make-up, manicure and nail art. Beauty therapy students also benefit from a wide range of additional qualifications. In addition they participate in a variety of seminars, trade events, visits, competitions, shows and exhibitions. The curriculum area contributes to the key stage 4 programme of work with school pupils. For example, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn personal grooming and basic salon assistant skills.

101. Hairdressing teachers provide their students with extensive and effective additional learning support. Students value this support and appreciate that it is provided by their own teachers. The teaching is well resourced. Students use both written learning materials and ILT-based work packages. Learning support needs are identified by early initial assessment and appropriate learning programmes is promptly implemented. Support sessions are programmed to take place on the same day as key skills lessons. Pastoral support is strong. The pastoral programme of group tutorials is carefully planned and includes many interesting topics and a good range of visiting speakers. Equal opportunities issues are included in the tutorial programme. They are introduced effectively in the context of salon working. Individual tutorials to discuss progress and complete action planning take place regularly with each student. Records of the reviews of modern apprentices' progress are detailed. In a few cases, the plans for each student's future work are insufficiently precise. Financial support is available to students where it is needed.

Leadership and management

102. Leadership and management are good. Most of the teachers work part time. Collaborative working is effective at establishing consistent practice, common purpose and a supportive atmosphere. Teacher appraisal effectively identifies each teacher's training needs. Lesson observation, course team meetings, and reviews of the quality of the provision are conducted regularly. Clear records of the discussions and outcomes are kept. Internal verification procedures are in place and assure most aspects of assessment procedures and standards. They have not addressed some fragmented assessment practice in hairdressing. Self-assessment has identified the weaknesses in the resources and accommodation and there are plans to improve these.

Care and early years provision



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

The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses

- high pass rates on national diploma courses

- good teaching
- very good resources to support teaching and learning
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on the diploma for childcare and education
- insufficient short course or part-time provision
- unsatisfactory pass rates of modern apprenticeship framework.

Scope of provision

Achievement and standards

104. Retention rates are high on most full-time courses. For example, on the national diploma in care, they have been 20% or more above the national average in each of the three years to 2003. Pass rates are high on the national diploma courses in both care and early years, well above average in recent years. Pass rates on the diploma in childcare and education have declined in the three years to 2003 and in 2003 were well below national averages. Retention rates on this course have been low in 2002 and 2003. Students make slow progress in completing NVQs and there is low achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks. Pass rates, however, are improving on work-based learning courses and are now at or slightly above national averages. The college has increased the entry GCSE requirements for full-time level 3 courses in order to try to improve the achievement of work-based qualifications.

105. Students' work in lessons is good. Their contributions to class discussion are mature and well focused. Foundation students, for example, sustained a thoughtful discussion on the importance of confidentiality when working with young children and their families. In a practical lesson on food preparation with young children, level 2 students prepared food for Halloween and identified the range of learning opportunities cooking presented for pre- school children.

106. Students' portfolios on all courses are well organised, addressing directly the requirements of the awarding bodies. NVQ portfolios reflect a good understanding of approved and current vocational practice. Students' lesson notes on all courses are neat and well ordered. Full-time students' professional practice is of a high standard and is well recorded in their professional practice portfolios. Students take pride in their work. Students are punctual and attendance is good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in care and early years provision, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
First diploma in care	2	No. of starts	*	18	15
		% retention	*	78	80
		% pass rate	*	86	58
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	16	21	28
		% retention	94	71	82
		% pass rate	87	73	87
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	17	21	82
		% retention	82	67	70
		% pass rate	100	93	86
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	*	33	16
		% retention	*	48	44
		% pass rate	*	88	71
National diploma in care	3	No. of starts	15	23	23
		% retention	73	83	70
		% pass rate	100	84	81
NVQ early years	3	No. of starts	20	24	54
		% retention	40	58	81
		% pass rate	75	29	64

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

* fewer than 15 starters

Teaching and learning

107. A high proportion of the teaching, significantly higher than is usually seen on inspection in this curriculum area, is good. None is unsatisfactory. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed. Lessons are carefully planned. They draw on a wide and appropriate range of teaching and learning methods to meet the needs of each student. In all lessons, the aims and objectives of the lesson are shared with the students at lesson commencement and an assessment made at the end of the lesson of how well they have been achieved. Teachers make good use of an appropriate variety of teaching and learning methods, including oral and written presentation of material, frequent questioning of students and more practical methods. Good use is made of group work and presentations. This type of learning activity is well managed and students respond well.

108. Teachers are well qualified and possess extensive experience in childcare and the health and social care services. This experience underpins the quality of teaching well. Their knowledge of current debates in health, social care and education provide the context in which students develop the links between theory and practice. Teachers also skilfully draw on students' workplace experience to relate theoretical issues to practice. Well-chosen case studies are used to check the understanding of theoretical issues and to address issues of equal opportunities. In a lesson on working with children's families, a wide range of family types were discussed including traveller families, lone parent families and families led by gay and lesbian carers. Students discussed how an understanding of diversity should guide their practice.

109. Work placement is very well organised and carefully monitored. The college has established professional relationships with workplace providers who actively co-operate in the assessment of

students on work placement. Students on NVQ programmes are carefully assessed and supported. Reviews of progress are regular, timely and thorough.

110. The area is very well resourced. The library is well stocked with up-to-date books and vocationally related journals. The new CoVE accommodation is well suited to the delivery of the care and early years courses. Students on all courses use ICT in the preparation, research and presentation of class work and formal assignments. Teachers recommend appropriate websites and students access other search engines to extend learning. Students in one lesson, following an interactive powerpoint presentation were directed to the college's virtual learning environment to extend and confirm the learning that had taken place in the lesson. Most assessed work is word processed. There is only limited access to ICT for students on work-based programmes.

111. Internal verification takes place regularly on all courses including work-based learning courses. Student assignments are carefully marked and students receive clear guidance on how they can improve. In a few cases, students' spelling and grammatical errors are not corrected. Student progress is carefully monitored.

112. There is a good range of full-time provision from entry level to level 4. Work-based learning is provided over a wide geographic area. There is little part-time provision. The department has made good progress in achieving the objectives included within its CoVE status. For example, the volume of NVQ provision has been increased, provision has been introduced at entry level, a foundation degree in early years has been validated and it is due to start in 2004. Partnership working has been strengthened. Links with the community and with care and early years organisations throughout the county including the North Lincolnshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and Sure Start have been developed and are good. The college is currently planning a range of short courses in response to the training needs in early years as identified and agreed by the Partnership.

Leadership and management

113. The CoVE in early years and the care provision are well managed. A clear strategic direction has been set. Quality assurance procedures are effective. There are clearly defined teams in care and early years. Roles and responsibilities are well defined and understood by teachers and students. Staff work well together and there is effective formal and informal communication within and between course teams. Records of the regular departmental and team meetings are clear and well focused. Action is agreed and progress monitored. All staff were involved in the design and resourcing of the new CoVE accommodation for care and early years and take ownership of the decisions made. Staff at all levels are involved in target setting, course review and course planning. All teams contributed to the self-assessment of the area. There is effective management of work-based learning which is showing continuous improvement.

Art, design and performing arts



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

The contributory grade for art and design provision is unsatisfactory (grade 4)

Strengths

- high pass rates on most level 3 courses

- high standards of work in performing arts
- good teaching in performing arts and media
- good resources for music and dance
- good use of vocational experience in teaching and learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass and retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate in art and design in 2003
- unsatisfactory teaching in art and design
- insufficient specialist IT equipment
- weak assessment
- unsatisfactory course management.

Scope of provision

114. The college offers full-time vocational provision at levels 2 and 3. The college works in partnership with the LEA to provide part-time provision for adult students. On full-time courses, there are 185 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 44 adults. First and national diploma courses in media courses are available. Additionally, a broad range of GCE AS and A2 subjects is available, on which 119 students aged 16 to 18 and 16 adults are enrolled. A GCSE in art and design is also offered. Provision for students aged 14 to 16 is available in performing arts and art and design. Course teams organise a range of publicity events including summer schools, taster days and music and theatrical performances.

Achievement and standards

115. Standards of work are high in performing arts. In this area, teachers' high expectations in

rehearsal and improvisation are reflected well in students' performance. Practical work is of good quality in dance and acting and theory and practice are linked together well in performing arts and media. In performing arts, students have a well developed sense of performance. In media, there is some good critical analysis by students. In a national diploma in media, first-year students made a lively word script suitable for filming. The level of specialist language used by students is high. All assignments in music lead to live performance and students perform well in public. In art and design, the standards of objective drawing are low. Insufficient thought is given to the use of sketchbooks which are not valued as tools for idea development. The quality of the work produced in art and design is adversely affected by a shortage of basic equipment for painting. Some of the photography work is creative and there are some examples of careful and competent drawings of Boston facades by GNVQ intermediate students. The students' technical skills are enhanced by the range of subjects additional to their main courses which are available.

116. In the three years to 2003, pass rates on the national diploma in popular music and on the GCE AS media studies and Art studies/fine arts courses have been well above the national average. On the popular music course, all students who complete the course have achieved the qualification during this period. On the GCSE art techniques/practice course, higher grade pass rates have fallen in this period and are now low. In 2003, pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course in art and design and on the national diploma in media production were also low.

117. Retention rates, although fluctuating on some courses are generally close to the national average. In 2003 retention rates were low on the GNVQ intermediate in art and design and the national diploma in media production. The attendance rate in the lessons observed was 78% which is slightly above the national average for this programme area. Some punctuality was poor in music lessons.

A sample of retention and pass rates in art, design and performing arts, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE art techniques/practice	2	No. of starts	48	40	22
		% retention	88	73	77
		% pass rate	40	38	35
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	16	16	40
		% retention	75	100	78
		% pass rate	58	50	90
GCE AS art studies/fine arts	2	No. of starts	77	64	60
		% retention	77	75	75
		% pass rate	78	92	89
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	34	36	53
		% retention	82	64	81
		% pass rate	89	87	88
National diploma media production	3	No. of starts	18	37	18
		% retention	94	65	67
		% pass rate	53	83	67

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

Quality of education and training

118. Teaching is good in performing arts and media. Teaching in media is imaginative and engaging

for students. For example, students learned about metaphor in film through a compelling commentary of a film sequence by a media lecturer who used spirited poetry for illustration. In a fine art national diploma lesson on three-dimensional work, students designed a stage. The teacher drew upon experience gained in designing production sets for television to link health and safety awareness to real life examples. Many teachers of art and design use only superficial and unchallenging questioning, fail to encourage students to think deeply enough and miss opportunities to use and share students' existing knowledge or encourage students' to work sufficiently on their own. Quieter and less confident students are not sufficiently involved and teachers do not encourage their participation.

119. Teachers vocational experience is well used to increase interest and motivation. Music teachers are practising musicians and their recent experience impacts positively on learning. Performing arts teachers use their professional scriptwriting experience to challenge and inspire students. In one lesson, the teacher used a script she had written as a resource for students working on a piece of theatre in education.

120. Much of the teaching in art and design is unsatisfactory. In this area of work, the teaching is poorly planned and managed and lessons are dull and uninspiring. Visual imagery is not stimulating, does not set appropriate standards and fails to inspire students. Teachers' expectations of the standards of work students should be producing are too low. Many opportunities are lost to relate lessons to the work of artists and designers.

121. There are good resources for music and dance. The Sam Newsom Centre provides a very good performance space for music and performing arts which, being close to the town centre, is easily accessible to the public for live performance. In some cases, external noise interrupts lessons. Good individual rehearsal spaces are effectively used by music and DJ technology students. The professional dance studio is well equipped. In performing arts and media, some rooms are too small for the numbers of students, limiting the range of teaching methods possible. One theatre in education class was taking place in a cluttered art room which was poorly lit. Some rooms are shared. A well-planned IT lesson for first diploma media students was disadvantaged by having to share with a first diploma art and design group. In this lesson, the learning of both groups was unsatisfactory. Some art and design rooms are poorly arranged making it difficult for teachers to teach effectively and manage the behaviour of all students.

122. In art design and media, ICT equipment is insufficient and inadequate. There is no Internet connection to the specialist art and design computer suite and Internet access to the music technology centre is inadequate. Computers in the library are slow and often do not work. Filters on computers are so restrictive students and teachers in all creative disciplines are unable to access a sufficient number of websites, restricting learning opportunities.

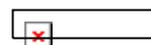
123. Assessment is underdeveloped. Grading criteria are not always specified on assignment briefs and the assessment process is not understood by all students. In art and design, written and verbal feedback on students work is inadequate. It does not help students to improve. Some internal verification procedures are not consistently followed. For example, assignments are not always verified before issue. Performing arts and media teachers have recently reviewed and strengthened these procedures. Initial assessment is carried out for all full-time students. Results identify those in need of additional support. This is provided by specialists and vocational staff. Good support is provided for students with limited mobility. A laptop, provided by the college, is used by a student with dyslexia.

Leadership and management

124. Development planning is unsatisfactory and is insufficiently linked to college priorities. Teachers lack an appropriate awareness of college management systems. The college's quality procedures are implemented poorly. For example, no course reviews have taken place for courses ending in 2002/03. Issues raised by external verifiers are not firmly dealt with. Feedback to teachers following lesson observation is not always clear enough to inform necessary improvements to the teaching. Informal communication between teams is good in performing arts and media. Teachers readily described the actions taken this year to improve retention and pass rates. However, written plans to

improve provision are not clear enough. Formal procedures to ensure good practice is shared systematically are underdeveloped. College procedures to support new teachers are not always followed. For example, new teachers do not always have the support of trained mentors. Team meetings are infrequent and minutes lack important information, for example, who is responsible for actions or when these should be completed.

English, foreign languages and humanities



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on GCE A2 programmes and GCE AS English
- good teaching of English
- the broad range of subjects available to access and GCE AS students.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates in GCE AS psychology
- too much teaching which fails to challenge students
- low progression rates from some GCE AS to GCE A2 subjects.

Scope of provision

125. A wide range of subjects is available at GCE AS and GCE A2. Key skills in communication, integrated into main stream courses, are offered at levels 2 to 3. A one-year access to HE course is aimed at mature students who want to progress to HE. This course is free to students. The course includes a wide range of options including biology, business, computing, English literature, mathematics, psychology and sociology. A one-year foundation programme prepares international students for entry to a British university. Along with their main programme, these students may also study a variety of English as a foreign languages (EFL) courses and gain appropriate qualifications. Teachers from this department provide entry level Spanish courses to students on the AVCE leisure and travel programme.

126. At the time of the inspection, there were 162 students enrolled on GCE AS programmes, 96 on GCE A2 and 64 on the access to HE course. There were 29 students enrolled on EFL courses.

Achievement and standards

127. Retention and pass rates are high on most GCE A2 programmes and on GCE AS level English. In the years 2002 and 2003, all GCE A2 sociology students have passed the course. In GCE AS and A2 English, retention and pass rates are regularly above the national averages. In GCE AS sociology and psychology, retention and pass rates have declined in the past year. In psychology they are now low. The pass rate on the access to HE course has also declined in recent years and in 2003 was similar to the national average. The retention rate on GCE AS French has also declined significantly in the three years to 2003 and is now well below the national average.

128. The access to HE course provides for a good range of progression opportunities. Some access students progress to a degree course at Boston college, others to degree courses at other universities. Progression rates from GCE AS to A2, for most subjects, are low. For example, in 2003, only 30% of the students who had studied psychology at GCE AS progressed to GCE A2 in this subject. In English language, the progression rate was only 52%.

129. The standard of students' work is satisfactory, with students working at the expected standard. Most students demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the topic studied, a few show good levels of attainment. For example, in a psychology GCE A2 lesson, whilst some students showed a good understanding of the differences between positivist and interaction approaches to observation, others had only a tenuous grasp of the concepts. Some English students display a limited ability to critically evaluate literary and non-literary texts and their writing skills are in some cases inadequate for the demand of the course.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	84	79	38
		% retention	67	68	82
		% pass rate	46	26	55
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	32	24	39
		% retention	69	88	87
		% pass rate	91	86	88
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	75	62	60
		% retention	72	79	67
		% pass rate	52	69	55
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	47	42	35
		% retention	68	88	80
		% pass rate	81	89	79
GCE A2 sociology	3	No. of starts	*	**	19
		% retention	*	**	100
		% pass rate	*	**	100
GCE A2 English language	3	No. of starts	*	25	17
		% retention	*	100	94
		% pass rate	*	96	100

Access to HE	3	No. of starts	36	47	79
		% retention	83	66	76
		% pass rate	90	97	78

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

***course not available**

**** fewer than 15 starters**

Quality of education and training

130. Most teaching on English courses is good. Some lessons are well prepared, delivered with flair and imagination and are of excellent quality. In these lessons, teaching is inclusive, fosters good relationships amongst students and teachers, and creates an atmosphere which is conducive to good learning. For example, in one excellent class, the teacher ensured that students with different skill levels were fully involved in learning. Acting, mimicry and other paralinguistic features were used to make the lesson interesting, stimulating and accessible to all students. Students whose first language is not English receive effective individual help.

131. Some teaching is dull and students are not stretched enough to achieve their full potential. In many lessons, teaching methods lack sufficient variety and fail to cater for the needs of all students in lessons to large and heterogeneous groups. In many humanities lessons, some with over 25 students, teachers rely mainly upon using the board to record information and upon asking the students questions. This leads to too few students speaking and others not having the opportunity to explore ideas fully during the lesson.

132. Lesson plans are coherent, well developed and show clear links to schemes of work. Teachers produce good quality handouts and worksheets and make good use of the equipment available in the classrooms. Few teachers use ILT sufficiently in languages lessons and many lack the confidence to use IT to enhance the learning of students.

133. Teachers are appropriately qualified. They hold relevant teaching qualifications and many have degrees. Classrooms are spacious and well lit and comfortably accommodate large groups of students. There is a good range of teaching and learning resources and equipment available to staff and students on most programmes. Access to computers, for GCE A-level students, outside lessons is easy and these students use them for study, writing assignments and carrying out research. Access to HE students find it more difficult to access computers between their classes. They also experienced difficulty in accessing sufficient copies of key text books when undertaking assignments.

134. Students' work is carefully and accurately assessed. Feedback on assignments is appropriately detailed and includes relevant information on their work and how they can improve. There is comprehensive initial assessment on the access to HE course and all students undertake a literacy and numeracy test. Additional learning support is arranged for those students who require it. In English, although students take a diagnostic test in literacy and numeracy, insufficient attention is given to assessing their levels of attainment in the subject prior to course commencement. Some students are placed on courses which are too demanding for them.

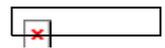
135. Advice and guidance to students are generally satisfactory. GCE A-level students are well supported by their tutors and by the college. GCE A2 students, in particular, spoke positively about the tutorial system and its usefulness to them. International students attending English courses are given additional support through EFL. This support is appropriate to both their individual needs and the course requirements. Tutorial groups on the access to HE course are large. The support students receive through these formal methods is supplemented by good informal access to teachers who provide good support for course-related and personal issues.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good communication between curriculum managers and other staff. Lack of a social science co-ordinator has adversely affected the developments in this curriculum area. Teachers are set performance targets for retention and pass rates, which are reviewed annually. There is appropriate access to internal and external training and updating events. Management information is readily available to staff on the college intranet. It is used by them to monitor their performance against retention and pass rate targets and to identify trends.

137. Teachers are aware of, and appropriately involved in, quality assurance procedures. Formal reviews of each subject are completed at the end of each year. These inform the curriculum area self-assessment report. Lesson observation is carried out regularly by curriculum managers. All teachers are observed annually. The grading of lessons during internal observation is overgenerous. There is little promotion of equal opportunities issues during lessons and this is not monitored sufficiently during lesson observation. Subject teams do not meet often enough to enable them to share good practice in teaching and learning.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- much good teaching and learning
- high retention rates
- good initial assessment
- effective literacy and numeracy support
- good use of IT to support learning
- effective expansion of provision through partnerships and marketing.

Weaknesses

- poor target setting in a few individual learning plans
- inadequate arrangements to verify achievements on courses which do not have examinations
- insufficient use of vocationally specific learning materials.

Scope of provision

138. There are 232 adults and 27 students aged 16 to 18 on literacy and numeracy courses. Most of these students are adults on part-time courses, about half studying at community venues. In addition, 44 full-time students aged 16 to 18 on foundation vocational courses in care, construction and IT are also aiming to achieve entry or level 1 literacy and numeracy qualifications. The number of students studying literacy and/or numeracy has increased rapidly, by more than 150% over the 18 months to October 2003. Some 275 other students receive literacy, numeracy or dyslexia support to help them in their studies on vocational or academic courses. Courses leading to the qualifications in the national Skills for Life framework were introduced in the 2002/03 academic year with more than 80 students taking entry level, level 1 or level 2 assessments and tests.

Achievement and standards

139. Pass rates on the national 'Skills for Life' courses are satisfactory, 59% of students achieving the certificate in adult literacy at level 1. For some students, these results represent a significant achievement and improved aspirations; for example, one young mother who left school aged 14 has passed the level 1 literacy test and is now studying at level 2 with an ambition to gain a qualification and employment in administrative work. Achievements in literacy and numeracy for students not aiming for qualifications are unclear because some individual learning plans do not set clear targets by which progress can be measured. Retention rates on basic skills courses improved last year and, at 90%, was high. Pass rates for level 1 courses in key skills communication and application of number have improved over the three years to 2003. These rates are high in some curriculum areas and low in others. The attendance rate in the lessons and support sessions inspected was 79%, which is high.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	431	387	319
		% retention	74	64	87
		% pass rate	25	36	42
Key skills communication	1	No. of starts	406	318	313
		% retention	73	59	83
		% pass rate	25	32	40

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

Quality of education and training

140. Much of the teaching is good. The most effective learning takes place when there are clearly defined learning outcomes which are linked to individual learning plans, and when targets are set and lessons planned to build upon students' prior knowledge and skills. Most lessons include a good variety of appropriate teaching strategies, which capture and maintain students' interests. For example, in one lesson on 'time', for adults with learning difficulties, the introduction required each student to portray a particular time on a clock face and question other students. This was followed by the students working individually with model clocks and worksheets which were graded in difficulty according to each student's level of understanding. Whole group questioning by the teacher checked on understanding and kept the students interested. The lesson finished with the students re-enforcing their learning by working with computer software packages on time. The careful planning which ensures learning was pitched at the right level for each student and met the short-term learning targets set each of them, and the variety of activity kept all the students engaged and making good progress.

141. In the best learning plans, students' progress is carefully assessed and reviewed against clear short-term learning targets. A few learning targets, however, fail to state clearly enough what it is that the students need to learn. Their quality varies between teachers and in a few cases the plans are not specific enough to be useful. The decisions made by individual teachers as to whether students have achieved the targets set in their learning plans are not moderated systematically by the teaching team.

142. Procedures to initially assess the literacy and numeracy skills of all college students are well organised and systematic. Computer-based assessments are analysed quickly to identify students who may benefit from extra help with maths or English. Those who do are carefully matched with tutors for individual or small group support sessions. In one support session, the tutor had liaised carefully with hairdressing and beauty therapy teachers and completed a very detailed assessment and work plan with the student to ensure she was able to improve her literacy skills and so be better prepared to complete her main course of study.

143. The literacy and numeracy support provided for students on courses across the college is effective in helping students achieve their main qualifications. Of the nearly 300 students who received literacy, numeracy or dyslexia support last year, 74% reached the end of their course and passed the examinations or other assessments. This is a high success rate. The students interviewed during the inspection reported that they were very happy with the support they received.

144. Students were motivated by both specialist basic skills and vocational staff providing literacy and numeracy support. Teachers of vocational subjects who deliver some of the literacy and numeracy support sessions need further training in teaching literacy and numeracy. Insufficient use is made of vocationally specific learning materials in some literacy and numeracy support sessions.

145. Teaching accommodation for literacy and numeracy classes is good. The support workshop on the Rochford site is excellent. Good use of IT to support learning was seen in most of the classes observed during inspection, including a community venue where the tutor had set up laptop computers for the students to use.

146. Ambitious targets have been set to further increase the range of courses, the number of community venues at which it operates and the number of students enrolled during the current academic year. The college has established some productive partnerships with local voluntary and community groups. These help to recruit students who would otherwise be unlikely to enrol on courses. For example, literacy and numeracy teachers from the college work with Sure Start, an organisation that aims to provide parents with information on health, welfare and finance. The teachers work with Sure Starts' clients in their own homes, assessing their needs and encouraging them to enrol on community or college-based courses. Other local partnerships which help the college provide teaching include Addaction which works with clients on probation who have alcohol and drug problems, the Girls Friendly Society which works with teenage mothers and FAST which works with homeless young people.

147. Marketing and publicity for basic skills courses are good. As a follow up to the national advertisements, an appearance in Boston marketplace was made by the Gremlins featured in the

national campaign. A CD-based speaking course guide, for non-readers, has been produced and high quality leaflets on new courses are regularly sent out to more than 50 community groups and other professionals in the area. The students seen during the inspection were very happy with the guidance and information they received before joining their courses.

Leadership and management

148. Curriculum management is effective, but has some weaknesses. The organisation of literacy, numeracy and dyslexia support in the college is very good. The expansion of literacy and numeracy courses has been well managed and there are a number of successful projects in place that will help develop the work further. Because of the recent successful management of community work, the LSC asked the college to run awareness raising events on basic skills for staff from community and voluntary organisations. A good number attended and most participants found them informative. Basic skills teachers are effectively managed and work well as a team. The self-assessment report for the area missed some of the weaknesses in the provision and overestimated the standard of teaching. Key improvement targets are rarely quantified, discussed in meetings or recorded clearly in action plans. Formal action planning lacks detail.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- a clear curriculum framework.

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient monitoring of students progress.

Scope of provision

149. The college provides full-time discrete courses for students with moderate and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The provision includes a pre-entry level programme to develop students' independence and vocational skills, and an entry level programme to broaden students' awareness of work and prepare them for further training or entry to work. At the time of the inspection, there were 48 students of whom 25 were aged 16 to 18 and 23 students aged 19 and over.

150. The pre-entry course includes practically based lessons such as those for daily living skills, learning about the community and horticulture. It also includes enrichment options in ceramics and leatherwork. Entry level students study three vocational options that include catering, horticulture and care. This programme offers a range of enrichment modules that include fabrication, mechanical engineering, art, web design, sport, music, go kart assembly and hairdressing. These students also work towards the Edexcel certificate in skills for working life. Some may also work towards NVQ units in food and drink service and certificates in adult numeracy and literacy. The second years of pre-entry and entry level programmes contain a core curriculum of literacy, numeracy and IT. The Mencap Essential Skills Award is offered to those students with the most complex learning disabilities. Courses are offered on both of the college's main campuses and an increasing number of venues in the local community.

Achievement and standards

151. The college has recently introduced a curriculum framework that enables students to progress, whilst remaining within discrete provision, from pre-entry into entry-level provision. The framework also provides a route into level 1 programmes in a range of vocational subjects. In 2002/03, 31% progressed into level one programmes in construction, IT and care. Two students gained full-time employment. In a few lessons, the achievements of some students is satisfactory, for example in acquiring new and relevant skills which prepare them for future life and work. Some students demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety procedures. However, most students' initial levels of personal and social skills are not fully assessed and recorded in sufficient detail. As a result, it is not possible to assess their actual levels of achievement. Many students underachieve, since teaching is not planned carefully enough to focus sufficiently precisely on individual students' needs.

Quality of education and training

152. In the better lessons, teachers plan to meet the needs of individual students. The lessons are lively with students learning through using appropriate day-to-day activities. In one lesson, the students were actively engaged in researching the health and social care facilities in the local area. Students worked effectively with their peers and developed communication, literacy and team working skills. In another lesson, the students worked productively making individual leather artefacts, followed the teachers instructions carefully, helped each other where appropriate and took pride in their achievements.

153. Many of the lessons observed were not of this quality. Classroom management is generally unsatisfactory. Much of the lesson planning is inadequate, with too much whole class teaching and little teaching which is differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. Teaching is unimaginative and lacks challenge and too narrow a range of individualised or different activities to maintain interest and make learning enjoyable. In some lessons, students are given inappropriate tasks and learn very little. Some literacy and numeracy subjects are not related to vocational or daily living skills. There is too much paper-based activity especially for non-readers. In one lesson planned for the whole group to develop the skill of asking questions, students were unruly and demonstrated that they already had these skills by asking why they were carrying out the activity. In another, the lesson plan was not followed and the activity of producing a picture without paint or pastels was ignored as the students produced pictures of pumpkins using such media.

154. Individual learning plans were reintroduced in the department in September 2003. The plans are presently underdeveloped. Inadequate baseline and initial assessment contributes to the setting of imprecise learning targets. The targets set do not reflect the students' learning needs sufficiently. The targets are often too general such as 'to learn English' or 'to learn about hygiene' and some do not refer to the need to develop appropriate personal or social skills which will equip the students for their adult lives. In a few lessons, the students' individual targets are appropriate to their needs and daily lives and are shared with the students who understood what they have to learn. Ongoing assessment of students' progress, recorded in students files is often a record of what class activities have taken place rather than what has been learned.

155. Levels of learning support and personal care for students are high. Learning support assistants

help effectively with personal care and provide some satisfactory support to students in their lessons. In some lessons, poor management of the learning support assistants leads to inappropriate or too much support for students, for example where learning assistants are simply carrying out a task for the student without requiring the student to direct operations sufficiently. Access to disability counselling is good, as are the links with speech and language therapists.

156. Links with schools and other agencies are underdeveloped. Little information is made available by schools to the college to establish what personal and social skills, or competencies students have previously achieved or where they might move on to after college. There is no external work experience for students. The college bistro and links with a specialist residential college enable students to participate and gain useful practical experience in catering and horticulture. Funding has been secured to support a new post to develop and extend these links.

157. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and many have experience of working with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Few have undertaken specialist training for working with students with complex learning disabilities. Some part-time teachers and learning support assistants have gained qualifications such as British sign language qualifications which benefit their work with students. A classroom has recently been refurbished to a satisfactory standard and includes kitchen and living skills equipment. The college provides appropriate transport for disabled students between the two main sites and into the community.

Leadership and management

158. Due to the weaknesses in individual learning planning, the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and insufficient monitoring of student progress curriculum management is unsatisfactory. Managers have developed additional programmes to meet the needs of the most disabled students in the community. A newly appointed development manager is developing links with external agencies such as Connexions, with special schools and with local social services. There are good formal and informal communications between the teachers and management. Programme meetings are taking place more frequently than in the past. There is a commitment among staff to improve teaching and learning and individual learning plans. External consultancy has been recently engaged to help the college identify the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Quality assurance arrangements are ineffective. Grades for teaching and learning awarded by the college last year are overgenerous and the judgements do not accurately reflect the quality of the provision.

Part D: College data

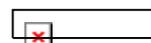
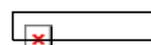


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	27	36
2	41	37
3	27	19
4/5	0	2
Other	5	6
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	911	225	7
Land-based provision	2	15	0
Construction	214	685	6
Engineering, technology and manufacture	157	149	2
Business administration, management and professional	299	628	6
Information and communication technology	836	3,592	28
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	446	914	9
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	552	324	6
Health, social care and public services	168	744	6
Visual and performing arts and media	547	128	4
Humanities	259	159	3
English, languages and communication	646	130	5
Foundation programmes	872	108	6
Unknown curriculum area	999	846	12
Total	6,908	8,647	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	544	450	361	1,485	1,422	1,760

	Retention rate	69	78	78	65	60	60
	National average	76	75	76	73	69	70
	Pass rate	62	68	67	85	82	89
	National average	65	69	71	66	68	71
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,284	1,125	1,171	1,177	1,267	1,510
	Retention rate	66	71	75	65	59	55
	National average	72	70	72	70	68	68
	Pass rate	79	77	71	81	83	84
	National average	67	69	71	64	68	72
3	Starters excluding transfers	868	1,535	1,430	729	764	788
	Retention rate	63	69	79	69	63	63
	National average	67	71	77	69	68	70
	Pass rate	82	77	83	82	77	85
	National average	75	77	79	66	69	72
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	31	32	33
	Retention rate	*	*	*	71	75	79
	National average	66	73	71	67	67	67
	Pass rate	*	*	*	59	54	85
	National average	65	54	53	68	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 2000 to 2002: College ISR.

**numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	

Level 3 (advanced)	60	33	7	83
Level 2 (intermediate)	50	43	7	44
Level 1 (foundation)	48	44	8	25
Other sessions	47	35	18	34
Totals	54	37	9	186

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