



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Wyke Sixth Form College

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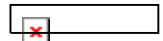
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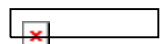
**Basic information about the college**



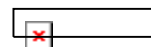
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Name of college:	Wyke Sixth Form College
Type of college:	Sixth form college
Principal:	Richard Smith
Address of college:	Grammar School Road Hull HU5 4NX
Telephone number:	01482 346 347
Fax number:	01482 473 336
Chair of governors:	John Wilson
Unique reference number:	130581
Name of reporting inspector:	Sandra Tweedie HMI
Dates of inspection:	29 September - 3 October 2003

**Part A: Summary**



## Information about the college

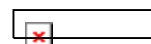


Wyke College is one of two sixth form colleges in Hull and is situated on the western edge of the city. A new principal was appointed in 2002. The structure and focus of the college has been reviewed during 2002/03. Priorities are: to increase expectations of study and success; improve teaching and learning; develop student access to guidance; and improve liaison with partner schools.

The population of Hull is approximately 243,589, with just over 5% aged 16 to 19. In the 2001 census, 41% of the population are recorded as having no qualifications. In 2001/02, the college recorded 90% of their students as white and 5% as of minority ethnic origin, with 5% unknown. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the average of the Hull population, which is 1.5%. The proportion of pupils in Hull schools achieving 5 or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades at A\* to C is improving, but remains very low at 28.9% in 2001/02. Over one-third of students at the college travels from the East Riding of Yorkshire or has previously attended a school outside the city boundary. In comparison with other sixth form colleges, the college offers a wide range of courses from entry to higher level. The college is developing 14 to 19 provision in partnership with several schools and post-19 courses in partnership with Hull University. In 2002/03, the college recorded 5,300 student enrolments for those aged 16 to 18 and 840 for adults. Some 60% of students were female. There was a pattern of declining recruitment of students aged 16 to 19 since 2001, which has recovered in September 2003 when enrolments have increased by 5%.

In its mission statement, the college aims to provide the best education for its students and to be a centre of excellence where they can achieve their full potential, choosing high-quality learning opportunities while supported in a caring environment.

## How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged provision in performing arts, media and film to be outstanding, and in English and humanities to be good. Provision is satisfactory in social sciences and health and social care, business studies, economics, accountancy and law, in information and communication technology (ICT) and computing and in sciences. A contributory grade was awarded in sciences, for biology, and is unsatisfactory. The provision in visual arts and mathematics is unsatisfactory. The main strengths and areas for improvement are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- a wide range of courses at different levels
  
- high pass rates on General Certificate of Education Advanced (GCE A2) courses
  
- enthusiastic and purposeful students

- effective and confident use of new technology to enhance learning in several subject areas
- good to excellent teaching and learning in humanities and performing arts, media and film
- strong personal support for students
- many good specialist resources
- well-informed governors
- good and improving links with primary and 11 to 16 schools.

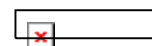
***What should be improved***

- retention rates on GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses
- the underachievement of students on GCE AS courses
- high-grade pass rates on GCSE courses
- curriculum management
- self-assessment, quality assurance and monitoring of performance
- schemes of work and lesson planning

- the identification of students' learning needs at level 3
- the quality of students' action planning to help them to improve their performance
- general classroom accommodation.

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

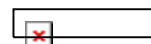


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Mathematics	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> A broad range of courses allows participation by students of widely differing ability. Achievement is poor on GCE AS and GCSE courses. Schemes of work and lesson planning lack important details. Little use is made of information technology (IT) to support teaching and learning. Teaching involves students and develops their oral skills in mathematics effectively. The self-assessment process lacks rigour.
Sciences	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass and retention rates are high for GCE A-level physics and low for GCE AS physics and biology and GCE A2 biology. Much teaching is good in chemistry and physics. Too many students do not realise their potential in biology, where teaching is over-reliant on written materials. Science laboratories are well equipped and subject support is good. Self-assessment lacks rigour. Biology is unsatisfactory.
Business studies, economics, accountancy and law	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on several courses but have declined for a few GCE AS subjects, as have retention rates. Theory teaching is effective, although the use of ICT in learning is not well developed. Support for students is good. Quality assurance and self-assessment are ineffective. The curriculum is well planned at levels 1 and 2.
Information and communications technology and computing	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass and retention rates are good on several courses but poor on European computer driving licence (ECDL) and GCE AS computing. Teaching is effective for adult students, but does not engage students aged 16 to 18 sufficiently. Standards of programming

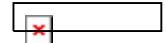
	work are good on two courses. ICT classroom facilities are also good. Performance has been improved on several courses, but course management and quality assurance lack rigour.
Visual arts	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Pass rates are low on GCE AS photography, graphic design and level 2 courses, and are high for GCE A2 art and textiles. There is underachievement by advanced level students in photography and GCE AS graphic design. Retention rates are low for most courses. Teaching and learning are generally good in textiles. ICT resources are used confidently. Ineffective management of students' support hinders their progress.
Performing arts, media and film	<b>Outstanding.</b> Most teaching is very good and some is excellent. Pass rates are high on many courses. Students' performances and written work are of a high standard. Students are encouraged to achieve their full potential and are highly motivated. Course management is good. Professional links are maintained. While specialist accommodation for performing arts is excellent, the temporary classroom accommodation for some subjects is unsatisfactory.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are good on GCE A2 courses, but more mixed for GCE AS. Overall, too few students achieve higher grades. There is a lot of very good teaching, with resources used effectively to stimulate learning. Many rooms are too small for current group sizes and restrict the range of learning activities that can be used. Course management is of variable quality.
Social sciences and health and social care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is a lot of good teaching, with effective use of new technology. Pass and retention rates are high for GCE A2 sociology and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate health and social care, but pass rates are below average for GCE AS sociology, philosophy and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) health and social care. Classrooms are unsuitable for some larger groups. The self-assessment process lacks rigour.
English	<b>Good.</b> Much teaching is good. Pass rates for GCE A-level English literature and English language and literature are high. The A* to C pass rate is low for GCSE English. Students receive good subject support from their teachers and through subject enrichment. The limitations of the accommodation have a detrimental effect on learning and relevant library stock is inadequate.

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



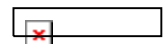
Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Managers and staff share a sense of purpose and direction, with a clear focus on levels of students' performance and satisfaction. Retention rates and achievement are generally improving, although they remain below the national averages for sixth form colleges. The exception is the GCE A2 programme, where pass rates are now above the national average. Curriculum management is variable; occasionally it is good, but in most areas it is at best satisfactory. Governors make an effective contribution to monitoring the college's performance. Financial management is sound, and the college offers satisfactory value for money. There is a lack of rigour in the college's self-assessment and quality assurance processes.

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



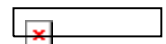
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. It is effectively widening participation within the context of its mission statement. While most full-time enrolments continue to be at level 3, the college has remodelled its level 2 GCSE provision. It has plans to introduce an additional course at level 4 and has established programmes at level 1 and below, for example, the Wyke foundation course, in order to improve the college's inclusiveness. In so doing, the college has worked in partnership with local schools and higher education (HE), and is an active member of the group charged with responding to the area-wide inspection. Students' awareness of equal opportunities issues is limited and the college is not making sufficient progress in actively promoting equal opportunities. In response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, the college has produced a policy and implementation plan. Progress in taking forward the action plan is slow. Much of the college plan rests on the collection and analysis of data relating, for example, to ethnic origin. This work is not complete. Although small in number, the proportion of students from ethnic minority groups is larger than the proportion of persons from such groups in the local population. The college is fulfilling its duties under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) and staff have received training in the implementation of the Act. The college foresees the need to invest further in its building stock if it is to respond fully to current legislation, although it has been able to provide disabled access to all but three of its teaching rooms.

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



Students at Wyke College receive satisfactory guidance and support. Pupils from local high schools and part-time day and evening applicants receive helpful guidance in choosing their college courses. There are appropriate arrangements for the initial assessment of the learning needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they are well supported in lessons. The individual learning needs of students on level 3 courses are less thoroughly identified. Students receive very good support for personal issues from the confidential counsellor. Careers education is well planned and students have easy access to high-quality careers guidance. Teachers provide a lot of informal help outside the classroom but there are shortcomings in the arrangements to support students in their academic studies. Though students are set target grades as part of the reviewing process, they are not helped to keep a record of what they need to do to achieve these targets, nor to record any support they might require. Students are not given sufficient help in developing good study skills.

## Students' view 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***

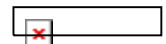
- the range of subjects

- the adult environment
- feeling valued by teachers
- everyone wanting to work
- the helpfulness and accessibility of staff
- the very useful guidance desk.

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

- overcrowded classrooms
- social space available to sit down
- availability of healthy food.

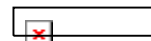
**Other information**



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, learning and attainment by inspectors

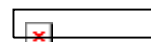
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	69	25	6
19+ and WBL* **	89	11	0
Learning 16-18	65	32	3
19+ and WBL* **	78	22	0

*Key: Inspectors grade three aspects of lessons: teaching, learning and attainment. 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 learners

\*\* based on low number of observations

## Achievement and standards



1. The majority of students at the college are aged 16 to 19 and are following courses at level 3. However, the college takes seriously its wish to widen participation and particularly to raise achievement on courses offered at level 2 to allow students to progress to advanced- level work. Provision for adult students offers a range of examination and general interest courses at different levels. This is mainly offered as an evening programme. Enrolments of full-time students have increased by 5% in 2003.

### **16-18 year olds**

2. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses have improved in the last three years, although they remain slightly below the national average. For example, college data show an improvement from 80% in 2001 to 85% in 2003, below the national average of 88%. GCE A-level pass rates, if general studies is excluded, have improved from 94.6% in 2002 to 97.2% in 2003. These figures use the measure of subjects passed relative to examination entries. The college changed its policy and entered many more students for general studies in 2003, resulting in a reduced pass rate. If general studies is included, the pass rate has remained stable between the two years. In 2003, 27 out of 36 subjects had a 100% pass rate. However, the percentage of students achieving high grades is relatively low, at 28%. Achievement on GCE AS courses has remained fairly constant over three years although retention rates have fluctuated. In 2003, college data indicate that approximately 84% of students completed their GCE AS course and, of those, around 80% were successful. These figures are below national averages for level 3 courses and the college is addressing this issue through its guidance and support systems.

3. Pass rates on level 2 courses have also improved to around the national average in 2002, with a slight further improvement in 2003. However, the achievement of grades A\* to C by students on GCSE courses remains stubbornly low, at only 38% in 2003. The college acknowledges this

weakness and has reduced its GCSE re-sit offer in 2003/04.

4. There is a small amount of level 1 enrolment and pass rates for these courses have been well below average. Wyke College has a full-time entry-level programme, the Wyke foundation course, in addition to its full-time level 2 offer. Few students have successfully completed their key skills qualifications at any level in any of the key skills.

5. At all levels, retention rates have been below national averages for similar colleges over the three-year period to 2001/02, but the trend has been generally upward and improving. At level 3, retention rates remain just slightly below the national average for students aged 16 to 18 in 2003, according to college data.

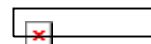
6. The college uses two nationally recognised systems for measuring how well students perform at advanced level in relation to their qualifications on entry to the college. These value added measures indicate that in most subjects at GCE A2, students progress as might be expected relative to their prior attainment. However, there was a decline in the college's overall value added scores in 2003, indicating that, overall, students' achievements, when GCE AS courses are included, are below expectations derived from their GCSE scores. In the three years to 2003, value added was significantly high on GCE A-level English language and music technology courses and for three GCE AS subjects. Conversely, students' progress was poor in five subjects at GCE A level and five at GCE AS. Subjects which provide negative value added include biology, general studies and classical civilisation.

7. In most subjects, the standard of students' work is satisfactory or better. It is good in English, social sciences, humanities subjects, performing arts, music, film and media. The inspection took place only four weeks into the term, but humanities and social science students, for example, were able to analyse complex issues and express their own views clearly. In several curriculum areas, students demonstrated that they had settled into the course quickly and they were producing work of a high standard for this stage in the course. However, in the visual arts area, the standard of work in some subjects was below that which might be expected. Attendance during the inspection averaged 86%. It was highest in performing arts, media and film, at 93%.

### **Adult students**

8. The college has a commitment to widening participation and has attracted nearly 450 adult students, most of whom study on a part-time basis. Overall pass rates for adults have fluctuated in the three-year period to 2001/02. However, in 2002, the most-recent reliable figures available, they were well below national averages at levels 1 and 3, but very close to national averages at level 2. Retention rates were at the national average at all levels in 2002.

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



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 134 lessons. In 71% of lessons, teaching was good or better. It was satisfactory in 24% and less than satisfactory in the remaining 5%. Learning was good or better in 65%, satisfactory in 31% and less than satisfactory in 3% of lessons. A smaller proportion of teaching is good or better at level 2 than at other levels. In one curriculum area, performing arts, media and film, all the teaching observed was good or better. In humanities and performing arts, media and film both teaching and learning were very good. The lowest proportions of good or better teaching were in mathematics, ICT and visual arts.

10. In good and better lessons, for example, in humanities subjects, sociology, performing arts, media subjects and psychology, teachers are skilful in the use of open or precise questions to ensure that all students are able to make a contribution. Both group and individual work are well

managed with a suitable pace and challenging content. Lessons have a productive atmosphere leading to some very good learning. In a few instances, teacher's presentations are overlong, with insufficient questioning and debate, activities are curtailed and so is a more direct involvement in learning. Many teachers give excellent subject support to students outside timetabled lessons. In a few subjects, teaching is less effective and occasionally pedestrian in approach and in the tasks set. In these lessons, students are not given the opportunity to work to their full potential. In ICT, students aged 16 to 18 are not engaged enough in some lessons, while teaching for adults is good. Lesson planning is good in humanities subjects but in several subjects, lesson planning and/or schemes of work are unsatisfactory. They are insufficiently detailed and do not always give any indication of timings, or they are no more than a list of topics. Aims and objectives are not always shared with students.

11. In several curriculum areas, teachers use ICT very effectively to enhance learning. For example, in a GCE AS geography lesson about rivers, ICT was used skilfully to assist students to compare photographic images and maps. It was easy for the teacher to switch quickly between images for comparison, to enlarge detail and to annotate the image. In science, ICT, sociology and psychology lessons, teachers use the technology with confidence but in other subjects it is not used enough.

12. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and they are both academically and professionally well qualified. Almost all full-time teachers hold a teaching qualification. The few new teachers who do not are currently undergoing training. The college also employs a number of part-time teachers, who are also well qualified and experienced. Both teaching and support staff contribute effectively to students' learning. However, the system used to access staff development is demand-led, which results in inconsistent take-up of opportunities and in some vocational areas staff lack recent commercial or sector experience which they could use to enhance their teaching.

13. Since the last inspection, the college has invested in a new student guidance and study centre which has improved information and learning technology (ILT) facilities for independent learning. Students have good access to IT resources, both in the study centre and in some curriculum areas.

14. The college has a detailed and coherent property strategy to address substantial weaknesses in some of its accommodation. To implement the strategy will require substantial investment. Although there are some very good specialist facilities, for example, for art and design, dance and drama, and science, much of the general classroom accommodation is inadequate to support current teaching and learning styles and activities. Many classrooms in the main teaching block are too small for the size of groups and in some cases the teacher is not able to circulate around the classroom to check students' work. The college has 19 temporary mobile classrooms which are difficult and expensive to maintain. Whilst they are well-decorated, maintained and spacious, they are unattractive and not up to modern standards and create a negative image for students. They are unsatisfactory for some lessons, for example, music technology, as they are not soundproofed. Sports facilities at the college are severely restricted and limit potential developments in this curriculum area.

15. The college has developed its facilities for people with restricted mobility and provides wheelchair access to all but three teaching rooms. Although the college has not yet carried out a survey to establish the extent to which its property complies with the requirements of recent legislation, it has commissioned such a survey and it foresees the need to invest further in its building stock if it is to respond adequately to current legislation.

16. The library provision is attractive and well arranged to support the courses offered. Students have an induction within their subject grouping, supported by useful leaflets outlining relevant materials in the library. The book stock is well established, but it is narrow and dated in mathematics and computing, for example. Students have access to some very good teaching and learning resources in many subjects, for example, social sciences and humanities. The college has invested in a number of interactive whiteboards and these are used effectively to enhance students' learning in several subject areas.

17. The diagnosis of the individual learning needs of students is not consistently thorough and during inspection there were students with unmet needs. The initial assessment of students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The college uses an appropriate range of strategies to

identify their needs, including liaison visits to schools, taster sessions, formal interviews and testing. Assessment of less specific needs, however, is not as effective. All students complete a key skills assessment test to determine their learning needs during their induction. The assessment is then used to inform any further support from teachers and/or individual study by students. However, few teachers had systematically diagnosed the subject specific needs of their students by the end of September. Senior managers did not monitor the proportion of students who took up the offer of additional support last year. Tutors are asked to judge additional support needs from a piece of prose that students write at enrolment. Not all students were asked to hand this in. Senior managers did not monitor the proportion of students who took up the offer of additional support last year. Few teachers had systematically diagnosed the subject specific needs of their students by the end of September.

18. Internal verification processes in all subjects are satisfactory and meet the demands of awarding bodies. There are uniform procedures across college, with common paperwork. There is no college assessment policy. Errors in spelling and grammar are not always corrected and opportunities are missed to improve students' key skills. There is no maximum time set for the return of marked work. Students on some national diploma courses have to wait too long for the return of work. The great majority of students' work is marked thoroughly with helpful indications of how to improve.

19. The academic progress of students is formally monitored in twice-yearly reviews. Teachers have helpful discussions with their students and set them target grades which are based in part on value-added information. The grades are recorded and passed to the tutor but a record of any agreed action is not. Students subsequently discuss with their tutor their progress across all subjects. However, students are not trained to write succinct action points that focus on what they need to do to achieve their target grade and their comments on reports usually consist of only general statements of intent. A good opportunity to help them improve their performance is consequently lost. Parents' consultation evenings are held after each review. These are usually well attended.

20. The college provides a wide range of level 2 and 3 courses that effectively meets the needs of students aged 16 to 18 in the area. Some 38 GCE AS, 36 GCE A2 and 18 GCSE subjects, as well as 6 vocational programmes at intermediate level and 6 at advanced level, are available. Nearly all of these have successfully recruited in the current academic year. In addition, the college offers three level 1 vocational courses and mathematics GCSE at foundation level. The Wyke foundation course is offered on a full-time basis at entry level and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses are available at six levels.

21. The curriculum has been modified to suit the needs of the students. At level 2, the GCSE programme has been restructured to give three main options, each supported by a tutor and learning mentors. 'Aim higher' funding has enabled extra teaching, for example, mathematics support for physics students, and an extension to the curriculum offer, such as Advanced Extension Awards (AEA) and master classes. Certificates in numeracy and literacy and a fast-track ICT course have recently been introduced.

22. All GCSE and GCE AS students are expected to study three key skills to level 2, and level 3 students are advised to do level 3 communication key skills. However, completion and pass rates are poor. To better meet students' needs, the college has recently replaced key skills in ICT with a new computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) course. This qualification is mandatory at level 2 if students have not already got such a qualification. A range of enrichment activities is available, including ECDL, musical and sporting activities, dance and drama, politics and work experience.

23. There are strong and improving links with local schools. Six 11 to 16 partner schools are involved with the college and three are involved in the 14 to 16 Increased Flexibility Programme, involving joint teaching at both venues. A liaison manager is now in post. After several years of declining numbers, full-time student numbers increased in 2003 by nearly 5% compared with the previous year. A wide range of student-centred marketing techniques is used, many of which are customised to each school. There is little involvement with employers and no formal needs analysis is done for employers' needs. The proposals to increase income from 'business training' are modest and focus on sustaining a small provision.

24. Students at local high schools receive much helpful guidance in choosing their college courses. All applicants are interviewed initially by experienced senior staff. The three-day 'Wyke start' event, held during the summer term of Year 11, allowed students to follow a timetable of their choosing and receive further guidance from a tutor about their choice of subjects. Students found this a helpful introduction to college life. All part-time day and evening students are interviewed by the adult learning co-ordinator who is a qualified adult guidance worker.

25. Enrolment is generally well managed. Students are enrolled by their personal tutors: this provides tutors with an early opportunity to get to know their students. Tutors follow common guidelines and attend an annual refresher session to ensure they have the up-to-date information required. Subject specialists and careers staff are also available for students to consult. Curriculum inspectors judged, however, that a small number of students were enrolled on unsuitable courses this September.

26. Students receive very good support on personal issues. Their first point of contact is their tutors, who are friendly and supportive, making students feel comfortable in asking for help. The tutorial programme is drawn up in consultation with students as well as staff. There are good supporting materials for personal and social issues, in particular for aspects of health education. However, of the seven tutorials observed during inspection week, only one was judged to be better than satisfactory and two were unsatisfactory. Not all tutors were well prepared and in some cases the material was unsuitable for the students or used in an unproductive way.

27. The recently established student guidance service is providing a prompt and comprehensive information and appointment service for students. Information is readily available on a range of issues, including transport and financial awards. Students are pleased with how quickly the service is able to arrange appointments for them with a careers adviser or the counsellor. The counsellor provides a confidential service on four days a week. Last year, nearly 20% of the students made use of this service, including a number of part-time students.

28. Students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally very well supported by suitably qualified learning support assistants. The exemplary support which is given to hearing impaired students enables them to take a full part in the lessons. Inspectors observed good support for students following foundation courses in mathematics and business. The tutorial programme has been specially adapted for the 11 students who are following the skills for life foundation level course.

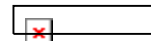
29. Teachers provide much informal support outside the classroom for students experiencing difficulty with their academic work. However, cross-college arrangements do not adequately match the needs of the level 3 students whose qualifications on entry to courses are generally below averages for similar colleges. Students currently in their second year had very few tutorial sessions which focused on supporting them in their studies. A workshop in study skills planned this year as part of the enrichment programme is not now being offered. Inspectors saw very little evidence of planned subject-specific study skills programmes. The learning support department has recently begun to offer support in organising work but most students still perceive this service as only for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a perception unfortunately confirmed by the entry in the current student handbook.

30. Many tutors monitor attendance closely, investigate rigorously the reasons for unacceptable levels of absence and inform parents or carers at an early stage, when this is appropriate. However, there is no clear statement about when an intervention should be made. Students at risk because of erratic attendance in the early weeks are not automatically caught by the trawl at the end of September, which aims to catch only those who have missed at least 20% of lessons. The adult learning co-ordinator checks the registers weekly and contacts those causing concern.

31. All students have access to high-quality careers guidance and follow an appropriate careers education programme. There are thorough arrangements for supporting applications to HE, including an annual careers convention and a parents' conference. Progression to HE, though low, is improving and the college is working closely with local universities to encourage wider participation. Students whose ambition is to gain employment at the end of their course receive guidance from

Connexions staff. The careers library is well stocked with booklets, videos and software packages.

## Leadership and management



32. Leadership and management of Wyke College are satisfactory. The new principal, who has been in post for one year, has led governors, managers and staff in developing a shared view of the future direction and purpose for the college, with a clear focus on recruitment, retention rates, achievement and students' satisfaction. There have been improvements to accommodation and resources, and to the morale of staff, to harness energy towards raising the college's performance. Numbers of full-time students have increased in 2003. Pass rates have also improved, though they remain below the average for sixth form colleges. However, although pass rates at GCE A2 are now above the national average, GCSE pass rates are poor. Retention rates at all levels have shown improvement over the last three years, but only for adult students have they reached the point where they are above the national average.

33. Communications within the college are effective. Managers use a number of means to ensure that this is so: the college intranet, a regular bulletin and a daily staff briefing. The principal seeks to consult widely and there are a variety of committees and groups through which staff and students are able to make their voices heard. The opportunities group, for example, provides a forum for the discussion of students' and staff's experience at Wyke and oversees the implementation and review of the college's equality and opportunity policy. Staff value the accessibility of senior managers.

34. The quality of management in curriculum areas varies widely. It is good in history, performing arts, media and film, and psychology, for example. In these areas, course teams meet regularly and focus on improving students' experience; they systematically monitor targets and make effective use of benchmarking data. In other curriculum areas, course management is at best satisfactory. Course reviews frequently lack rigour and quality assurance arrangements are weak and ineffective.

35. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory. The college scheme sets objectives and quality measures and, having identified the person responsible, it assumes that the process of course review will take account of both student and staff questionnaires and of students' achievements, including analysis of value added data. Review leads to a self-assessment report, which includes a development plan for each section of the report. Both curriculum and business support areas are included in the annual self-assessment report. The quality of the course review process and of the self-assessment reports varies, but in the majority of cases it is neither robust nor rigorous. Statements of strength are too often not accompanied by the data necessary to support them. Weaknesses are not always addressed in action plans and in some cases the actions proposed are vague. There is little evidence that action plans are systematically followed through to a conclusion. Inspectors found weaknesses that were not identified in the self-assessment report.

36. A further element of the college's scheme for quality assurance is the system of lesson observation. In 2002/03, a team of internal observers carried out a total of 54 observations, all of which were graded as good or better, suggesting a very high standard of teaching and learning. In assessing provision at the beginning of the 2003/04 academic year, inspectors' judgements were consistent with three of the grades for the curriculum areas published in the college's 2001/02 self-assessment report. They graded one area higher and five lower, by one grade in each case.

37. An appraisal scheme has been in place for some time. The scheme not only helps staff to identify what they need to do to improve their performance, but also serves as a useful channel of two-way communication and identifies staff development needs to inform the staff development plan. The 2003/04 plan includes training for new staff on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, SENDA and race equality issues.

38. The college has reliable management information, which is increasingly available on the college

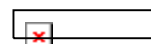
intranet. Levels of confidence in the data are high. The manager responsible for information produces a range of standard reports and responds to requests for additional reports flexibly and promptly. The result is that managers have robust information to inform their decisions.

39. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. The governing body is well informed about the college's academic and financial performance. It has contributed to the development of the college's strategic and development plan and property strategy for the period 2003 to 2006. The college has been able to invest in a capital programme, confident that the financial impact has been carefully appraised and that the building work forms part of a wider property strategy. Governors receive an annual report on students' achievements. Although last year's report did not draw attention to the weaknesses in achievement, governors effectively questioned managers to elicit the weaknesses and proposals for action to address them. Each of the committees of the governing body also has a set of performance indicators against which to judge its performance and makes an annual report to the corporation about the business it has conducted. The performance indicators serve as a benchmark against which governors judge themselves on their contribution to the college's self-assessment process.

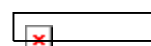
40. The college has a long-established equal opportunities policy. Although the student handbook draws the policy to the attention of students, neither the course directory nor the prospectus contains any reference to equal opportunities. The adult education prospectus does make reference to meeting the needs of students with a disability and those with a learning difficulty. Students show awareness of the college's positive response to students with disability, but they have little awareness of the wider aspects of equal opportunities. Governors approved a race equality policy at their meeting in July 2002. Appropriate training has taken place, but implementation of the action plan has been slow. Much of the implementation of the plan rests on the collection and analysis of data relating, for example, to ethnic origin. This work is not yet complete. The college has sought to respond to other aspects of the equal opportunities agenda through its curriculum offer. Whilst most full-time enrolments continue to be at level 3, the college has remodelled its level 2 GCSE provision: it has plans to develop an additional course at level 4 and has established programmes at level 1 and below in order to improve the college's inclusiveness.

41. Financial control is strong despite the challenges, including a failure to meet its recruitment targets, in recent years. In 2003, however, student numbers have increased to above the growth target that the college set for itself. The deployment of resources is carefully monitored to ensure their efficient use. Teachers' workloads are carefully monitored to ensure their time is fully used. Requests for remission are carefully examined before approval. Given the current levels of retention rates and achievement, the college currently offers satisfactory value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on GCE A2 courses

- good development of students' oral expression of mathematical ideas
- wide range of mathematics courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor achievement at GCE AS
- very small proportion of high grades at GCSE
- little use of IT
- insufficiently detailed lesson schemes and plans
- lack of rigour in self-assessment processes.

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

42. The college offers a broad range of courses in mathematics. It provides modular courses at GCE AS and GCE A2, including modules in applied mathematics such as statistics and discrete mathematics. In addition, a small number of students add modules leading to further mathematics qualifications. The college provides one-year GCSE mathematics courses at foundation and intermediate levels for a large number of students aged 16 to 18. The college also offers a certificate in adult numeracy. For adult students, there is a part-time GCSE course held in the evening.

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

43. Students' achievements are unsatisfactory at GCSE and GCE AS. For GCSE mathematics, the proportion of students achieving grades A\* to C is consistently below the national average and relatively few students succeed. For example, in 2003, only 37 students succeeded in achieving these grades out of 208 who started the course. A small proportion of students are studying GCSE mathematics at foundation level, which does not allow them to achieve high grades. GCE AS mathematics pass rates were poor in 2002 and 2003 and the proportion of students attaining high grades was also small. Pass and retention rates for GCE A2 mathematics are generally high; although only 18 students studied at GCE A2 in 2003, all students starting the course were successful.

44. Most students make efforts to present their work properly and it is usually of an appropriate



standard, clearly setting out the stages in their thinking. Advanced level students are confident when using calculators. Students on GCE AS mathematics courses are able to calculate the gradients of tangents to different parabola and recognise patterns in them. Few students arrive late for lessons and those who do are integrated effectively into the learning process.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics (one year ) (A* to C pass)	2	No. of starts	162	206	208
		% retention	81	83	72
		% pass rate	35	28	25
GCE AS mathematics (one year )	3	No. of starts	104	83	75
		% retention	78	75	89
		% pass rate	70	53	54
GCE A2 mathematics (one year)	3	No. of starts	47**	45	18
		% retention	50	98	100
		% pass rate	81	91	100

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

\*\* two-year A-level course in 2001

***Quality of education and training***

45. Teaching on the mathematics courses is generally satisfactory or better. Teachers prepare thoroughly for their lessons in terms of how best to develop mathematical concepts in an incremental manner to support learning. Little thought is given to timing, however, with the result that some lessons 'run out of steam' towards the end and others are rushed.

46. Schemes of work lack detail and are frequently little more than lists of topics to be covered. Insufficient thought is given to a statement of the precise aims and objectives of a lesson, and these are rarely shared with students, thus denying them the chance to be fully involved in their learning. In some GCE AS teaching, the topic was not introduced fully. The rate of progress at the start of the lesson was too rapid for all students and the topic was not well linked to previous GCSE work. Teachers encourage students to talk about mathematical ideas and processes in their own words. This results in students developing skill in their oral expression of mathematical ideas. As a result, they are able to help each other and to consolidate their own learning in the process. Students are keen to contribute and volunteer their own ideas, even to the extent of taking over at the whiteboard. Innovative teaching techniques are sometimes used to stimulate thought and discussion.

47. GCSE lessons sometimes contain students with a wide range of abilities. In a minority of cases, there are too few opportunities for students to progress at their own pace. Little extension work is provided. Insufficient use is made of IT to support teaching and learning, and opportunities are being missed to consolidate learning and provide extension work through its use. Staff give of their own time freely to support students and the revision classes they run are appreciated.

48. Assessment of students' work is thorough and conforms to specified criteria that are well understood by students. Marked work is returned promptly and carefully annotated to provide constructive feedback.

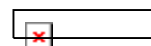
49. The mathematics area consists entirely of mobile classrooms, which in some cases have been given considerable curriculum identity through posters and displays of students' work. These

classrooms are sometimes crowded and frequently stuffy. Their close proximity to each other does, however, encourage communication amongst staff and opportunities to share practice. Staff are well qualified; all have substantial experience and involve themselves in staff development programmes to update their skills. The stock of mathematics texts in the library is adequate, though some are rarely used. Students confirm that they use the library frequently but only to take advantage of a very narrow range of texts. There is room for some updating of library stock.

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

50. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Effective action to remedy the poor achievement of GCSE and GCE AS students has not been given sufficient priority; too few students are successful in achieving the qualification. Action to address identified issues is imprecise and responsibility for it is almost entirely allocated to the head of department. Some weaknesses in provision and resources are neither recognised nor addressed. Quality assurance processes are neither sufficiently formal nor frequent enough to allow issues to be addressed quickly and comprehensively. Day-to-day administration of the department is satisfactory, in that rooms and staff are timetabled efficiently.

### **Sciences**



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

Contributory grade for biology is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass and retention rates for GCE A-level physics
  
- good teaching of chemistry and physics
  
- excellent laboratories
  
- strong subject support for students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates for GCE AS biology and physics and GCE A-level biology
  
- significant underachievement in biology

- over-reliance on written materials in biology teaching
  
- self-assessment lacks rigour.

**Scope of provision**

51. The college provides GCE AS and A-level courses in biology, chemistry, geology and physics, and a GCE AS course in public understanding of science. Although there are no vocational science courses, there is substantial subject choice for GCSE entrants, who are able to prepare appropriately for progression into a wide range of HE courses. Over 200 students started GCE AS and GCE A2 science subjects in 2002/03. The largest group of students is studying biology. The number of students starting GCE AS physics has fallen from 50 to 25 between 2001 and 2003. In 2003, just over 50 students were entered for GCSE science courses, which include GCSE astronomy and GCSE human physiology and health. Almost all students are studying full time and are aged 16 to 18.

**Achievement and standards**

52. Pass rates for GCE AS science subjects are low. In 2003, in biology and in physics, they were well below the averages for sixth form colleges. For GCE AS chemistry, the pass rate has improved by 13% over the last 3 years, to above the national average in 2003. Pass rates on some GCE A-level courses have improved and, in 2003, a 100% pass rate was recorded for GCE A-level physics. GCE A-level biology pass rates, however, have been consistently below the national average for several years. A significant proportion of students on GCE AS and A2 biology courses do not achieve the grades that they are capable of.

53. The proportion of students achieving high grades A\* to C on GCSE science courses varies considerably. In 2003, 8 of 10 students who started the course achieved a high grade pass for GCSE biology, but only 2 out of 10 students achieved a high grade for GCSE human physiology and health. Retention rates on GCE AS courses are close to national averages for sixth form colleges. Retention rates for all GCE A-level science subjects have improved over the last 3 years, but for GCE A-level chemistry they are consistently below average.

54. Students are attentive in lessons and interested in their learning. Their work is generally of a good standard with well-organised and well-presented files. In 2002, a physics student reached the final stage of the British Physics Olympiad and chemistry students have achieved regional recognition in competitions for 'young analysts'. The most able students are encouraged to attend master classes at the local university.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE biology *	2	No. of starts	28	26	26
		% retention	82	69	85
		% pass rate	13	44	50
GCSE science **	2	No. of starts	19	10	16
		% retention	79	90	69

		% pass rate	80	56	55
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	70	66	67
		% retention	90	88	87
		% pass rate	60	62	67
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	55	48	37
		% retention	87	81	89
		% pass rate	75	79	88
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	50	34	25
		% retention	88	88	92
		% pass rate	68	60	70
GCE A2 biology ***	3	No. of starts	46	30	31
		% retention	61	97	90
		% pass rate	75	83	79
GCE A2 chemistry ***	3	No. of starts	26	30	22
		% retention	69	93	91
		% pass rate	83	96	90
GCE A2 physics ***	3	No. of starts	37	24	****
		% retention	54	96	****
		% pass rate	70	96	****

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

\* GCSE biology and GCSE human physiology and health in 2003

\*\* single award in 2003

\*\*\* GCE A level in 2001

\*\*\*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

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

55. Teaching is good, and sometimes very good, in chemistry and physics. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of activities and resources to develop learning, including confident use of ILT. Students are fully engaged in these classes and teachers make good use of questioning to check students' learning. In chemistry lessons, teachers use visual displays on the interactive whiteboard effectively and, in one lesson, students were able to clearly explain the complex concepts involved in ionisation energies. In a well-planned science lesson on displacement reactions, the teacher made very good use of demonstrations, video clips and questioning to introduce and reinforce the topic in a lively and interesting way.

56. In biology, there is an over-reliance by teachers on the use of written materials. Some teaching is unimaginative and does not provide enough challenge for students. In a number of lessons, teachers spent an inappropriate amount of time presenting information that students had already received. More-able students are not given enough opportunities to think for themselves. A significant number of students are underachieving in biology.

57. Experimental work forms a regular part of lessons. During practical work, students handle apparatus safely and in a confident and competent manner. In a chemistry lesson, two students demonstrated how to perform titrations correctly and were guided by their peers.

58. The science laboratories provide an excellent environment to enhance learning, across the

range of science provision. Teachers are suitably qualified and demonstrate extensive subject expertise. Teachers are well supported by technicians, although in practical classes the assistance provided to students is limited. All the laboratories have a clear subject identity. There is a wide range of equipment, sufficient to support practical work.

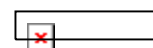
59. Assessment practice is satisfactory, but there are some variations in the rigour with which that of centre-assessed work is conducted and recorded. Homework is set regularly and accurately marked and corrected. Examination questions are used regularly in lessons and develop learning in an effective way. However, the written feedback provided to students on formative assessments does not give sufficient guidance on how to improve work.

60. There is strong subject support, including effective provision for students with individual learning needs. In chemistry, teachers provide additional help outside timetabled lessons for students who are making slow progress and for gifted and talented students who are preparing for the AEA. Physics students are given extra help with mathematics. There is inconsistent application of the entry requirements for GCSE and GCE AS subjects, and as a result some students are enrolled on courses inappropriately.

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

61. Course leadership and management are satisfactory overall. In biology, they are unsatisfactory. Self-assessment lacks rigour and some important issues, notably the underachievement of biology students, have not been addressed adequately by managers. The college's self-assessment grades do not accurately reflect the trends in students' achievements. Strategies for improvement were implemented in chemistry and physics during 2002/03 and there is evidence of progress in raising achievements on GCE AS courses. There is effective teamwork within subjects and informal communication between teaching staff and technicians is good. Formal communication at course level is unsatisfactory where, for example, minutes of subject meetings do not allocate responsibilities for action clearly.

### **Business studies, economics, accountancy and law**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on several courses
  
- effective teaching of theory
  
- well-planned curriculum for level 1 and 2 courses
  
- strong support for students.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates and declining pass rates on some GCE AS courses
  
- insufficient use of ICT
  
- little recent commercial updating for staff
  
  
- poor quality assurance and self-assessment.

### **Scope of provision**

62. The college has enrolled 214 students on GCE AS and A2 courses in business studies, accounting, economics and law this year. There are 18 full-time students on level 1 and 2 GNVQ business studies courses in 2003/04, but there is no level 3 vocational or GCSE provision at present. A small number of evening-class students study different levels of introductory accounts and book-keeping, and GCE AS law.

### **Achievement and standards**

63. Pass rates are high on several courses and were 100% on GNVQ intermediate business studies, GCE A2 business and GCE A2 law in 2003. Computerised accounts results have been consistently above the national average for the past three years. Pass rates for GCE AS accounting and law have been high but declined significantly in 2003. Poor retention rates has been a persistent feature of GCE AS accounting, business studies and law courses, and the retention rate has fallen sharply on all three courses in the past year.

64. The standard of work produced by students is generally good. Many students gain confidence and self-esteem, and are able to analyse, criticise and present logical arguments with increasing intellectual maturity. While this may be anticipated on level 3 GCE A-level courses, students following vocational programmes often show similar skills. Written work is satisfactory and portfolios are usually well presented. Students' work is not always developed to its full potential through the use of ICT.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in business studies, economics, accountancy and law, 2001 to 2003**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Computerised accounts	2	No. of starts	34	37	17
		% retention	85	88	92
		% pass rate	93	82	81
GCE A2 business *	3	No. of starts	59	23	29
		% retention	56	91	97

		% pass rate	70	100	100
GCE AS accounting	3	No. of starts	17	29	23
		% retention	71	79	74
		% pass rate	92	78	59
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	40	51	59
		% retention	75	88	76
		% pass rate	93	93	73
GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	55	59	64
		% retention	85	88	81
		% pass rate	70	90	92
GCE A2 law	3	No. of starts	28	19	32
		% retention	69	95	88
		% pass rate	77	100	100

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

\* GCE A level in 2001

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

65. Teaching on business courses is mainly good. Teachers ensure that their lessons have meaning for students by trying to relate the theoretical aspects of the curriculum to the students' experiences. A business planning class, for example, asked students to identify the best market research methods used to promote youth-related products and services in their local area. A group of vocational students were required to create a business plan for a leisure centre which they had visited recently. Teachers frequently ask students to consider the implications of business and accounting theory in their own part-time jobs.

66. Many lessons lack detailed planning. In these lessons, teachers often spend too much time talking to the students from the front of the class, and do not allow sufficient time for other learning activities. Students often take notes passively throughout much of the lesson and their active participation or views and thoughts are rarely encouraged. Students who were interviewed from across the curriculum area were generally complimentary about their lessons, but most stressed that they would enjoy a wider variety of learning activities to stimulate their interest further.

67. Staff are well qualified with appropriate academic and professional qualifications. Some staff development is undertaken but full-time staff have not had extensive, recent commercial experience which might add new currency to their teaching, particularly in vocational areas. Vocational students, however, benefit from a range of planned commercial links. A series of visits are planned to a number of local retail organisations and the football stadium. Some level 3 students also have opportunities to visit organisations related to their subject of study. In a GCE AS law class, the teacher and students were planning coursework around a visit to the local magistrates' court.

68. Teaching rooms are adequate but are unimaginatively resourced. In most lessons, there is a lack of reference to or use of ICT and it is not used as tool for learning. A developed curriculum-area website or database is not yet available to students. One exception is the GNVQ intermediate course where students are regularly encouraged to use a range of computer skills for research and presentation of their work.

69. Students are aware of the assessment requirements of their courses. Written work is returned promptly and students value the teachers' constructive, detailed comments. There is some ineffective checking of individual students' progress in lessons through poor questioning and failing

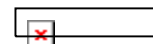
to determine and assess everyone's understanding. Reviews of individual students' progress in meeting their target grade take place regularly, but detailed individual learning plans are not in place. Parents are informed about students' progress both within a structure of parents' evenings and through more informal arrangements.

70. Students speak highly of the willingness of subject teachers to advise and support them on a wide range of issues. Students say that this is a major motivating and encouraging factor in helping them succeed at college. Students mention the extra lessons offered in business, economics and law before examinations and the opportunities that accounting students have to gain additional subject-related qualifications through the enrichment programme. Students requiring additional learning support are identified and the college makes appropriate support arrangements with the knowledge of subject teachers. Teachers offer advice and guidance about course requirements. They recognise that some students on level 2 courses may not be able to progress to the next appropriate level of vocational learning within the current curriculum offer.

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

71. Day-to-day operational management of the wider business area is satisfactory and team members provide good informal support for each other. Quality assurance is ineffective; the implementation and monitoring of most procedures do not take place in a rigorous, systematic manner across the curriculum area or within most individual subject teams. There are few detailed policies which relate specifically to the area. Little is done to analyse data received, and to set and monitor targets for improvement. The formal self-assessment process is too descriptive and is not helpful as a document for planning improvements.

### **Information and communications technology and computing**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass and retention rates on GNVQ intermediate IT, AVCE IT and CLAIT courses
  
- effective teaching of adult students
  
- good work by programming students on national diploma and introductory diploma graphics
  
- good ICT classroom resources.

#### ***Weaknesses***



- o low pass and retention rates on GCE AS computing and low pass rates on ECDL courses
  
- o insufficient engagement of students aged 16 to 18 in many lessons
  
- o lack of rigour in course management and quality assurance.

**Scope of provision**

72. The college offers a wide range of courses in computing and ICT. Over 80 full-time students are following GCE AS and A2 ICT, and GCE AS and A2 computing courses. A total of 86 full-time students are on the introductory diploma in IT, first diploma in IT or the national diploma courses in computer studies. Short and part-time courses include ECDL, CLAIT, text processing and first steps in computing. These courses are available during the day and evenings. 373 full-time students aged 16 to 18 follow CLAIT or ECDL courses to develop key IT skills. Some 80 adult students study on a part-time basis.

**Achievement and standards**

73. Pass and retention rates are high for students on CLAIT, GNVQ intermediate IT and AVCE double award courses. In particular, retention rates on CLAIT and AVCE courses and the pass rate on the AVCE course have increased to significantly above national averages. On the GCE AS computing course, pass and retention rates have remained below the national average for three years. Pass rates on the ECDL one-year course have been below average in 2002/03. Students on GCE AS and A2 courses perform less well than is predicted by their GCSE grades, while those on the AVCE course perform better.

74. Overall, the standard of work is satisfactory. Students' files and assignments are well organised and presented. Standards of graphic work are high in students' folders and in lessons on the intermediate GNVQ course and the introductory diploma course. Pascal programming work in national diploma lessons and students' folders is good, with high-quality documentation. Most students demonstrate effective ICT skills and techniques when using software such as 'Windows' and when editing. They understand essential concepts and are usually able to give clear answers when required. Students using the internet for research in a GCE AS ICT lesson were able to talk confidently about applications of ICT in medicine and to extract key concepts from internet articles. Adult students in an ECDL lesson were able to create macros confidently and explain the reasons for them.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	51	64	*
		% retention	84	97	*
		% pass rate	79	77	*
GNVQ intermediate IT part 1	2	No. of starts	16	21	21
		% retention	94	71	90

		% pass rate	93	67	89
ECDL (1 year)	2	No. of starts	35	77	180
		% retention	77	77	74
		% pass rate	96	58	63
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	48	46	19
		% retention	73	72	68
		% pass rate	60	48	75
AVCE IT double award	3	No. of starts	19	24	*
		% retention	68	88	*
		% pass rate	85	90	*

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

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

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

75. The majority of teaching is satisfactory or better. Teaching for adults is often good or better. In all lessons, teachers make time to give effective and appropriate individual support to students. However, students aged 16 to 18 are insufficiently engaged in many of their lessons. Teachers make overlong presentations, with too few opportunities for students to contribute or for their learning to be checked. Adult students make good progress using well-presented learning materials, and there is particularly effective teaching to small groups in ECDL and text processing lessons. In a national diploma programming lesson, the enthusiasm and skilful technique of the teacher inspired students and enabled them to increase in confidence. Some worksheets refer to relevant work in other cultures. Teachers use the interactive whiteboard imaginatively in some advanced level lessons to illustrate key points and techniques.

76. Teachers plan assignments appropriately. Assessment criteria and expectations are clearly described and students' success is monitored effectively. Work is appropriately marked, but feedback varies in quality and does not always help students to improve. Some marked work on the national diploma course takes too long to be returned. The use of value added data to set targets for students is handled sensitively, but the actions required are not monitored at subject level.

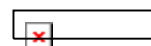
77. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Full-time students value the induction process, but feel it is not long enough. Students are correctly placed on courses and there is good support from subject staff outside lesson time. Additional revision workshops provided by staff in 2003 helped to improve pass rates. Full-time students have a diagnostic assessment but the results of this are not available in the subject area. Staff can also refer students to these workshops but there is no review of its effectiveness. Many adult students progress from level 1 to more advanced courses.

78. Classroom resources are good and enhance learning. Students are motivated and confident because computers are reliable and have up-to-date applications. All rooms have interactive whiteboards but in some rooms, although they are well equipped, the workspace is cramped or seating is inappropriate. Technical support is not always available and occasionally this can have an adverse impact on learning. The library contains few up-to-date reference books on standard computing software which might promote further reading. However, it does have multiple copies of the standard text used in lessons. College staff are confident using ICT and regularly update their ICT skills through short courses.

### **Leadership and management**

79. Recently, management of the department has focused on improving results and ensuring students are on appropriate courses. Retention and pass rates have been improved on several courses and most rates are now close to, or above, national averages. Staff development has raised staff ICT skills and enabled the teaching of new topics. Departmental minutes and the review process do not make explicit the actions required for improvement. Self-assessment is not sufficiently self-critical. Schemes of work and lesson plans are not detailed enough. Courses are valued by students, but the small size of the second-year GCE A-level groups and of some adult groups raises concerns about effective use of resources.

## Visual arts



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates for GCE A2 textiles
- good teaching, learning and standards in textiles
- effective use of ICT resources on photography and graphic design courses.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on several courses
- poor retention rates for GCE AS subjects, first-year national diploma and level 2 courses
- underachievement of students on GCE AS and A2 photography and GCE AS graphic design courses
- ineffective management of student support.

### **Scope of provision**

80. At level 2, the college offers a full-time GNVQ intermediate course in art and design and GCSE

photography. At advanced level, there is a range of subject choice. GCE A-level art and design provides options in fine art, photography and textiles. Also offered are GCE AS and A2 graphic design and one full-time advanced level course, a national diploma in fine art. Approximately 200 students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled in this area in 2003/04, the majority on advanced courses. There are a small number of adults enrolled on the GCE AS photography evening course.

### **Achievement and standards**

81. Pass rates for GCE A2 art, textiles and design technology are satisfactory or better than average. However, students' achievement overall is unsatisfactory. Pass rates were low in 2003 for GCE AS art and design, GNVQ intermediate art and design, and GCSE photography. For most subjects, the proportion of students gaining high grades is below average. Students on GCE A2 and AS graphic design and photography courses are not achieving as well as they should. There has been some disruption to the running of courses in the first year of the national diploma course in fine art, as well as for GNVQ intermediate art and design and GCE AS photography. This was due to full-time courses with small numbers being combined and a specialist staff shortage during the photography course. Retention rates are low for these groups as well as for a number of others. In the national diploma second-year group, the standard of work is below what might be expected at this stage of the course.

82. The work of students is celebrated in many displays around the college and there is evidence that students are able to develop a range of practical, critical and analytical skills. The current standard of students' work is largely satisfactory at this early stage of their courses. Students are generally well motivated. Work is produced in a wide variety of formats, from large scale drawing, such as self-portrait figures produced by GNVQ intermediate students, to detailed screen prints based on art deco patterns in textiles. There is some inconsistency of quality. Some sketchbooks show competent research and development of ideas with good critical and analytical thinking taking place but, in some examples, students are clearly lacking skills in drawing and technical competence. In graphic design, there is lack of a real understanding of the design process and drawing skills are not well developed to express ideas.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in visual arts, 2001 to 2003**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE photography (A* to C pass)	2	No. of starts	22	26	29
		% retention	64	88	59
		% pass rate	79	70	33
GCE A2 art and design **	3	No. of starts	25	43	57
		% retention	68	93	89
		% pass rate	94	93	98
GCE AS art and design	3	No. of starts	80	114	94
		% retention	81	78	60
		% pass rate	89	94	70

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), College (2003).

\*\* GCE A level in 2001

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

83. Most teaching is satisfactory and some is good, particularly in textiles, where students are able to develop practical and evaluative skills. In the better textile lessons, students are confidently and

imaginatively engaged in learning new techniques of screen printing, for example, by painting directly on to the screen as a base for later overworking. There is, however, some prescriptive teaching and some unimaginative approaches to creative thinking; for example, undemanding and dull tasks were set for students in a three-dimensional exercise and there was little opportunity for individuality. Effective use is made of ICT in graphic design and photography. In one lesson at an early stage of their course, GCE AS students worked on a graphics package, confidently editing photographic images they had created. Teaching materials are well prepared. Critical and analytical skills are encouraged and, in discussions, students are able to use vocabulary well.

84. Resources are generally satisfactory, with good ICT equipment and appropriate design software available in workshops. Some accommodation is less satisfactory and includes a photography darkroom that is too small. The design technology workshop is underused. In a GCSE photography class, the group had to be split as they could not all fit into the darkroom when developing films. The problem was well managed by the tutor, but the learning of these students was hindered.

85. The range of library books is good and they are well used, but there is a need for more on contemporary art and design to increase students' understanding of creative graphic design principles. There is insufficient technical support, which has an adverse impact on the ability of staff to prepare adequately for lessons. There are insufficient materials and basic equipment for the art courses, although staff are inventive in making the most of what they have. Assessment procedures are regular and standardised. Teachers provide good, detailed feedback to students. These records of feedback are used effectively in planning individual learning.

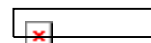
86. The range of art and design courses provides useful progression pathways between levels 2 and 3 in vocational art and design courses, but there is a lack of enrichment courses. Students' perception of initial guidance is positive and the induction programme and careers advice in the subject area are supportive.

87. There is ineffective management of student support. The diagnosis of students' subject skills on entry is unsystematic and is not backed up by a methodical plan of support to monitor students throughout their course. Students applying for full-time art courses are not usually interviewed by subject staff. Students' art folders are not seen by teachers routinely to ascertain potential in the subject. There is a positive and inclusive 'open' policy of taking students without a background in the subject, giving them opportunities to succeed. Students who join the course late or have personal problems are given the opportunity to complete the course in the following January.

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

88. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Day-to-day course administration is good, but self-assessment and quality assurance are not used effectively to develop the curriculum and improve examination results. The quality assurance system is not perceived by staff as a vehicle to raise achievement. Weaknesses are not identified well and actions to correct them are not taken. Targets for improvement are often set which are unquantifiable, and there is a lack of monitoring of the achievement of these during the year.

### **Performing arts, media and film**



Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on many courses

- a lot of very good and some excellent teaching
- excellent professional links which enhance learning
- very high standards of performance and written work
- outstanding assessment practice.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates for GCE AS film and media
- low pass rate for national diploma drama in 2002/03.

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

89. The college provides a wide range of performance, media and film studies courses, predominantly at levels 2 and 3 and for full-time students, with a smaller amount of provision at entry level and level 2 offered as part-time study. Over 270 students are enrolled in total. Approximately 80 students are studying drama as either theatre studies GCE A level or a full-time national diploma course. Some 81 students are studying dance on GCSE, GCE AS and GCE A2 courses and 40 students follow music and music technology at GCE AS and A2. There are 74 students on GCE AS and A2 media courses and 49 students are studying GCE AS and A2 film studies. There are exceptionally good links with local groups and performance venues. In addition, there are various residencies arranged for dance and drama students. Enrichment opportunities are well established through these links and the other extra-curricular music ensembles and performances.

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

90. Pass rates are consistently high on many courses. In particular, for first diploma performing arts, GCE AS and A2 theatre studies and music, and GCE AS film and video, and dance in 2003. There are good retention rates for advanced students on GCE A2 theatre studies and music courses. In 2002/03, the pass rate for the national diploma in drama was below average. While most pass rates are very high, retention rates are lower than average on a few courses, for example, GCE AS media studies and GCE AS film studies, where retention rates fell in 2003. GCE AS music technology students have achieved significantly higher grades than might be expected based on their grades at GCSE.

91. Students are very well motivated, enthusiastic and make the most of their rehearsal and lesson time. Attendance is good. In performances, students show very high levels of technical competence. For example, GCE AS music students showed considerable expertise in analysing a score and used

technical terms to describe their analysis. The quality of performance on GCE AS and A2 drama course is high. Film studies students are committed to their course and work hard to produce thorough and relevant work in both video and written work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE A2 drama/theatre studies *	3	No. of starts	23	27	25
		% retention	52	89	96
		% pass rate	83	100	100
GCE AS film studies	3	No. of starts	25	45	38
		% retention	86	82	68
		% pass rate	100	97	96
National diploma in drama	3	No. of starts	27	35	45
		% retention	81	80	64
		% pass rate	95	71	82
GCE A2 media studies (one year) *	3	No. of starts	21	27	31
		% retention	76	85	87
		% pass rate	94	96	100

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), College (2003).

\* GCE A level in 2001

***Quality of education and training***

92. Much teaching and learning is very good and some is excellent. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and enjoy teaching. Many lessons are vibrant, interesting and use a stimulating combination of example and demonstration. In a GCE AS dance lesson, students were asked to devise a dance sequence; they rehearsed in a very focused way, were helpful and supportive of the students choreographing the piece and performed it with conviction. In a guitar lesson with students of mixed age and experience, the teacher skilfully introduced and practised reading rhythm and then transferred this to playing the rhythm. All students were able to complete the task and the teacher encouraged the more experienced students to perform at a higher level, while supporting less experienced students. In an advanced level music lesson, the tutor enabled students to shine in their accurate analysis of the form of a movement from a Vivaldi violin concerto. This was exceptional at an early stage of the course and for students with very different previous musical experience. In assessment of performances by first-year students, teachers encourage students to be supportive of each other but also to honestly evaluate each others' performance as part of the development of their critical skills. The students performed a series of duologue scenes where the performance by each pair of students and their characterisation were confident and convincing.

93. The theatre provides excellent and well-equipped specialist accommodation for dance and drama. Film studies students have similar facilities, a very well-equipped base room and regular access to the theatre. While this base room is a very good resource, it becomes crowded when groups have more than 17 students. Despite these good resources, accommodation is unsatisfactory for music and music technology and for some dance and drama groups currently using temporary classrooms. In music technology, the temporary classroom can not be soundproofed, which restricts the standards of recordings made.

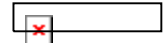
94. Most of the well-qualified teaching staff maintain an active professional link with their

performance or industry discipline, for example, in drama and in music through ensembles and musical direction. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are thorough. This is well documented using individual tracking sheets. Work is marked with care; feedback is constructive and gives praise for effort made and for good work. Performances are given critical and supportive evaluations. Support for students is good.

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

95. Leadership and management in the curriculum are good. Staff are fully involved in making decisions about future developments and feel that managers are approachable, listen to their views and are active in promoting good practice and continuous improvement. Where there are some part-time and new staff, they are well supported by a mentor and by more experienced teachers who give help with planning lessons. There are opportunities to teach in teams. The self-assessment report identifies the key issues around retention rates and achievement and the strategy for improvement. Managers work closely with teachers to monitor students' progress and intervene early to address any issues emerging.

## **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses
  
- very good teaching
  
- excellent resources used to stimulate learning
  
- good departmental management in history.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor achievement of higher grades on GCE AS and A-level course
  
- unsatisfactory retention rates for GCE AS history
  
- some ineffective course management.



### **Scope of provision**

96. The college offers GCE AS and A2 courses in geography, government and politics, and history. There is also a one-year GCE A-level course in classical civilisation. Almost all students are aged 16 to 18. In 2002/03, there are 203 students enrolled on these courses: there are 76 students in history, the largest subject; 60 in geography; 47 in government and politics; and 20 in classical civilization. No courses are offered below advanced level. Only one of the adult evening classes offered in humanities has recruited sufficiently to run this year.

### **Achievement and standards**

97. Retention and pass rates on GCE A-level courses are good. GCE AS pass rates in most subjects are at or above national averages. Retention rates are mixed for GCE AS subjects, with history below the national average over three years. The proportion of higher-grade passes at both GCE AS and A level are below the national average in all subjects. Although GCE A-level students achieve broadly in line with expectation based on GCSE results, valued added is declining in all subjects except history and this trend is most marked in classical civilisation. Attendance during inspection was 88%. Punctuality is good and where students do arrive late they are always challenged.

98. Students' attainment is good in most lessons. Students enjoy their lessons and participate confidently, making use of prior learning. After only four weeks, GCE AS geography students can use technical terms confidently. GCE A-level students are able to analyse complex concepts and express their own ideas clearly. History students use higher-order skills in working with sources. They can not only detect bias but also see that a source can be both biased and reliable. Whilst the standard of students' work varies, it is appropriate to the level and stage of their courses. There are excellent examples of coursework in history, covering topics as varied as Charles I and the siege of Hull, the Gulf War and improvement in the role of women since 1945.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCE A2 geography *	3	No. of starts	30	21	22
		% retention	57	100	100
		% pass rate	94	96	100
GCE A2 history *	3	No. of starts	39	30	35
		% retention	67	93	97
		% pass rate	69	100	100
GCE AS geography	3	No. of starts	46	33	37
		% retention	80	88	97
		% pass rate	92	90	94
GCE AS government and politics	3	No. of starts	16	26	19
		% retention	94	88	89
		% pass rate	87	91	88
GCE AS history	3	No. of starts	52	47	54
		% retention	79	89	85
		% pass rate	93	95	80

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

\* GCE A level in 2003

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

99. Teaching is generally very good. Lessons are well planned. They usually begin with clear statements of what will be achieved in the lesson and how this links to previous lessons and those to follow. Most teaching is enthusiastic, with good use of humour. Lessons have good pace and are challenging. There is a strong focus on learning. Teachers make skilful use of open and targeted questioning to secure participation by all students, to optimise their contributions and to check understanding. There is good individual support in class. Students are helped to acquire and practise the skills needed to be successful on their courses, including study and organisational skills. In GCE AS classes, teachers give clear advice on note-taking and examination requirements. Teachers explain to students the purpose and relevance of the tasks they are undertaking. Lessons have much purposeful activity leading to learning that is good or very good in almost every case. Students see this productive atmosphere as a major strength of the college. On geography and on government and politics courses, close attention is given to the learning and use of key terminology. A small number of lessons were insufficiently challenging and students had few chances to contribute.

100. Most teachers are able to make their teaching relevant to students' own experience. In a GCE AS history lesson, for instance, there was very skilful use of the Nike 'swish' logo to stimulate discussion on the power of symbols. This led on to work on the power of the swastika in Nazi propaganda. In another lesson, the concept of nationalism was introduced through reference to refugees from Palestine. Teachers make excellent use of modern technology to stimulate learning. In a GCE A-level government and politics lesson, images of the war and a chilling video clip of the devastation of a French village were projected on to an interactive whiteboard to stimulate discussion on the influence of World War II in creating the European movement. There was little evidence of ILT, however, in students' presentations.

101. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Students value their knowledge and expertise highly and find them helpful and accessible in and out of lessons. Teachers prepare a wide range of high-quality learning resources. Besides course handbooks and study guides, there are well-designed materials to assist students to order, record and review their learning and to develop good study habits.

102. Learning is enriched in a number of ways. A lunchtime news review class for GCE A2 government and politics students gives them an opportunity to discuss events as they happen. Attendance at these sessions, however, is poor. History students attend master classes at the University of Hull and revision conferences. 'Excellence challenge' funded a specialist to work with geography students on fieldwork.

103. Teaching takes place in accommodation that is mostly well equipped. Classrooms are, however, too small for many GCE AS groups and become cramped and hot. Room size constrains the range of learning activities which can be planned and makes it difficult for teachers to circulate effectively to monitor students' progress.

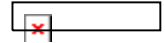
104. Assessment is suitable and rigorous, and arrangements for feedback are mostly satisfactory. Tasks are appropriate to the stage and level of the course. Students feel that they receive accurate information about their courses during application and found the induction course held in the summer term very helpful.

### **Leadership and management**

105. Humanities are not managed as a single unit in the college but distributed in a number of divisions. Overall, course management is of variable quality and individual approaches prevail.

History is well led and managed. Self-assessments for history are thorough and include self-critical statements and a clear action plan. Management of other courses is less effective. Here, self-assessment and action plans are underdeveloped. Targets are set for retention rates and achievement, but actions to achieve them are vague and lacking in detail. Quality assurance procedures have yet to have an impact on achievement in key areas. Not enough opportunities are provided to share good practice.

## **Social sciences and health and social care**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high achievement on GCE A2 sociology and GNVQ intermediate health and social care courses in 2002/03
  
- a lot of good teaching
  
- high-quality learning materials
  
- very effective use of new technology.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on a number of courses
  
- low pass rates on AVCE health and social care and GCE AS philosophy and sociology
  
- unsuitable accommodation for some large groups
  
- self-assessment process lacks rigour.

### **Scope of provision**

106. The college provides advanced level courses in sociology, psychology, philosophy, critical thinking, and health and social care. Most students are aged 16 to 18. GCE AS courses in sociology and psychology are offered in the evening. At level 2, the college provides GNVQ intermediate health and social care and GCSEs in sociology and child development. In 2003/04, there are over 200 enrolments in psychology, 150 in sociology, 72 in health and social care, 48 in philosophy and 11 in critical thinking. The curriculum area also supports a vocational GCSE in health and social care for 16 pupils from a local school.

### **Achievement and standards**

107. Pass rates in 2003 improved significantly and are now above average on a number of courses, for example, GCE A2 philosophy and sociology, GCE AS psychology, GCE AS critical thinking, GCSE sociology and intermediate GNVQ health and social care. Pass rates for GCE A2 psychology are satisfactory. GCE AS philosophy and sociology pass rates were below average in 2003. The percentage of high grades for GCE AS subjects was generally below average in 2003, apart from in psychology, but is very high for GCE A2 sociology and intermediate GNVQ health and social care.

108. Retention rates have been variable over the last three years and poor in many subjects. There are signs of improvement in 2002/03. The consistent exceptions have been GCE AS sociology, where retention rates have been satisfactory, and GCE A2 philosophy, where it has been good. Comparison with students' GCSE grades suggests that, in 2002/03, those on GCE AS and A2 courses did not achieve their potential, with the exception of GCE A2 sociology where achievement was significantly better than predicted.

109. Standards of current students' assignment work and oral contribution in classes are higher than the historical picture of examination performance. Standards are high on psychology, sociology, philosophy, critical thinking and on intermediate health and social care courses. Students in a GCE AS sociology class volunteered terms such as 'functionalism' and 'nuclear family' in a fluent manner that is not usually found during the first few weeks of a course. Psychology students were able to make judgements confidently about the ethics of studies in obedience and conformity.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in social sciences and health and social care, 2001 to 2003**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCSE sociology (A* to C pass) **	2	No. of starts	24	27	18
		% retention	63	63	67
		% pass rate	67	47	67
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	9	8	17
		% retention	100	63	76
		% pass rate	89	80	92
GCE AS philosophy	3	No. of starts	17	14	30
		% retention	59	79	73
		% pass rate	80	64	55
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	59	83	107
		% retention	76	84	80
		% pass rate	73	48	93

GCE A2 psychology ***	3	No. of starts	42	28	34
		% retention	61	93	76
		% pass rate	88	92	92
GCE A2 sociology ***	3	No. of starts	35	31	25
		% retention	60	90	80
		% pass rate	90	86	100

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

\*\* GCSE social studies course in 2001 and 2002, changed to GCSE sociology in 2003

\*\*\* GCE A level in 2001

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

110. Much of the teaching is good. In many lessons, students are engaged from the first minute. For example, a psychology lesson started with a question and answer session which established that the group had full factual knowledge of Milgram's classic study. This was followed by well-paced movement between individual, small-group and whole-group work, resulting in sophisticated judgements about the nature of obedience and the ethics of this type of research. Group activities were well managed and often allowed students to work on different aspects of an issue before feedback to a larger group. This helped develop students' understanding, confidence and fluency in communicating social science ideas. In an intermediate health and social care class, effective management of group activities allowed all students to spend some time with the teacher dissecting a heart. Teachers question students effectively in most classes and often challenge them to move from 'common sense' to more theoretical approaches. In a GCE AS sociology class, this approach was successful in raising discussion of the Simpsons from 'pop' sociology to application of Talcot Parson's views of the family.

111. In some philosophy classes, opportunities to involve students are missed. Students speak highly of those sessions that include a high level of involvement, but some are frustrated that this approach does not form a more substantial part of all lessons.

112. Resources are generally effective in supporting teaching and learning but some rooms are too small for larger groups. This makes the atmosphere uncomfortable and puts constraints on teachers' planning and classroom activity.

113. Comprehensive handbooks and worksheets designed by teachers contain activities which, in many cases, help students to make structured notes in their own words. The interactive whiteboard is used effectively, especially in sociology lessons. Students have good access to computers and make appropriate use of internet search; on psychology courses this is enhanced by a website produced by teaching staff. Staff are well qualified in their subjects, although there is limited sector experience in health and social care.

114. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. In all areas, feedback on written assignments is constructive and tells students how they could improve. Internal verification processes in health and social care are satisfactory. Assessment policy is not consistent across subjects.

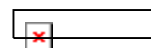
115. Students have the opportunity to mix academic and vocational studies and 28 students study social science subjects in combination with a vocational award in health and social care. A good enrichment programme is available, including the opportunity to help at a college parent-and-toddler group. For health and social care students, there are effective links with local employers to provide relevant work experience. Some GCE AS philosophy students are not prepared for the demands of the subject but in other areas guidance and support are successful in enabling students to arrive at the appropriate programme of study. Students value the support that they receive from teachers.

Absences are monitored systematically. This has been effective in maintaining good attendance this year. Careers advice for HE is valued by most students. The 'aim higher' programme provides additional support for sociology students and was a contributory factor in raising achievement in 2003.

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

116. Course-level management within the area is satisfactory, but leadership has been ineffective in raising standards. Staffing problems of the past have been resolved with the appointment of new psychology staff and of a course leader for sociology. New full-time teachers have been well supported with an induction programme and mentor, but this has not been extended to staff transferring from part-time to full-time posts. Staff are enthusiastic about the college and their subjects; there is an air of optimism extending to the classroom. All staff are observed teaching and are appraised annually, identifying some of the development needs. Staff development opportunities are determined by individual requests. Self-assessment lacks rigour and has not addressed important issues of achievement and retention rates. Equal opportunities issues are promoted in the curriculum.

## **English**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on GCE A-level English literature, English language and English language and literature courses
  
- a lot of good and very good teaching
  
- a good range of courses that meet the needs of students effectively
  
- outstanding subject support for individual students
  
- a broad range of English enrichment opportunities.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on GCSE English courses

- accommodation that restricts teaching and learning opportunities
  
- insufficient relevant and recent English books in the library.

### **Scope of provision**

117. The college offers a variety of level 2 and level 3 English courses. Most of the 433 students enrolled are aged 16 to 18. Around 170 are enrolled on GCSE English courses. High-achieving advanced level students may study for an AEA. Evening classes are provided in GCSE English language and English literature, GCE A2 English literature and a one-year course in GCE A-level English literature and language. The college has introduced a certificate in adult literacy during 2003/04.

### **Achievement and standards**

118. Pass rates are generally improving. For both GCE A-level English literature and English language and literature, pass rates are very good, reaching 100% in 2003. The proportion of students achieving high grades A\* to C on GCSE courses has been too low, but is improving. The number of students who improved their previous GCSE results by a grade or more has increased from 41% in 2002 to 63% in 2003. Students taking GCE AS English language and English literature courses are performing significantly better than might be expected from their attainment in GCSE. In 2003, high-grade pass rates on the AEA English improved to 83% of entrants gaining merit or distinction. Retention rates have improved on most courses and are close to the national average.

119. The standard of achievement in lessons was satisfactory or better. Most students are purposeful and take learning seriously. GCSE students showed that they appreciated the structure of lessons, and made good notes on the literary techniques of *Nothing's Changed* by Tatamkhulu Afrika. In GCE AS lessons, students made good progress and were able to grasp technical concepts at an early stage of the course. In one language lesson, students who were unfamiliar with the idea of semantic fields were able to identify confidently words that contributed to different fields. In GCE A2 lessons, students made some perceptive comments on the texts, showing progress in literary analysis and techniques.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in English , 2001 to 2003**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	120	138	130
		% retention	76	81	78
		% pass rate	44	28	45
GCE AS English language and literature	3	No. of starts	50	62	58
		% retention	80	82	83
		% pass rate	72	90	98
GCE A2 English language *	3	No. of starts	44	33	46
		% retention	59	82	95
		% pass rate	69	96	100
GCE A2 English	3	No. of starts	36	21	31

language and literature *		% retention	64	100	100
		% pass rate	87	100	100
GCE A2 English literature *	3	No. of starts	45	33	34
		% retention	71	94	91
		% pass rate	94	94	100

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

\* GCE A level in 2001

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

120. There is a lot of good, and some very good, teaching by experienced enthusiastic staff. In the best lessons, teachers communicated their enjoyment of the subject. In one GCE A2 literature lesson using text from *Oranges are not the only fruit*, the teacher inspired students by a quiet intensity and total enthusiasm for the novel. The result was a mutually illuminating exploration of the allegories in the text. Teachers are skilful in discussion work: in both GCSE and GCE AS language lessons, they were able to elicit complex and subtle comments from students, sometimes of an extended nature. Teachers use group work to allow students to share and test ideas, and there are clear benefits for students' enjoyment, confidence and articulacy.

121. Accommodation is adversely affecting the quality of the teaching and learning. The main rooms used for English teaching are dated and too small; staff cannot move around easily to advise individual students. Heating and ventilation are inadequate. Noise from the neighbouring sports field is a problem. Staff find difficulty in using ICT to support students' learning as the network links are not reliable. The library book stock is insufficient.

122. Written work is marked accurately. Teachers' comments to students on their work have a strong emphasis on how it might be improved. The assessment of learning within lessons is more variable. Teachers assess students' understanding and acquired knowledge through their contributions to class discussion and within group work. Teachers respond intuitively to their perceptions of the needs of individuals and classes, but there is insufficient documentation of how learning needs will be met. Most lesson plans lack sufficient detail, including approximate timings. Schemes of work give schedules of activities, but there is little detail about how each aspect of the specification might be taught.

123. The range of English courses that is available provides opportunities for students to study at convenient times in the evening or day. The English subject options that are available at GCE A level and held in the evening attract students from within Wyke College and elsewhere. The AEA provides more able students with an enrichment option to stimulate higher-level thinking skills and more sophisticated responses.

124. Teachers are responsive to the local community. Project work was undertaken in June and July with Year 10 pupils from a local high school. The most recent theme related to *The Matrix* films and involved a joint venture with media studies.

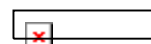
125. Enrichment activities are well established, often with links to external organisations. In collaboration with The Larkin Society, the college hosts an annual national conference on the local poet. There are also master classes on particular themes, visits to literary festivals, theatre trips, study days and extra revision classes at weekends and during holidays. Students feel well supported, with good access to subject guidance. Teachers provide much individual help and advice, which is valued by students.

### **Leadership and management**

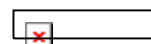


126. The department is well led. Teachers' enthusiasm for their subject is shared and there is a common vision to support students' learning inside or outside the classroom. The team has given good support to students through the aim higher initiative, where they have contributed to the development of the programme. They have also contributed to the development and teaching of the AEA. Course management is generally good; there is much informal communication about students and their work, but formal communications are underdeveloped and minutes of meetings do not sufficiently highlight problems concerning students' progress. The formalising of records requires development.

#### Part D: College data



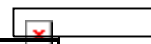
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18	19+
1	1	25
2	26	42
3	52	25
4/5	0	1
Other	21	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2003

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments % *
Science and mathematics	748	106	14
Engineering	39	0	1
Business administration, management and professional	190	157	6
Information and communications technology	565	142	12
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	6	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	88	50	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	17	0

Health, social care and public services	51	5	1
Visual and performing arts and media	604	32	10
Humanities	1,164	40	20
English, languages and communication	717	161	14
Foundation programmes	14	24	1
Unknown AOL	1,116	94	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,296</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in 2003

\* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

**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	430	27	28	45	32	44
	Retention rate (%)	66	74	71	60	66	73
	National Average (%)	79	80	78	71	70	72
	Pass rate (%)	56	65	60	26	90	50
	National Average (%)	70	66	71	67	70	75
2	Starters excluding transfers	812	729	798	135	126	173
	Retention rate (%)	71	72	76	61	61	74
	National Average (%)	80	80	81	71	72	71
	Pass rate (%)	77	91	86	81	84	69
	National Average (%)	80	85	84	70	68	71
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,826	3,251	2,431	139	159	134
	Retention rate (%)	57	59	85	62	58	71
	National Average (%)	75	80	89	63	64	69
	Pass rate (%)	70	80	83	60	63	59
	National Average (%)	85	86	88	65	67	75

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 sixth form colleges).

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England*, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

2. College rates for 1999/2000 to 2001/02: *College ISR*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	74	20	6	98
Level 2 (intermediate)	55	41	4	27
Level 1 (foundation)	86	14	0	7
Other sessions	100	0	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>134</b>

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