



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

The Richard Huish College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science](#)

[Mathematics and computing](#)

[Business](#)

[Sports, leisure and recreation](#)

[Visual and performing arts and media](#)

[Humanities](#)

[Sociology and psychology](#)

[English and modern foreign languages](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

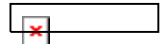
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2002/03](#)

[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2002/03](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

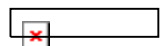
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

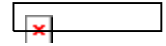


Name of college:	The Richard Huish College
Type of college:	Sixth form college
Principal:	Dr Peter Avery
Address of college:	South Road Taunton Somerset TA1 3DZ
Telephone number:	01823 320800
Fax number:	01823 320801
Chair of governors:	Ray Stokes
Unique reference number:	130440
Name of reporting inspector:	Alan Hinchliffe HMI
Date of inspection:	29 September - 3 October 2003

Part A: Summary



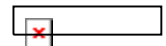
Information about the college



The Richard Huish College is a sixth form college in Taunton, established in 1979. The college is based on a single site, about a mile from the centre of Taunton. It is the only sixth form college in Somerset. The college attracts students from a wide geographical area around the town, as well as from the schools for 11 to 16 year olds in Taunton. The college also attracts students from the strong independent sector in Taunton. In Somerset as a whole, around 80% of young people aged 16 to 18 are in full-time education and training. General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results in Somerset in 2002 were slightly above the national average. The unemployment rate in the area served by the college is low. There is a general further education college in Taunton, and four tertiary colleges within a 25 mile radius. The college caters mainly for full-time students aged 16 to 18. There were 1,281 such students in 2002/03. Most students are taking advanced level courses. There are over 40 subjects offered at level 3 in General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) and GCE Advanced level (GCE A2). Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses are offered in business, leisure and recreation, performing arts (popular music industries), and health and social care. At level 2 a small number of GCSEs is offered. The college places a strong emphasis on the breadth of its enrichment activities for full-time students. There is a growing range of professional courses for adult students, mainly in business and accounting. Adult students make up less than 5% of the college's full-time equivalent students.

The college's mission is 'to be a centre of excellence in the south-west by providing 16 to 19 year old students with high quality advanced level education, to prepare them for higher education (HE) and professional careers, and by contributing to workforce development in the region'.

How effective is the college?



The college is very successful. Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be outstanding. Students learn very well, and their achievements are very good. Inspectors judged the quality of education to be outstanding in five curriculum areas and good in the remaining three.

Key strengths

- outstanding provision in most curriculum areas
- students' achievements on most courses
- the standard of students' work
- a lot of very good teaching

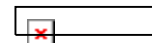
- the ethos of the college in celebrating students' success
- students' commitment to and enthusiasm for college life
- welcoming and inclusive environment
- outstanding enrichment programme
- outstanding leadership throughout the college
- very good curriculum management
- excellent specialist resources in music technology and modern foreign languages.

What should be improved

- staff skills in working with new technology in the classroom
- some outdated and cramped accommodation in science, art and English
- on-site facilities for practical sporting activities
- links with employers for students on full-time courses
- social areas for students.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science	Outstanding. Pass rates are very high. Students are highly motivated and benefit from very good teaching, effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) and excellent individual support. Students' interest in scientific enquiry is strong, and is enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities.
Mathematics and computing	Good. Pass rates are good on most courses. Pass and retention rates have declined for GCE AS computing. Most teaching is good, but there is some less-effective teaching in both mathematics and information technology (IT). A range of specialist resources is used effectively in the classroom. Students are very well supported by the teachers.
Business	Good. There are high pass and retention rates on most courses. However, in 2002/03, the retention rate for AVCE business was poor. There is much imaginative and stimulating teaching in some of the GCE AS and A2 provision. Academic support is very good, and feedback on students' progress is very effective. There is little sharing of good practice in teaching and learning.
Sports, leisure and recreation	Outstanding. Pass rates and retention rates are excellent. The standard of students' written, oral and collaborative work is very good, especially in activity-based lessons. Teaching is often innovative and, overall, is very good. There are outstanding competitive sports and enrichment programmes. However, there are insufficient high-quality practical facilities on campus.
Visual and performing arts and media	Outstanding. Pass rates are high. Practical work in art, music, media and performance is of a high standard, often at a professional level. Most teaching and learning are very good, as is support for students. Students benefit from excellent extra-curricular activities which enhance their learning. Curriculum management is very good.
Humanities	Outstanding. Pass and retention rates are very high. The quality of teaching and learning, and of students' work, is very good. Students debate well in class, work productively in groups and tackle written work thoroughly. Curriculum management is very good, with a clear focus on raising standards.
Sociology and psychology	Outstanding. Pass rates are high. Most teaching is good or very good, and learning takes place in a stimulating and attractive environment. Students receive a great deal of support, are well motivated and work enthusiastically. Equality and diversity issues are

	well-integrated into teaching and learning. There is excellent curriculum management.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. There are high pass rates for most subjects, with a high percentages of grades A and B at GCE A2. There has been a decline in the proportion of high grades at GCE AS. Most teaching is good or better, although in a minority of lessons not enough is expected of students. Enrichment provision is outstanding in both English and modern foreign languages.

How well is the college led and managed?

The leadership and management of the college are outstanding. The principal, senior managers and governors provide excellent leadership. The strategy and vision for the college are clear and shared by all staff and students. Throughout the college there is a powerful focus on raising standards and ensuring that students maximize their potential. Curriculum management is very effective. Quality assurance and self-assessment procedures are successful in improving the quality of provision. Students' achievements are outstanding and the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Students enjoy their studies and take pride in a culture that celebrates success and values individuals. Financial management is excellent and the college provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

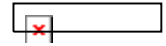
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Students value the welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment. The equal opportunities and race equality policy are contained within an overarching diversity and equality policy. The diversity and equality action group monitors the implementation of the policy. Curriculum teams are beginning to take account of equal opportunities data in the analysis of differences in standards of performance. The college has responded appropriately to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) in providing accessible facilities, aids and services for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the two years to 2003, access for students with restricted mobility has improved from 56% to 93% of the college campus. Staff training has raised awareness of statutory requirements and of strategies to support effective learning across a range of special needs. There is particularly good practice in embedding diversity and equality in social science classes.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Full-time students receive outstanding support and guidance. There are very strong links with partner schools and the college provides a range of taster days and other events to provide advice and guidance to Year 11 pupils. The induction process is thorough and helps to identify individual students' support needs. The support from personal tutors, student services staff, college managers, and health and welfare staff is effective and valued by students. The college tutorial system for full-time students is very good. Group tutorial sessions are well organised and supplemented with

students receive informal support and guidance from their subject teachers. There is a specialist team of student services staff who provide good support for 'at risk' students and those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The quality of information and guidance on progression to HE is excellent. Parents are kept well informed by information evenings and consultations with tutors, as well as receiving progress reports and information on college life.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

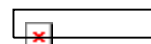
- the ethos of the college that values success and hard work
- being treated like adults by staff
- resources available for study and research
- the range of enrichment opportunities
- excellent support available through subject workshops and personal tutorials
- the clarity of course and assessment information
- the range of courses
- the induction programme.

What they feel could be improved

- facilities and accommodation for art and sport

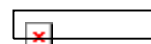
- canteen space and indoor social areas
- access to first choice enrichment activities
- access to computers and study space.

Other information

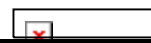


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The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

Part B: The college as a whole



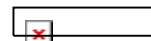
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors



Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching (all ages)	80	19	1
Learning (all ages)	86	13	1

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

Achievement and standards



1. Students' achievements at Richard Huish College are outstanding. The vast majority of students who commence courses complete them successfully, often achieving high grades. Students' overall performance places the college amongst the top sixth form colleges in the country. The college places a strong emphasis on its enrichment programme. Most students participate to some degree in non-examined courses or activities. Their achievements in sport, the arts and a wide range of other voluntary groups are of high quality and benefit students' personal development. Attendance at lessons was very good, during the inspection, at 92%.

16 to 18 year olds

2. Over 95% of the college's full-time equivalent students are aged 16 to 18. Around 90% of student enrolments are at advanced level. GCE AS and A2 and AVCE pass rates are outstanding, and have been above the national average for sixth form colleges over the last three years. In 2002, the overall pass rate was 92%, 4% above the national average. The retention rate was also 92%, 3% above the national average. Department for Education and Skills performance tables for 2002 show that the average point score per student at advanced level was 291.6 and the average point score per exam entry was 83.3. Both these figures are significantly above local and national averages for all schools and colleges. In 2002, 43% of students achieved high grade A and B on advanced level courses; 10% above the national average.

3. College data for 2003 show that pass rates at advanced level have improved further since 2002, whilst retention rates have remained high. At GCE A2, the pass rate is over 98%; at GCE AS it is 93%. On all AVCE courses, in business, health and social care, leisure and recreation, and performing arts, pass rates were 100%. The percentage of students achieving high grades rose slightly to 44%. In many GCE A2 subjects, pass rates were 100%: these include English language and literature, music, environmental science, geology, drama, archaeology, government and politics, and philosophy. At GCE AS, pass rates were 100% in economics, performance studies, English literature and Spanish. The proportion of students achieving grades A or B at GCE A2 was particularly outstanding in geology, mathematics, drama, archaeology and religious studies.

4. The college offers GCSE courses in mathematics and English for students wishing to improve their grades, and in photography, general studies and Spanish. Higher grade pass rates on all of these courses are very good.

5. The college sets demanding minimum target grades for all advanced level students, based on their GCSE results. The formula used to determine the target deliberately sets the predicted grade at a higher level than would be expected, in order to raise students' aspirations. The college judges its own achievement on the number of students who meet or exceed these targets. The proportion of students at GCE A2 who meet or exceed their target grades has risen to over 70% in 2003. On AVCE courses, nearly 90% of students achieve their targets. At GCE AS, there was a slight decline in the proportion of students achieving their predicted grades, from 65% to 62%. The college also uses national indicators of value added to assess its own performance. Such analysis shows that, overall, students are making very good progress given their prior attainment.

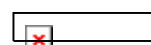
6. Students' achievements are reflected in the standard of their work. Inspectors judged that students' attainment was good or better in 84% of the lessons observed. Standards are particularly high in humanities, sociology and psychology, science, and visual and performing arts and media. Students take real pride in the quality of their work. The college has successfully developed a culture in which, in students' own words, it is 'cool to be clever'. Students are confident and articulate. They willingly engage in intellectual debate and enjoy their learning. In science, students' grasp of scientific concepts and ideas is consistently impressive. Music students reach high standards of performance. In humanities and the social sciences, students quickly develop skills of analysis and evaluation that enable them to speak and write perceptively. The level of debate in some English classes is outstanding, with students demonstrating a fluent knowledge and understanding of literary and linguistic techniques. Business studies students produce some excellently presented project work containing sophisticated analysis.

7. Most advanced level students come to the college with the intention of securing a place in HE. In 2003, around 80% of students progressed to university. Some 17 students were successful in gaining places at Oxford or Cambridge universities.

Adult learners

8. Most adults are studying for professional qualifications in accountancy. Although few students successfully complete the full qualification, pass and retention rates have improved over the last three years, particularly at level 2. Pass rates on individual modules are very good. Students on professional courses produce work of good quality and demonstrate a sound understanding of theory.

Quality of education and training



9. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In 80% of lessons, teaching was good or better. Of the 142 lessons observed, only two were judged to be unsatisfactory. Students' learning was good or better in 86% of lessons. These figures are significantly higher than the average for sixth form colleges inspected in 2002/03.

10. Teachers are passionate about the subjects they teach and manage to convey their excitement to their students. In many lessons, teaching is inspirational and creates an atmosphere of intellectual enjoyment and challenge, to which students respond enthusiastically. In some outstanding lessons, for example, in science, business studies and English, imaginative and stimulating techniques and resources were used to generate scholarly discussion that would not have been out of place in HE.

11. Teachers have developed effective ways to plan lessons with a range of interesting learning activities. They use a variety of strategies to impart their expertise to students, including discussion, group and paired work, role plays and simulations, and student presentations. Ideas and concepts are explained very clearly through careful exposition. In most lessons, teachers make very good use of question and answer techniques to ensure that students understand the work and can articulate their knowledge in appropriate terminology. The quality of learning resources used to aid learning is frequently excellent, and includes the growing use of ILT in the classroom. The college intranet contains a wide range of useful materials and links for most subjects. In a minority of lessons, technology, in particular powerpoint presentations, is used inappropriately.

12. A particular strength of the college is the students' attitude to their studies. Learning is exceptional. Students are very highly motivated, are intrinsically interested in learning new information and are enthusiastic about extending their understanding. They quickly develop good study habits, including independent research skills, and work hard to improve their knowledge and understanding. Much collaborative work in lessons is outstanding, with students co-operating most effectively on tasks set by the teacher. These features are present in all curriculum areas, and are particularly strong in science, humanities, social sciences and English and modern foreign languages.

13. In a minority of lessons, teachers make too few demands on students. The pace of learning is slow, and questioning is not used effectively to check that students understand. Time is wasted on tasks that are either too easy or that students could do outside of the classroom.

14. Teachers are enthusiastic, well qualified in their subjects and experienced. Over 90% hold a teaching qualification. Around half of all teachers are external examiners. Part-time and full-time staff are well supported. New teachers receive mentoring support from experienced practitioners. The college has made good progress in addressing accommodation and resource weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Recent developments include two new purpose-built teaching block and a

well-designed learning resource centre, incorporating a library and high specification IT equipment. Increasing student numbers put a strain on the existing refectory and indoor social areas. There is some outdated accommodation for practical work in science, cramped storage in art areas and overcrowding in some English classes. A further phase in the college's accommodation strategy aims to address these issues and to provide improved facilities in practical sports.

15. The accommodation is well maintained and clean. Many teaching areas have interesting and informative displays. There are good resources for most subjects and some excellent specialist resources for music technology and modern foreign languages. Most classrooms have access to the college's internal computer network. All students and staff have e-mail accounts. Provision of computers for students is adequate for independent study. However, there are insufficient computers for general use in the learning resource centre at peak times. There are a number of computer projectors and interactive whiteboards in classrooms and many teachers are becoming increasingly proficient in their use. There is a substantial amount of learning materials on-line, available through the college intranet. The technical support for IT is good. The library is well-stocked and students have access to a wide range of newspapers and journals. There is good liaison between the library staff and curriculum leaders. A well-planned library induction assists students in developing good research skills. Access to college areas for students with mobility difficulties has improved significantly.

16. Assessment practice across the college is thorough, reliable and rigorous. Initial assessment of full-time students provides a good diagnosis of their learning needs. All full-time students are interviewed and their previous qualifications, aspirations and interests are taken into account before inducting them into college life. During induction, full-time students are tested in the subjects they have chosen in order to establish their current level of competence in the key skills of communication and number. Students also complete a learning styles questionnaire, which is analysed and used to identify their preferred learning style. Induction tutors keep a profile for each student, which is effective in helping them to plan individual learning programmes and arrange appropriate learning support. The result of the initial assessment is recorded, together with the target grades to be achieved on GCE AS and A2 programmes, and any learning support needs identified on an individual learning plan. All students have detailed records on their file with specific and measurable short-term and long-term targets set. The procedures to monitor students' progress towards meeting their target grades are effective in improving their performance.

17. In all curriculum areas, assessment is extremely well managed, effectively planned and carried out regularly. Students' work is accurately and consistently marked and helpful feedback is provided quickly to help students improve their work. Progress is reported each term to parents by personal tutors. Students of humanities, maths and science make good use of programmes on the college intranet to assess their own progress and provide instant feedback on their understanding of the subject. On the AVCE health and social care course, assessment practice is excellent and leads students to identify practical solutions to further improve the quality of their work. For modern apprentices in business studies and accounting, assessment is satisfactory. However, opportunities for continuous work-based assessment and the engagement of employers in the process are limited.

18. The college provides an extensive range of courses at advanced level, including some 46 GCE AS, GCE A2 and AVCE subjects. Curriculum 2000 has been successfully introduced and most full-time students take four subjects from the good mix of academic and vocational subjects. Sports academy programmes are offered in football, cricket and lawn tennis. There are 26 students on these specialist courses that include a high standard of practical sports coaching and GCE AS and A2 options. All students benefit from the very wide range of curriculum enrichment activities and additional qualifications that are available to them. These include the Duke of Edinburgh Award, music, dance and drama and an outstanding range of competitive sports. Many students are able to participate in learning activities that complement their courses, such as community sports leader awards, foreign visits, field trips and educational visits to theatres and art galleries. In response to a level 2 initiative funded by Somerset LSC, the college has recently introduced a successful course, providing a mix of GCSE and GCE AS subjects, for students not yet ready to progress directly to a full advanced level programme.

19. Links with partner schools are good. More than 120 Year 10 and 11 pupils are on a new GCSE

course in applied business at the college that aims to improve vocational choices for pupils aged 14 to 16. Some classes are taught by college teachers in local schools. A successful bid for additional funding has supported a significant increase in available places.

20. There has been a steady growth in the provision of courses for adult learners in business, accountancy and IT. There are 26 advanced modern apprentices enrolled on college programmes. The college business development unit manages this provision and has good links with the community and local employers. However, links with employers for full-time courses are informal and rely on contacts made within curriculum areas.

21. The college has a clear policy on the provision of key skills. All students, unless exempt as a result of previous qualifications obtained, have the opportunity to develop their skills and to gain communication key skills at level 3 and IT at level 2 or above. A key skills support tutor gives good advice and guidance to students on portfolio building and coursework. Separate communication and IT classes are timetabled each week and students have the option to study the key skill of application of number. Key skills development opportunities are mapped onto GCE AS and A2 and AVCE courses. There is very effective co-ordination of key skills across the college and quality assurance of key skills coursework is good. The number of students achieving a key skills qualification and attendance at key skills classes has improved. However, too few students value their key skills experience and many do not see the relevance of key skills to their college courses or further studies.

22. Support and guidance are outstanding for students aged 16 to 18. Students value highly the support they receive from personal tutors, subject teachers and the student services team. The induction process is well managed and co-ordinated, helping new students to settle in to college life quickly. Second-year students volunteer as 'freshers' angels' to support the newcomers and run student-led activities. Effective subject testing during induction and the early weeks of term is used to identify the level of ability and additional support that students may require. Teaching staff use the outcomes from induction effectively throughout the course to ensure that teaching and assessment reflect the range of abilities to be found in each group.

23. The college introduced the current tutorial framework in 2001. The system works very well and teachers receive regular training in its use. In addition to attending well-organised and very effective formal group sessions with their personal tutors, students also have regular individual interviews. They can, and do, request further one-to-one meetings. Students, parents and staff value the individual sessions and the college has found attendance at the formal group tutorial sessions has improved significantly. Adult students receive high-quality informal support and guidance from their subject teachers.

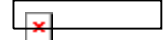
24. An early review of students' progress is used to confirm the appropriate level of study and choice of course. The college carries out a thorough assessment of the potential achievement of each student aged 16 to 18 and of their support needs when they join the college. Challenging target grades for achievement are set for each student, based on their GCSE results. The regular one-to-one tutorial meetings are very effective in monitoring students' progress. A comprehensive tutorial file is used to note each student's achievement and record outcomes of meetings, from which helpful action plans are produced where necessary. Parents receive regular feedback through parents' evenings and individual students' reports in the spring and summer terms.

25. Extra help and support is provided for all students who need it. Workshop sessions are held in most subjects to provide individual academic support. Students are either referred to these by their subject teacher or they can self-refer. The workshop sessions are well attended and any absences are quickly followed up. Those on level 2 courses receive additional help in English and mathematics. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly strong. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are effective. Information on poor attendance is collected by subject teachers and quickly fed back to personal tutors. Absence patterns causing concern are effectively acted upon through tutorials. Managers monitor attendance patterns carefully and set challenging targets for improvement.

26. There is excellent support, information and guidance for students wanting to progress to HE. The

college works closely with the Connexions service to support students seeking entry into employment. A careers section in the learning resource centre provides good resource material.

Leadership and management



27. Leadership and management of the college are outstanding. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been fully addressed. The principal, governors and senior managers provide excellent leadership and strategic direction. There is effective delegation to middle managers who are empowered to make decisions within their areas of responsibility. The college has continued to grow, exceeding its targets for enrolment of students aged 16 to 18, and increasing enrolments on adult part-time courses. There have been substantial accommodation developments with two new buildings and refurbishment of other areas. Throughout this period of growth and change, the college has improved standards of retention and achievement to consistently high levels. It has also been successful in meeting its financial targets, and in achieving or exceeding all performance indicators.

28. Curriculum management is excellent in two areas and very good in all other areas. Five out of the eight areas of learning inspected were judged to be outstanding and the other three areas were judged to be good. Staff enjoy working at the college, form effective teams and are well supported. Course managers know exactly what is expected of them and have been supported in developing the skills required to be effective managers. There is a strong focus by all teams on students' achievement. Demanding targets are set for retention, achievement and progress against minimum target grades, and these are monitored closely throughout the year.

29. Communications in the college are excellent. The values and the objectives of the college are understood and promoted by staff at all levels. Staff feel fully informed about all aspects of the college business and appreciate the open and consultative style of senior management. The college management team comprises the principal, two vice principals, an assistant principal, faculty directors and managers of support areas. This team meets regularly and is successful in identifying, discussing and addressing issues facing the college.

30. Arrangements for ensuring the quality of the provision are comprehensive and rigorous. Course teams make judgements on the quality of provision based on sound evidence. An annual course quality report is produced for each course, through which a thorough analysis of the previous year's performance takes place. The reports are self-critical and, in most areas, accurately identify strengths and weaknesses of the provision. This leads to an action plan which is closely monitored by the course team and the faculty management team. The views of students are systematically collected, analysed and reported on. Part of this process includes the regular focus-group meetings chaired by the principal or senior managers with randomly selected groups of students. The views of parents and partner schools are also sought and used effectively in the self-assessment process.

31. The college's lesson observation programme contributes to the improvement of teaching and learning. All staff are observed at least once a year. New teachers are observed at least twice during their first six months. Feedback is thorough, and focused on improving teacher performance. Staff in many curriculum areas share good practice in teaching and learning through peer observations and team meetings, but in some areas there is insufficient sharing of good practice. The college's teaching and learning profile has improved since the last inspection.

32. Appraisal and staff development arrangements in the college are excellent. Members of the remuneration committee appraise the principal and he appraises the vice principals and the assistant principal. Appraisals are conducted against agreed objectives. Training opportunities for teaching and support staff are clearly linked to the college's objectives and to improving students' performance. Training is fully analysed and evaluated and reports produced each term for the college management team and annually for the governors. There is a clear college commitment to

ensuring all teaching staff have teaching qualifications and engage in continuous professional development. The college achieved Investor in People status in 1997 and has been successful in all re-assessment since.

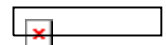
33. Governors work extremely well with managers and staff and, with the principal, set a clear strategic direction for the college. They bring a broad range of professional skills to the college and are enthusiastic and committed to their work. The governors were fully involved in the drawing up of the three-year development plan for 2003 to 2006 and they closely monitor progress against the strategic objectives of the college. The principal provides timely and detailed reports which enable governors to carry out their duties effectively. Governors and senior managers set targets for recruitment, retention rates and achievement, and these are monitored closely.

34. There is a commitment to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity for all members of the college community. The equal opportunities policy is reviewed annually. The college's diversity and equality advisory group has been particularly active in raising awareness of equal opportunities issues across the college. Representation on the diversity and equality advisory group includes staff at all levels, a governor and student representatives. The college complies with the requirements of the recently amended Race Relations Act and SENDA. All staff received training on the obligations laid down in SENDA. The college has a detailed and thorough complaints procedure and complaints are dealt with rapidly and effectively. The college collects data on gender, ethnicity and disability and is starting to use this to analyse the performance of particular groups of students. Careful attention to students' individual needs ensures students achieve their full potential.

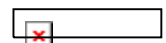
35. The management information system has improved since the last inspection and is now excellent. All college staff have access through the college intranet to a wide range of data which is accurate and reliable. Teachers make very good use of the system to track students' progress, monitor retention rates and students' achievements and inform planning.

36. Financial management is excellent. The college is in financial category A and has been for many years. The college offers good value for money. Staff and other resources are deployed efficiently. Major new building projects have been completed successfully, within budget and on time. There is very careful monitoring of expenditure, with tight controls on budgets. Budget holders receive regular and accurate information on expenditure. Financial reporting to senior managers and governors has improved since the last inspection and they now receive timely and accurate monthly reports on financial performance.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science



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

Strengths

- excellent pass rates on all advanced level courses

- very good teaching
- outstanding workshop-based support for individual students
- exceptional engagement by students in scientific enquiry
- excellent provision of enrichment which enhances learning
- excellent use of IT to support learning.

Weaknesses

- outdated and inadequate accommodation for practical work.

Scope of provision

37. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and attend college full time. GCE AS and A2 courses are offered in biology, chemistry, environmental science, geology and physics. There is a GCE AS course in human biology which is being offered for the first time in 2003/04. GCSE astronomy is offered as part of the enrichment programme. There are over 1,000 enrolments on advanced level science courses. At the time of the inspection, over 300 students were taking courses in biology, with around 200 taking courses in both chemistry and physics.

Achievement and standards

38. Students' achievements in sciences are outstanding. Pass and retention rates on all courses are consistently high, being significantly above national averages for sixth form colleges overall during the last three years. Pass rates on all courses except chemistry GCE AS were above 90% in 2003. All students who began GCE A2 environmental science and geology courses in 2002 were successful. The proportion of students achieving grades A or B in 2003 was very high, particularly for physics and geology. For example, 78% of all students starting GCE A2 geology in 2002 achieved a grade A or B. Well over half of all physics students commencing GCE AS and A2 in 2002 achieved high grades.

39. Students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE. In biology and chemistry, students achieve broadly in line with the grades predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE performance. On geology, physics and environmental science courses, many students achieve higher grades than the targets set for them.

40. The standard of students' work is high. Their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and ideas is frequently better than could be expected, especially for those students at the start of their GCE AS courses. Students ask searching questions, and talk and write fluently about their

subjects. They quickly learn how to analyse and evaluate scientific data. Attendance at lessons is good, at 92%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	128	127	126
		% retention	82	98	96
		% pass rate	98	97	97
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	64	63	73
		% retention	84	95	97
		% pass rate	94	97	96
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	185	168	175
		% retention	91	92	93
		% pass rate	95	93	91
GCE AS chemistry	3	No. of starts	95	91	121
		% retention	93	87	95
		% pass rate	91	92	85
GCE AS environmental science	3	No. of starts	59	36	51
		% retention	92	89	96
		% pass rate	98	78	98
GCE AS geology	3	No. of starts	22	27	39
		% retention	91	96	92
		% pass rate	90	96	97

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

Quality of education and training

41. Teaching is very good; some is outstanding. All teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject and develop very good relationships with their students. Students are exceptionally well motivated. They are keen to extend their learning of science and ask probing questions of their teachers. For example, in a physics lesson on kinematics, students became deeply involved in the topic and asked intelligent questions about the derivation of equations they were using in calculations.

42. Teachers use a variety of effective techniques in lessons, including exposition, question and answer, group and pair activities and practical work. In an excellent chemistry lesson, students carried out an activity in pairs; a card-matching game enabled them to revise the essential factual material about chemical bonding and prepared them for follow-up work on carboxylic acids. In an outstanding environmental science lesson, students worked well in groups, using newspaper articles and video clips as stimulus material, to gather information on the environmental impact of mining.

43. In practical sessions, teachers relate theory to practice clearly and effectively. For instance, in a biology lesson, the students constructed their own apparatus to test the effects of light intensity on the use of carbon dioxide in pond weed and this consolidated the work covered in theory lessons on photosynthesis. In a human biology lesson, students tested samples of jelly, cakes and other foods for the presence of protein. This reinforced their studies on the structure of protein molecules.

44. Excellent use is made of ILT in lessons to enhance learning. In a geology lesson, an interactive whiteboard was used to display a graph of the changes in rock composition during cooling and the importance of the eutectic point. In another geology lesson, students drew data from a large database on earthquakes to investigate the relationship between death tolls and other factors such as the relative affluence of countries. In a human biology lesson, students saw a computer simulation of a road traffic accident and then had to test their skills of life-saving by correctly identifying blood groups suitable for donation and checking their choice on the computer animation.

45. Teaching accommodation is characterised by attractive wall displays, including students' work. Mirrors and fan lights in colours of the spectrum and pictures of molecules bring physics and chemistry laboratories to life. Skeletal structures, including a large horse's leg, and an inflatable dinosaur make interesting features and capture students' attention in biology and geology rooms. However, some laboratories are outdated and not adequate for practical work, particularly in chemistry.

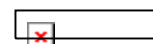
46. An impressive range of enrichment activities is offered in science. For instance, environmental science students have done work experience on Exmoor. Human biology students benefit from visiting the haematology laboratory at the local hospital. There are good links with partner schools and over 150 students have become involved in the science buddies scheme.

47. The curriculum area has outstanding provision for supporting individual students through a workshop system. Students visiting the workshop can do so by an appointment system for one-to-one help with a teacher. Alternatively, they can drop in to use the extensive range of revision materials on the science intranet, or to do research for projects and coursework. Teachers give constructive and helpful written feedback on students' work that helps them to improve.

Leadership and management

48. The science programme area is well managed. Communication between managers and teachers is good at curriculum-area and course-team level. There is an excellent team spirit among the science staff. Teaching resources are all shared. Students' progress is rigorously monitored. Programme team leaders ensure that a strong emphasis is given to improving the quality of teaching and learning and preparing students well for examinations. The well-developed self-assessment reports acknowledge minor weaknesses and contain action plans which address these issues.

Mathematics and computing



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- very good analytical skills demonstrated by mathematics students
- much good teaching

- highly effective study support
- very good specialist resources supporting effective learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass and retention rates for GCE AS computing
- ineffective teaching in a minority of lessons.

Scope of provision

49. A wide range of provision at GCE AS and A2 is offered in mathematics and computing. In mathematics, students can choose from options in statistics, pure, applied and mechanics. Further mathematics units are provided for the more able students. A new single mathematics GCE AS course has been introduced to provide suitable units for weaker students. GCSE mathematics is available for those students who wish to improve their grade. Around 350 students are taking advanced level mathematics courses, with over 50 on the GCSE course. Over 200 students are taking courses in GCE AS and A2 computing or information and communications technology (ICT).

Achievement and standards

50. Pass rates are high on most courses and are significantly above national averages for GCSE mathematics, GCE AS ICT, GCE AS mathematics and GCE A2 further mathematics. There has been a decline in the pass rate for GCE AS computing to 10% below the national average in 2003. Pass rates for GCE A2 computing and ICT are good, but the proportion of students achieving high grades is small. Pass rates for GCSE mathematics have been high for the last two years. Retention rates are high across the curriculum area, except for GCE AS computing. In comparison with their prior attainment, students with higher GCSE grades are achieving broadly in line with expectations. However, many students with lower GCSE results are not achieving the grades of which they are capable.

51. The standard of students' work in lessons is consistently high in mathematics. Written work contains well-presented answers showing clear understanding of mathematical processes. In lessons, students demonstrate good analytical skills. Their powers of reasoning and evaluation are higher than might be expected at this stage in the course. The computing skills of some first-year ICT students are weak, but most students are working at the standard expected. GCE A2 students on both computing and ICT courses demonstrate a good understanding of appropriate skills and techniques.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	65	64	61
		% retention	82	88	93

		% pass rate	32	57	63
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	203	190	219
		% retention	88	91	93
		% pass rate	68	69	78
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	144	105	107
		% retention	81	95	95
		% pass rate	96	95	90
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	56	83	80
		% retention	84	89	79
		% pass rate	91	82	70
GCE AS ICT	3	No. of starts	131	93	93
		% retention	86	86	90
		% pass rate	86	74	86
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	45	69	38
		% retention	68	97	97
		% pass rate	96	90	92

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

Quality of education and training

52. Most teaching is good or better. Lessons are well structured and use a range of activities, materials and equipment to stimulate learning. Teaching is planned in detail and guided by clear schemes of work. In many sessions, good use of questioning by the teacher promotes discussion and challenges students to give extended answers, developing their knowledge of ideas. Mathematics students studying logarithms responded to enthusiastic and stimulating teaching to explore solutions and extend their understanding with a range of practice questions. They demonstrated clear analytical reasoning and a strong grasp of the subject. Good computing and ICT lessons made effective use of interactive whiteboards and learning materials from the college's intranet to develop students' practical and theoretical skills and understanding. For example, in a very good computing lesson, students quickly acquired the principles of binary search through the effective use of interactive technologies combined with skilful questioning.

53. The less-effective lessons do not fully involve students and often fail to cater for students of differing abilities. Able students are left with too little to do, whilst less-able students struggle to make progress. Sometimes the teacher talks too much and does not check if all students understand the concepts. In some ICT lessons, the technology was not used effectively. The interactive whiteboard was used as a standard whiteboard and students wasted time copying diagrams into their written notes, instead of saving the images electronically.

54. The curriculum area is well resourced, with appropriately equipped classrooms, good levels of specialist equipment and well-qualified staff. There is a very good intranet site for the provision and management of all learning materials for computing and ICT courses. Interactive whiteboards with industry standard software are used well in some lessons to promote learning. The mathematics intranet site is effectively used as an independent learning resource. There are numerous good paper-based resources for practice and revision in mathematics.

55. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good across all courses. Students' individual learning needs are diagnosed through detailed initial assessment. Predictions from GCSE scores are used to set targets for achievement and to guide progress. All teachers regularly set and

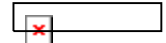
mark homework and assignments and review students' progress at regular intervals. Each formal piece of work for mathematics is marked to an agreed standard scale. Detailed assessment procedures are well documented for ICT and computing courses. Newly introduced student files contain student activity calendars and milestone check lists to ensure that students plan their coursework effectively.

56. Students are very well supported. ICT and computing students attend a pre-enrolment 'skills builder' course in the summer after their GCSE exams. During their induction programme, mathematics students undergo an initial assessment based on GCSE material. Students who achieve low scores are directed to timetabled workshop sessions for intensive support and guidance. A similar assessment is done in ICT and computing to particularly assess IT skills. A workshop programme on these subjects concentrates on improving these skills. The workshop is also used extensively throughout the year by all students for subject support. Students value highly the support given by staff.

Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are very good. Course leaders set clear agendas and action plans for the improvement of teaching, learning and achievements in their area. These actions arise from detailed analysis of results at the end of each year. Self-assessment is rigorous and accurate. Course teams meet regularly and discuss issues of course development, production of course materials, standardisation of coursework and students' progress. Teams change their delivery and methods of assessment in response to students' opinion and progress. Reviews of teaching and learning strategies occur frequently both informally and at formal team meetings. There is considerable informal exchange of good practice and sharing of material within teams.

Business



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses
- much imaginative and stimulating teaching on GCE AS and A2 business studies and economics courses
- very good academic support for students
- very effective feedback on progress which helps students to improve.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate on AVCE business in 2002/03
- insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

58. The department offers a wide range of advanced level courses including GCE AS and A2 accounting, business studies and economics and AVCE business. There is an excellent range of professional accountancy courses, with very good progression routes for adult students. These include Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) qualifications. Over 300 16 to 18 year olds are following courses in GCE AS and A2 business studies, accounting and economics. There are currently around 30 students on AVCE business courses and a further 30 on modern apprenticeship programmes. The college has made good links with local schools and is providing a GCSE double award in applied business for pupils aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

59. Pass rates are higher than national averages on all GCE AS and A2 subjects. Retention rates are good on most courses but are below national averages for AVCE business and AAT intermediate level 3. Pass rates and retention rates for modules on professional courses are very good, although few adults complete the whole qualification. The percentage of students achieving high grades is above the national average on many courses, although it is low on GCE A2 business studies. The college's own analysis of the progress that students make shows that on GCE AS and A2 accounting and business courses, some students are not achieving as well as could be expected from their prior attainment. By contrast, on AVCE business, those students who complete the course are achieving above their predicted grades.

60. Standards of work are at least satisfactory, with a substantial amount of very good work. Students on advanced level courses display a good knowledge of concepts and terminology and are able to apply new learning to a variety of case studies. Their ability to illustrate answers with examples drawn from current business practice is impressive. In their written work, GCE A2 and AS students display strong analytical and evaluative skills. For example, students were able to analyse the three options open to a garden centre at risk of failure and give clear judgements on the most appropriate action. AVCE students research their assignments well. GCE AS and A2 project work is very good, with examples of excellent presentation and mature analysis. In one case, a student who carried out market research for a local radio station won a prize for the quality of the work. Standards of work on professional courses are at least satisfactory with a substantial amount of high-quality work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE AS accounting	3	No. of starts	54	50	37
		% retention	83	92	92
		% pass rate	70	80	79
GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	170	131	150
		% retention	88	91	86
		% pass rate	94	92	96

AVCE (double award) business (two years)	3	No. of starts	23	23	*
		% retention	61	78	*
		% pass rate	93	83	*
GCE A-level accounting	3	No. of starts	13	20	29
		% retention	82	100	97
		% pass rate	100	90	93
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	138	101	94
		% retention	75	96	98
		% pass rate	100	100	98
ACCA professional scheme - part 3	H	No. of starts	19	18	21
		% retention	89	100	90
		% pass rate	0	17	26

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

61. Most teaching is good or better. In business studies and economics lessons, much of the teaching is imaginative and stimulating. There is also some very effective teaching in professional classes. Teachers use a wide range of teaching styles to enhance learning, including group and paired work, business games and presentations. There is some innovative teaching of business concepts. In one business studies class, the teacher brought in a varied collection of teddy bears and required individual students to decide which pricing strategy applied to each bear. Students quickly grasped the differences between economy and premium pricing policy as each student justified their decision and the whole class enjoyed being drawn into the debate. In another class the teacher brought in a range of products, including videos and some recent music releases. This successfully generated a discussion on price-elasticity of demand. Students were able to conclude that whilst demand for a new release would become elastic over time, it could become inelastic again as the music achieved cult status. Students are enthusiastic and interested, and make good progress.

62. In the less successful lessons, teachers fail to use question and answer techniques effectively to engage students. Too few demands are placed on students, and able students in particular are not challenged. Even in some of the better lessons, teachers accept brief answers from more able students and, consequently, they do not deepen their understanding or extend their thinking.

63. Teachers are appropriately qualified and benefit from effective staff development, including subject-specific updating. They make good use of Internet and intranet resources and use current business examples to illustrate their lessons. The library and learning centre provides a satisfactory range of business texts and access to newspapers and business journals. Other resources, such as data projectors, are not always used effectively, although there are some examples of excellent practice. The use of a data projector in a business taxation class enabled the teacher to demonstrate immediately the consequence of changes in tax variables, without the distraction of arduous calculations.

64. Assessment of students' work on all courses is very good. Students receive very detailed feedback on their work, which helps them to improve. Clear development targets are set and reviewed when the next piece of work is submitted. Students who are underachieving are quickly identified and receive good support, including workshop sessions, to meet their individual needs. Adult students who are unable to attend classes receive learning materials and assessment tasks by

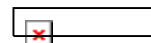
e-mail. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. For example, one student who suffers from a hearing impairment and other learning difficulties is making good progress because staff have been trained to use specialist learning aids.

65. The department offers a wide range of courses with clear progression routes for students aged 16 to 18 and for adults. Students benefit from good opportunities for course-related enrichment that enhance their learning. These include a two day 'business dynamic' programme, work placements for accounting students and trips abroad to study European industry. There is good applied GCSE business provision for a growing number of pupils aged 14 to 16 from partner schools.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are good. There is rigorous analysis of achievement, retention rates and attendance data and effective action to address issues identified. Course reviews are both analytical and evaluative and lead to clear, prioritised action points. However, self-assessment reports are insufficiently critical. Some routine features are identified as strengths. There is little focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning through the sharing of good practice. Teachers work well within their teams. All staff promote equality of opportunity effectively and sensitively.

Sports, leisure and recreation



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

Strengths

- excellent pass rates and retention rates
- very good teaching and learning
- outstanding sports enrichment and competitive sports programmes
- strong support structure for students' achievement
- dynamic curriculum leadership ensures high standards
- aspirational and inclusive ethos creates a culture of personal pride.

Weaknesses

- insufficient provision of high-quality sports facilities on site.

Scope of provision

67. Approximately 290 students are studying physical education and leisure and recreation at advanced level. There are around 150 students taking GCE AS or A2 physical education and around 100 taking the AVCE in leisure and recreation. Some 350 students from across the college participate in the sports enrichment programme. These include vocational qualifications such as community sports leaders award, the basic expedition leaders award, as well as the Duke of Edinburgh Award at gold level. The college offers an extensive competitive sports programme with around 250 students representing the college in local, regional and national competitions in 18 different sports. There are also sports academies in tennis and football and an English Cricket Board elite cricket academy in partnership with Somerset County Cricket Club.

Achievement and standards

68. Pass and retention rates are excellent. Students taking the AVCE leisure and recreation double award or single award achieved 100% pass rates in 2002 and 2003. Retention rates for these courses have also been considerably above the national average over the same period. In 2003, 47% of AVCE leisure and recreation double award and 57% of single award students achieved the highest grades of A or B, compared with a national average in schools and colleges of 8% and 10%, respectively, in 2002. Pass rates for GCE A2 physical education have averaged 99% between 2001 and 2003 with retention rates at or above the national average of 96%. Whilst GCE AS pass rates have declined, from 98% in 2001 to 92% in 2003, they are still 3% above the national average. Students on the AVCE courses achieve significantly higher grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results.

69. High levels of students' attainment are evident in the very good standards of students' written and practical work. Students develop high order analytical skills. They contribute effectively to group discussions and have confidence in expressing themselves orally. A particular strength is students' ability to work co-operatively and collaboratively during group work in classroom and practical situations. Most students have developed very good independent learning skills, including research and retrieval of information. Attendance during the week of inspection was very good, at 96%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Basic expedition leader award	2	No. of starts	19	24	19
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Community sport leader award	2	No. of starts	43	36	41
		% retention	93	100	90
		% pass rate	93	61	100
GCE A-level physical education	3	No. of starts	87	46	61
		% retention	78	96	93
		% pass rate	99	100	98
GCE AS physical	3	No. of starts	70	77	86

education		% retention	83	92	85
		% pass rate	98	97	92
AVCE leisure and recreation (double award)	3	No. of starts	*	24	21
		% retention	*	63	71
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

70. Teaching and learning are very good. Two-thirds of the lessons observed were very good or excellent. The quality of planning and consideration of the creative ways to develop learning is exceptional. Staff create innovative teaching and learning activities that are demanding, extending and enjoyable for students. The aims of every lesson are displayed and shared with students at the start. Most lessons provide variety and frequent opportunities for active and collaborative learning. Learning and students' progress are frequently checked. For example, at the start of a sports psychology lesson, the teacher assessed the students' previous understanding through a good-humoured but competitive stand-up quiz. In another session, students' understanding was checked in an entertaining but constructive manner through a traffic light system. Students responded to the teachers' enquiries by saying 'amber' if they were unsure, 'red' if they were having difficulty or 'green' if they understood.

71. Approaches to learning are often simple but very effective. In a physical education lesson, students were encouraged to consider the difference between sport and play by engaging in a pre-prepared activity with conkers on strings. One teacher used the game of 'hangman' to see if students could provide the letters that made up the key terms of Weiner's model of attribution. Opportunities were regularly created for students to apply theoretical concepts in practical situations. In an anatomy and physiology class, focusing on the movement of joints and associated muscles, models of movable joints were available together with tennis rackets, hockey sticks and balls. Using this equipment, students could experience, consider and analyse the practical applications of the theory they were discussing.

72. Students receive strong support to achieve high standards in academic studies and practical elements of their programmes. Students negotiate challenging individual targets for achievement at the start of the course. These cover examination courses and other elements of their programmes. There is very good support for students through individual tutorials; these monitor progress towards targets and deal speedily with any cause for concern. There are rigorous systems in place to deal with unsatisfactory academic performance, absence and poor punctuality. A physical education support workshop is available, at published times in the week, to which students needing academic support can be directed, or can self-refer.

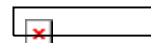
73. Most students in the curriculum area participate fully in the outstanding sports enrichment programme and the competitive sports programme designed to provide opportunities both for participation and competition at a range of levels. The expectation placed on students to aspire to the highest standards of behaviour, dress and performance is impressively successful. The college uses a wide range of external practical facilities at a number of venues to supplement the limited facilities available on the college campus. These facilities involve considerable expense and travel time and are unable to sustain the increasing demands of the curriculum area.

Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are outstanding at all levels. The area benefits from a dynamic, experienced and committed team of people who set the framework for the success of their students. There is a culture of structured review and evaluation in all aspects of the provision, which has led to the maintenance and development of high standards. The team have created an inclusive ethos for students, based on the highest professional practice and expectations,

that has set the tone for all involved. The results of this approach are evident from the achievements of students over a consistent period.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates
- very good teaching and learning
- high standard of practical work
- excellent range of enrichment activities enhances student experience
- excellent support for students
- very good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient display and storage space for art and design students' work

Scope of provision

75. There is a wide range of GCE AS and A2 courses in art and design, media, film studies, performance studies, drama and theatre studies, dance, music and music technology. There is also an AVCE performing arts (popular music industries) course and a GCSE in photography is offered to advanced level students as an additional qualification. At the time of inspection there were 242 students on film and media studies courses, 162 students on music and music technology, 156 students on performing arts and 127 students undertaking art and design courses.

Achievement and standards

76. Pass and retention rates are excellent on nearly all courses, mostly ranging between 90% and 100% in 2003. The proportion of students who stay on their course and succeed has either been maintained at a high level or improved over the last three years. The percentage of students achieving grades A or B is also high, and is above the national average. In 2003, just over half of all students completing GCE A2 courses achieved high grades, as did just under half of all GCE AS and AVCE students. Many students are achieving higher grades than predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results. Over 70% of GCE A2 students met or exceeded the demanding target grade set for them in 2003.

77. Work produced by students is of a very high standard. Art and design students experiment freely with different media, producing creative outcomes through drawing, printmaking, textiles, photography and mixed media. Sketchbooks are full of ideas for development using contemporary influences, historical influences and students' own work as starting points. Textiles work is particularly good, utilising appliqué, embroidery and other techniques imaginatively. Musicians are accomplished in their practice, many students having achieved grade eight in their instrument. Music technology and popular music students compose and perform to a high standard. Media students produce well-researched and well-scripted show reels. Performing arts and dance students are accomplished performers.

78. Students develop a broad range of additional skills alongside their main courses of study. There is a college orchestra, ensembles for strings, wind and brass, and choral, jazz and rock bands. Video production, drama, dance, photography and life drawing classes are also popular with students. Students on music and drama courses enhance their skills through involvement in festivals. In particular, popular music students benefited from playing at the recent Glastonbury festival.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	106	96	111
		% retention	87	86	88
		% pass rate	99	95	87
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	88	70	56
		% retention	67	97	98
		% pass rate	98	99	98
GCE AS art and design	3	No. of starts	51	65	71
		% retention	86	82	86
		% pass rate	91	92	95
GCE A-level performance studies	3	No. of starts	42	36	28
		% retention	76	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	96
GCE AS dance	3	No. of starts	27	24	21
		% retention	74	88	100
		% pass rate	95	67	95
GCE A-level music	3	No. of starts	19	*	19
		% retention	89	*	100
		% pass rate	94	*	100

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

** fewer than 15 starters enrolled*

Quality of education and training

79. Teaching is very good. Staff are experts in their subjects. Lessons are well planned and students' progress in class is good. Most teaching is well-structured and delivered with enthusiasm, using a variety of methods to make lessons lively and interesting. For example, in an outstanding drama class, students were working on a complex task to act out a short scene in the absurd genre, using voice and movement. Students were motivated to perform outstanding drama and took pride in their achievement. Teaching proceeded at a brisk pace using a variety of techniques to ensure students were engaged. The teacher used praise, humour, excellent timing and accentuation in oral delivery. In a very good music class, students were asked to analyse the textural qualities of a classical instrumental track. The teacher explained the key analytical concepts using keyboard, whiteboard and compact discs. At one point the teacher spontaneously improvised by suggesting that students sing Frere Jacques in two groups, to the great amusement of students. This reinforced understanding of the canon effect in music composition.

80. Teaching staff are well qualified. Most have relevant commercial experience or are practitioners in their field. Staff development and professional updating are effective. The learning resource centre provides up-to-date and essential learning materials in a variety of media. Equipment levels and space for music students are very good. Computer equipment and software is industry standard and there is a good range of musical instruments. Spaces for rehearsal and performance to support performing arts and dance are good. Students appreciate the access they have to workshops throughout the day. However, there is insufficient display and storage space for art and design students' work.

81. Assessment practice is very good. Homework is generally annotated with constructive comments informing students how to improve. Teachers correct written work for spelling and punctuation. Some written feedback on work in dance is less constructive, providing only brief comments. Students' progress is tracked systematically, with regular reviews of their current attainment compared with their target grades.

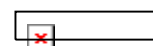
82. Enrichment opportunities are excellent. In addition to the range of courses within the college, students on all courses benefit from links with local and regional businesses, arts organisations and festivals. In music, there are effective relations with a Somerset radio station that promotes local band initiatives. A newly established recording-label business in the college promotes student talent.

83. Support for students is excellent. Staff are very accessible, and provide sound advice, both on progress in college and progression from college. Students value highly the academic and pastoral guidance they receive both from subject teachers and pastoral tutors.

Leadership and management

84. Curriculum management is very good. The self-assessment process is effective in improving quality. Course reviews and action plans are extremely detailed and thorough. Action plans include qualitative and quantitative targets to address weaknesses, for example, in resources. Many of the action points and targets are achieved. Teachers and managers share a common purpose to raise standards. There is little sharing of good practice on teaching strategies between colleagues in the visual and creative arts area.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- very high pass and retention rates
- very high standard of student work
- enthusiastic and effective teaching
- extensive range of enrichment opportunities that supports learning
- effective strategies to raise standards.

Weaknesses

- failure to extend more able students in a minority of lessons.

Scope of provision

85. Courses are provided at GCE AS and GCE A2 in archaeology, geography, government and politics, history, law, philosophy and religious studies. Critical thinking is taught at GCE AS. There are over 1,000 enrolments on humanities course, nearly all students aged 16 to 18. The largest numbers are on history courses, with over 280 students, and law, taken by around 230 students. To challenge the most able to perform at the highest level, history is piloting the use of Advanced Extension papers.

Achievement and standards

86. Pass rates and retention rates are very high, being significantly above the national averages for sixth form colleges overall. In 2003, pass rates for GCE A2 law, government and politics, philosophy, archaeology and religious studies were 100%. For geography and history they were 98% and 97%, respectively. GCE AS pass rates exceeded 90% for most subjects. The percentage of students achieving passes at the higher grades is increasing steadily and is also above the national average for sixth form colleges. For example, on archaeology, law, and late modern history courses, the percentages of students gaining grades A or B are at least 10% higher than the national average.

87. High standards of work are consistently seen in classes. Students are very focused on their studies and participate enthusiastically in lessons. They develop skills of critical evaluation through reflecting on their own work. In a geography lesson, students were able to accurately diagnose strengths and weaknesses in examination answers written by other students. History students demonstrated an impressive grasp of political and historical terminology and concepts. Students have the confidence to contribute articulately in lessons and are developing skills to enable them to analyse complex problems. Law students can evaluate complex information and propose in the appropriate terminology the best legal course to follow. Group work is often used very effectively.

Students help one another identify weaknesses in their work and collaborate in seeking ways to improve.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE AS archaeology	3	No. of starts	41	41	45
		% retention	90	85	91
		% pass rate	89	83	88
GCE AS critical thinking	3	No. of starts	73	68	120
		% retention	84	88	92
		% pass rate	89	97	84
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	82	86	130
		% retention	88	93	88
		% pass rate	90	86	92
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	84	76	58
		% retention	85	95	97
		% pass rate	94	100	98
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	88	73	70
		% retention	84	99	94
		% pass rate	86	97	97
GCE A-level philosophy	3	No. of starts	22	40	49
		% retention	86	88	92
		% pass rate	89	89	100

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

Quality of education and training

88. The quality of teaching is consistently very good. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and convey their excitement to students. They have developed effective ways to plan lessons to include a range of interesting and lively learning activities. In most lessons, students show a real interest in deepening their understanding of the subject. For example, in an outstanding religious studies lesson students, enjoyed ranking a list of `evil' acts according to how bad they were and then comparing their results with a list produced by the church in the Middle Ages. This led on to an intelligent discussion about the changing influences on ideas of right and wrong. In a very good geography lesson, groups of students explored the effects of suburbanisation and then debated as a class whether the overall impact was positive or negative. The combination of group work and class discussion was very effective in involving all students in thinking and talking about geographical debates. In a lively history lesson on Hitler's rise to power, students learnt very quickly how to identify and analyse different sources of historical evidence. In a minority of lessons, more able students are not expected to consider and communicate ideas in sufficient depth.

89. Resources for humanities are good. A wide range of handouts and other learning materials is used effectively to minimise the time students spend taking notes. The learning resource centre is stocked with an appropriate range of current specialist magazines and an adequate range of up-to-date books. There is a good range of texts for religious studies and government and politics. All humanities subjects have their own intranet sites. The best sites, for archaeology, geography and history, identify homework assignments for the term. They also give details of trips and visits,

provide additional learning resources, list relevant web sites and provide high-quality revision material. Students find them very useful.

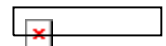
90. Students receive very good academic support. Work is marked conscientiously and thoroughly, although there are variations in the quality of feedback given for different subjects. Students respond well to the challenging target grades they are set when they start at college. Staff go to great lengths to ensure students have every opportunity to achieve them, providing additional help and support through subject workshops and additional tutorial time.

91. There is a very good range of enrichment activities to support learning. Most subjects organise day trips and residential visits to supplement work done in college and to inspire students to undertake further study and research. Examples include archaeological field trips to Jordan and Ireland as well as, more locally, geography field trips, history visits to famous sites and a trip to the House of Commons for those studying government and politics. In religious studies, speakers from local health and welfare agencies are used to promote debate about such issues as abortion and euthanasia.

Leadership and management

92. Leadership and management are excellent. Teamwork is very effective in creating a culture of continuous improvement. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified in course reviews. Each year, the progress made by every student and results on each course are analysed very carefully. Students' achievements are then compared with the national pattern and from this staff identify where there is room for further improvement. Actions taken are successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning and in raising standards. The strategies have been successful in improving the quality of provision in humanities over the last three years.

Sociology and psychology



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

Strengths

- very high pass and retention rates
- a lot of very good teaching
- excellent use of group work in learning
- very good resources to stimulate learning
- outstanding subject support for individual students

- excellent curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of ILT in a minority of lessons.

Scope of provision

93. GCE AS and A2 courses are offered in both psychology and sociology. Health and social care students can choose from a single award or a double award AVCE. At the time of inspection, there were 480 students taking psychology, 175 taking sociology, and over 100 on health and social care courses. Nearly all students are full time, aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

94. Pass and retention rates are very high. Pass rates were above national averages on all courses in 2003. Health and social care pass rates have been at 100% for the last three years. For both psychology and health and social care, and on GCE A2 sociology, students are achieving grades above those predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. For GCE AS sociology, there was a decline in the proportion of students achieving high grades in 2003 compared with the high figures of the previous two years. By contrast, the proportion of students achieving grades A or B for GCE A2 sociology rose to above national averages. Retention rates on all courses have been at or above national averages throughout the last three years.

95. Students' work is of a high standard. Their application of discursive, analytical and observational skills is excellent. They are able to relate information and their experiences intelligently to the concepts and issues under review. They apply psychological and sociological perspectives to the analysis of case studies and source material with clarity, demonstrating an ability to think critically.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AVCE health and social care (double award) (two years)	3	No. of starts	30	29	32
		% retention	93	83	81
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	216	227	266
		% retention	90	92	93
		% pass rate	97	91	94
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	136	164	136
		% retention	85	98	96
		% pass rate	99	95	96
GCE AS sociology	3	No. of starts	94	87	94
		% retention	89	92	89
		% pass rate	95	90	89

GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	56	51	54
		% retention	75	98	96
		% pass rate	93	98	98

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

Quality of education and training

96. There is much very good teaching. Lessons are very well planned with excellent support materials. Teachers use a wide variety of approaches including pair work, group presentations, role play, powerpoint and videos. Students are given scope to express and explore their ideas in class and work responsibly on their own and in groups. They respond to this with enthusiasm, high commitment and a sense of challenge and enjoyment. The use of group work to enthuse and challenge students intellectually is exemplary. Research, observational and presentational skills are of a high order. Students derive much satisfaction from their studies. They can critically interrogate source material, draw conclusions and support their judgements with evidence from texts with confidence. An awareness of and sensitivity towards equal opportunities and the cultural diversity of modern Britain underpins teaching and learning in all subjects.

97. Lessons are challenging and participatory. In a very good sociology lesson on biological and social determinism, the teacher and students used a marionette to illustrate the functionalist view that human behaviour is shaped by social forces external to the individual. This led to an excellent discussion between students and teachers where both case studies and individual experiences were drawn on. In an imaginative health and social care class, students examined Maslow's hierarchy of discrimination. In groups they drew spider diagrams of selected aspects of the theory and reported back to the class using case study examples to contextualise their enquiry. In a psychology lesson a student recalled an observation he had made of an autistic work colleague and related this to an experiment conducted by Baron-Cohen with autistic children. This instigated a lively class discussion with other students recalling their own observations.

98. Resources are of a high quality. Both the Internet and intranet are used to good effect, and there are well-planned and developmental handouts to aid students' learning and encourage independent thinking. Students develop research skills in the learning centre where they use computer resources to gather information and ideas about particular topics and authors. All subjects have good library provision, which students value and use extensively. There is some good use of ILT in the classroom but ILT is used in an ineffective way in a minority of lessons. For example, students were asked to copy notes from poorly presented powerpoint slides. Teaching accommodation is very good, although one health and social care group was inappropriately located in a chemistry laboratory.

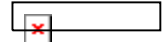
99. The assessment of students' work throughout all subjects is very thorough. Teachers identify the learning needs of their students and set them realistic but challenging targets. Progress towards these targets is carefully monitored. Clear procedures are implemented for students who are underachieving. Teachers return work promptly and write detailed, constructive comments identifying areas for further development. The quality of assessment in health and social care is outstanding. Students' work placements aid the high quality of portfolios and are a significant factor in the excellent achievements of this area.

100. Subject support for students is outstanding. The introduction of workshop sessions on both sociology and psychology courses has proved popular with students and has had a positive impact on improving achievement. There is very good support for students with learning needs. A particular strength of the area is the informal support provided. Students speak highly of the supportive approach of all staff. Teachers are enthusiastic and dedicated and give generously of their time to aid students' progress and understanding.

Leadership and management

101. There is highly effective course management. Faculty and subject leaders consult well with staff. Course teams work well together, communicate effectively, develop very good course materials and share good practice. Quality systems are detailed, monitored and integrated into teaching and learning. Equal opportunities and issues of social inclusion are well integrated into schemes of work and classroom learning. Staff appraisal is well established and leads to relevant staff development.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses
- above average proportion of high grades for most subjects at GCE A2
- exciting and intellectually challenging teaching in many lessons
- excellent enrichment provision in both English and modern languages
- good teaching accommodation and very good learning resources
- highly effective departmental and faculty management.

Weaknesses

- a decline in the proportion of students achieving high grades on GCE AS courses
- dull or unsatisfactory teaching in a minority of lessons.

Scope of provision

102. There is a very wide range of provision in English and modern foreign languages. In English, GCE AS and A2 students can take English language, English literature and English language and literature. There is also a GCSE English course for students needing to improve their grade. At the time of inspection, over 500 students were taking an advanced level English course. French, German and Spanish are all offered at GCE AS and A2. Spanish and Italian are available at GCSE, and there is a beginner's course in Japanese. Latin GCSE has been introduced in 2003, attracting a small number of students. Around 100 students take advanced level French, with approximately 30 studying German and 30 Spanish. Both English and French students are able to sit the GCE Advanced Extension paper.

Achievement and standards

103. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses, and have significantly exceeded national averages for sixth form colleges over the last three years. In 2003, pass rates for GCE AS Spanish, GCE AS English literature and GCE A2 English language and literature were 100%. Most other courses had pass rates over 90%, although in GCE AS German the pass rate declined to 71%. At GCE A2, the proportion of students achieving grades A or B is outstanding, reaching nearly 60% overall in 2003. Over 80% of students achieved or exceeded the target grade set for them on the basis of their GCSE results. The 17 students sitting GCE Advanced Extension papers in English and French achieved outstanding results. The proportion of students achieving high grades at GCE AS has declined over the last three years. For example, between 2001 and 2003, the percentage of high grades for English literature fell from 70% to 40%, and for English language from 51% to 29%. Compared with their prior attainment, GCE A2 students are making excellent progress, whilst at GCE AS achievements were slightly below predictions in 2003.

104. The standard of students' work is high. In modern languages, both oral and written work is of a high or very high standard. Students develop a laudable regard for accuracy and strive to achieve it. Their learning skills are well developed and they respond well to interesting materials. In English, many students demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of literary and linguistic terminology and ideas, and can write and speak fluently about difficult texts.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	88	77	102
		% retention	87	90	88
		% pass rate	100	100	96
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	59	64	58
		% retention	85	98	97
		% pass rate	98	100	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	71	57	61
		% retention	86	100	92
		% pass rate	95	100	98
GCE AS French language	3	No. of starts	63	42	57
		% retention	81	90	85
		% pass rate	98	95	85
GCE A-level French language	3	No. of starts	38	36	32
		% retention	74	97	97
		% pass rate	96	100	97
GCE AS German	3	No. of starts	23	19	24

language	% retention	91	100	88
	% pass rate	95	95	71

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

Quality of education and training

105. Most teaching is good or better, and a lot of teaching is very good. However, in a minority of the lessons, teaching is dull or unsatisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers bring a scholarly enthusiasm to their engagement with students. In modern foreign languages there is some imaginative teaching, with good use of the target language as the main means of communication. Teaching materials are well chosen, mainly drawn from authentic sources, to bring the lessons to life. For example, in a very good German lesson on drugs and alcohol, the teacher used a video recording of a pop star singing about his own experiences of alcohol abuse following the death of his wife. The students were moved by the words of the song, its use of metaphor and imaginative language considerably enriching their vocabulary.

106. The best English lessons are intellectually challenging and are characterised by students' enthusiasm for engaging in discussion on literary and linguistic ideas. Teachers inspire students through their passion for their subject and the wide range of resources used to stimulate learning. In an outstanding session for students entering the Advanced Extension paper, students participated in an invigorating debate on the Arthurian legend through various periods of English literature.

107. In the less effective lessons, too few demands are placed on students. Teaching is pedestrian and fails to enthuse or engage students. In a minority of lessons, students are given insufficient opportunity to think for themselves. For example, in one lesson, the teacher did not give students time to respond to questions before telling them the answer.

108. Teachers are highly qualified. Many are examiners or senior examiners, and some write textbooks on their subjects. The range of learning materials provided, including those available on the college intranet, are impressive. Students appreciate the work teachers have undertaken in building up an intranet provision that contains worksheets, notes, background information on set texts, recommended reading lists and critical extracts relevant to current study. There are also links to specialist scholarly websites, as well as to European newspaper and broadcast media. Teaching accommodation is excellent. Classrooms are attractive, with good learning resources and stimulating displays. However, some English classes were overcrowded, limiting the range of activities that could be undertaken. There is a state of the art digital language laboratory. Some features of this resource are yet to be fully exploited in teaching.

109. Students' work is marked thoroughly. The feedback given by teachers is particularly helpful in identifying what students need to do to improve their performance in examinations. Students are set clear targets which are monitored assiduously. Additional workshop support is provided for students who need extra help.

110. The range and quality of enrichment activities in both English and modern foreign languages is excellent. English students undertake theatre visits to current productions of all the plays they study, often in London or Stratford. There are links with London's Globe Theatre, enabling students not only to see productions there but also to take part in the study programme offered by the theatre. There is a well supported course in creative writing, allowing students to work with a published novelist. As a result, an exceptionally good magazine of the students' own work has been produced. Students of modern languages not only undertake frequent trips to the continent, but have the opportunity to undertake placements as language assistants in French primary schools. Native speakers of the language support learning in one-to-one conversation sessions. The presence for one term each year of German students in their final year of college adds an additional dimension to learning that language.

Leadership and management

111. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear focus on raising standards and effective staff development to further improve the quality of teaching and learning. Quality assurance procedures are particularly effective in English. Teamwork is good, both within and across subject areas, with effective sharing of resources and discussion of good practice by colleagues.

Part D: College data

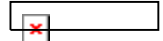
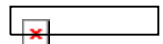


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2002/03

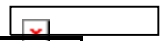


Level	16-18	19+
1	1	16
2	21	17
3	78	21
4/5	0	44
Other	0	3
Total *	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2002/03



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%) *
Science and mathematics	1,188	59	17
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	69	0	1
Business administration, management and professional	371	229	8
Information and communications technology	1,473	33	21
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	309	6	4

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public services	134	40	2
Visual and performing arts and media	597	3	8
Humanities	1,454	7	20
English, languages and communication	1,252	5	17
Foundation programmes	0	0	0
Total	6,847	382	100

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	52	593	27	*	*	*
	Retention rate (%)	90	72	96	*	*	*
	National average (%)	79	80	78	*	*	*
	Pass rate (%)	51	14	88	*	*	*
	National average (%)	70	66	71	*	*	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	235	212	235	16	24	93
	Retention rate (%)	88	87	90	81	92	97
	National average (%)	80	80	81	71	72	71
	Pass rate (%)	48	92	90	31	60	91
	National average (%)	80	85	84	70	68	71
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,074	5,030	4,267	36	31	47
	Retention rate (%)	78	79	92	72	48	70
	National average (%)	75	80	89	63	64	69
	Pass rate (%)	87	93	92	50	60	67
	National average (%)	85	86	88	65	67	75
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	62	100	107

	Retention rate (%)	*	*	*	95	97	98
	National average (%)	*	*	*	**	**	**
	Pass rate (%)	*	*	*	12	5	11
	National average (%)	*	*	*	**	**	**

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 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*

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

** data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	79	19	2	126
Level 2 (intermediate)	80	20	0	10
Level 1 (foundation)	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Other sessions	83	17	0	6
Totals	80	19	1	142

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

