



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Luton Sixth Form College

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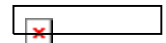
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**Basic information about the college**



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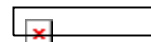
Name of college:	Luton Sixth Form College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Simon Kitchener
Address of college:	Bradgers Hill Road Luton LU2 7EW
Telephone number:	01582 877500
Fax number:	01582 877501
Chair of governors:	Viv Dunnington MBE
Unique reference number:	130600
Name of reporting inspector:	Lindsay Hebditch HMI
Dates of inspection:	29 September - 10 October 2003

**Part A: Summary**



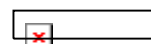
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### Information about the college



The college's mission is 'to be a centre of excellence for the academic and general vocational education of young people'.

### How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of education to be outstanding in four of the curriculum areas inspected, good in five and satisfactory in one. Standards of teaching and learning are very good. The main strengths and weaknesses that should be improved are listed below.

#### ***Key strengths***

- outstanding leadership and management
  
- highly effective promotion of a multicultural ethos
  
- overall, students achieving GCE grades higher than those predicted by their GCSE results
  
- high standards of teaching and learning
  
- very good specialist resources
  
- thorough monitoring of student progress
  
- excellent advice and guidance
  
- excellent attendance and punctuality

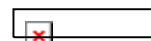
- safe and secure environment.

**What should be improved**

- key skills provision
- effectiveness of group tutorials
- sharing of teaching skills and best practice between subject teams
- pass rates and the proportion of high grades achieved in some GCE AS and A-level subjects.

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

**Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas**

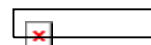


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Mathematics	<b>Outstanding.</b> Students on GCE AS and A-level courses achieve very high grades which are above those predicted from their previous academic performance. The pass rate for GCSE mathematics is high. Most teaching is enthusiastic and promotes very good learning. However, there is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons. Subject support for students is very good. Leadership is very strong.
Science	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates on most courses are satisfactory but are poor for human biology. Students on physics and human biology courses achieve low grades relative to their GCSE results. Retention rates and attendance are high for most subjects. Teaching of physical science subjects is effective but this good practice is not shared with

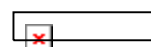
	other subjects. Students' work is regularly and accurately marked.
Business studies	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high on GCE A-level and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses. Pass rates are low on GCE AS economics and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) courses. Teaching is well planned and effective. Tutorials are good. There is insufficient sharing of good practice on the GNVQ intermediate course. There is a wide range of provision.
Information and communications technology	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are good on vocational courses. Most students progress to higher level courses or higher education (HE). Students make good progress in lessons. The teaching of practical skills is effective but in some lessons there are insufficient activities to sustain the interest of more able students. The arrangements to provide additional subject help for students are ineffective.
Health and social care	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are very good. The pass rate for GNVQ intermediate health and social care is excellent. Progression from the GNVQ intermediate to higher level courses is very good. Much of the teaching is interesting and motivates students. However, insufficient consideration is given to the vocational context of health and social care in lessons.
Art, design and media	<b>Outstanding.</b> Retention and pass rates are very good. With the exception of GCE A-level graphic design, students achieve high grades relative to their GCSE results. Teaching is imaginative and leads to high standards of work. Resources are outstanding. Leadership and curriculum management are excellent.
Performing arts	<b>Outstanding.</b> Pass rates are very good. Students make outstanding progress. Teaching is creative and supports the development of imaginative performance work. Curriculum leadership and management are strong. However, there are insufficient links with industry.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates on most courses are above those predicted from the students' previous academic performance. Retention rates are below the national average on several courses. Teaching and learning are good. Particular attention is given to differentiating learning tasks according to the ability of the students. The provision in geography is excellent.
Social sciences	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates for GCE A-level government and politics, sociology and GCSE sociology are good. Students in psychology do not achieve the results expected of them. There is much good teaching which takes account of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the students. There are insufficient strategies to meet the needs of students with different abilities in some lessons.
English and modern foreign languages	<b>Outstanding.</b> Pass rates are very high. Teaching is excellent and often inspirational. Students receive outstanding support. Assessment is rigorous. Curriculum management is strong. There are varied and exciting enrichment activities in English.

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



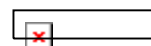
principal, senior management team and corporation have ensured that the college is peaceful, harmonious and conducive to effective learning. Challenging targets for improvement are set and usually met. The quality of teaching and learning, pass rates and students' work has improved since the last inspection. Curriculum management is very good. Outstanding equal opportunities practices form the basis of day-to-day college life and reflect the college's mission. Quality assurance is effective. The self-assessment report accurately describes the college's strengths and weaknesses, including its unsatisfactory arrangements for key skills. The college's management information system provides reliable data which are used effectively throughout the college. Governance is very good. The corporation has a strong commitment to the welfare of the college. Governors exercise their duty to monitor the college's academic and financial health assiduously. Financial management is strong and the deployment of resources is effective. The college has developed successful collaborative arrangements with other providers of education in Luton.

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



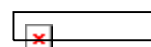
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. It has been successful in promoting racial understanding and in promoting friendship and tolerance between students of different backgrounds. Strategies and plans reflect the very high priority given to increasing participation and developing an inclusive college community. Some 63% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The college has an effective race equality policy and complies fully with its statutory requirements under the Race Relations Amendment Act. Students and staff are routinely consulted on its implementation. Diversity training is outstanding. Enrolments and students' achievements are closely monitored according to gender, ethnicity and disability. Thorough planning of courses and lessons by teachers promotes multicultural issues and increases mutual understanding among students from different ethnic groups. Many students enter the college with low levels of prior achievement and make very good progress. The college has assessed its accommodation against the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act criteria and developed an action plan with targets and dates for completion. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported.

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



Students joining the college receive excellent advice and guidance. Arrangements for providing information on careers and progression to HE are very good. Students' individual learning needs are accurately diagnosed and appropriate arrangements are made to meet them. Some 89% of students who receive additional learning support achieve their learning goals. Teachers provide much valuable informal support for students. Individual tutorials are used effectively to monitor the progress of students. However, group tutorials fail to maintain their interest.

### **Students' views of the college**



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

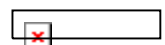
***What students like about the college***

- helpful and supportive teachers
  
- good teaching
  
- individual tutorials
  
- absence of bullying
  
- welcoming adult environment
  
- good range of courses
  
- use of the gymnasium.

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

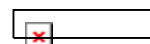
- key skills
  
- long gaps between some lessons
  
- lack of social areas
  
- cost of food in the refectory.

**Other information**



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

## Part B: The college as a whole



### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

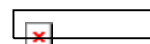
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	81	18	1
19+ and WBL* **	100	0	0
Learning 16-18	80	19	1
19+ and WBL* **	100	0	0

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

\* work-based learners

\*\* based on 10 observations

## Achievement and standards



### 16 to 18 year olds

1. Most students on level 3 programmes follow courses leading to GCE AS and A-level qualifications. Pass rates on these courses have improved over the period 2001 to 2003 and are now close to the national average for sixth form colleges. The college calculates how well students are achieving in their GCE AS and A-level studies compared with their previous GCSE results. Overall, students are achieving higher grades than predicted. The extent of this improvement has increased over the period 2001 to 2003. However, the number of high grades achieved (A or B) at both GCE AS and A-level is low. Students in art and design, business studies, English language, geography, government and politics, mathematics, music, performing arts and sociology have consistently achieved significantly higher grades than those predicted. These subjects account for approximately 33% of the college enrolments for GCE A-level courses. The average point score for



students' achievement at GCE AS and A level has risen from 14.4 in 2000/01 to 16.7 in 2002/03; below the England average of 17.8 but above the local average of 16.1. Pass rates on AVCE courses are well above the national average and improving. Some 93% of AVCE double award students achieved the qualification in 2002/03.

2. At level 2, the pass rate for GCSE subjects has improved to above the national average. The pass rate for those students achieving grades A\* to C in mathematics is well above the national average, at 52%, and outstanding in English, at 80%. The pass rate on GNVQ intermediate courses is high. The college offers GNVQ foundation courses in information and design technology, and business studies. The pass rate for information and design technology is high but the pass rate for business studies is low.

3. Retention rates on most courses for students aged 16 to 18 are high. Attendance has improved, from 84% observed at the last inspection, to 91%, well above the national average for sixth form college inspections of 85%. Progression to HE is consistently good. In 2002/03, 96% of students were successful in their applications and, overall, 82% of the level 3 cohort progressed to university.

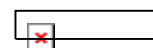
4. Students are highly motivated, learn quickly and make good progress from the time they first join the college. They produce good written work in health and social care, social sciences, and English and modern foreign languages. Written explanations are clear, well presented and demonstrate good levels of research and study skills. Oral skills are well developed. Students are able to sustain an argument and develop a point of view well. They answer questions confidently in lessons and enter into knowledgeable discussion with their teachers. In art, design and media and in performing arts, students' work is impressive and demonstrates high levels of imagination and flair. Although in most subjects the standard of practical work is good, science students lack confidence in their practical skills. Some of these students have low levels of prior achievement in GCSE mathematics, which hinders their progress.

5. Students from a range of courses have gained awards and recognition in a variety of external activities. These include success in the Times Educational Supplement 'Newspaper' competition and the UK Senior Maths Challenge. There are also many achievements in a wide range of sporting activities including swimming, trampolining and cross country.

### **Adult learners**

6. A small number of adult learners follow part-time courses in GCE AS and A-level subjects. Retention rates and pass rates on these courses are mostly satisfactory but on some courses students choose not to enter for examinations and success rates are low.

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



7. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 181 lessons. The overall quality of teaching was very good. Inspectors judged that teaching was good or better in 81% of the lessons observed, satisfactory in 18%, and less than satisfactory in 1%. Some 84% of the lessons taught by full-time teachers were good or better, compared with 73% of lessons taught by part-time teachers. Teaching was best in mathematics, visual arts and media, and English and modern foreign languages. In these curriculum areas, more than 90% of teaching was judged to be good or better. Some 71% of teaching in performing arts was very good or excellent. There was a clear correlation between good teaching and effective learning. In most lessons, students worked hard, participated fully in learning and were highly motivated by the opportunities they had to develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers are fully aware of the ethnic diversity of their students. They design learning materials and select books that reflect this diversity. The opinions of all students are valued in lessons, irrespective of their backgrounds or ethnicity.

8. Teachers convey genuine interest and enthusiasm in their subjects. Most lessons are well planned, have clear objectives and follow suitably detailed schemes of work. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to help students to learn, and manage learning effectively. They produce materials and learning aids of excellent quality, particularly for mathematics, science and business. Much teaching is imaginative. For example, in one excellent English lesson, the teacher devised a memory game which required students to count to ten in Anglo Saxon. Effective use is made of questions during and at the end of lessons to check that students understand their work. Teachers are skilful in using questioning techniques which enable students to form conclusions for themselves and encourage less confident students to persevere. Students learn how to be critical and analytical as well as gaining good subject knowledge. Teachers in mathematics, English and humanities regularly introduce the technical language of their subject and then re-use it effectively during review exercises at the end of the lesson. Teachers provide a good range of learning materials and learning aids.

9. There are many large classes. The average class size observed was 17, well above the average for sixth form colleges of 13. Teachers have adjusted their methods to take account of larger classes and focus successfully on what students will learn, rather than how they will teach. In the few instances where aspects of teaching were unsuccessful, teachers failed to pay enough attention to the wide range of learning needs of the students, particularly in group work activities, and insufficient demands were made of the more able students.

10. All full-time and part-time teachers are well qualified. Most have degrees or equivalent qualifications and specialist expertise. Teachers receive good support from the college to achieve teaching qualifications if they do not already possess them.

11. The overall standard of college accommodation is good. The main areas of the college are well maintained and clean, and there are attractive displays of students' work in classrooms and corridors. Considerable ingenuity has been shown in creating additional accommodation, such as curriculum resource bases, despite the age of some of the buildings. Some 95% of the site has satisfactory access and facilities for people with restricted mobility. Students make good use of the refectory, although they complain that at peak times it can be overcrowded. There is a lack of alternative social areas. Students gain access to the site and to each lesson by using the electronic registration system. This system, along with high levels of security staffing, helps to maintain a safe and secure working environment, and also provides valuable information on attendance, punctuality and room availability.

12. The college's learning resource centres contain a wide variety of up-to-date materials. Spaces in the centres have been carefully constructed to allow for silent working, group and individual computer work. The college's intranet is well designed and provides access to an extensive range of course materials and assignments. There are sufficient up-to-date computers for students, with one computer for approximately every four full-time equivalent students. There is good technical support for information technology (IT) equipment.

13. There are comprehensive procedures for assessing and monitoring the progress of students. Specific assessment workshops, designed to introduce students to assessment criteria, are organised in a number of curriculum areas. Students have a clear understanding of assessment objectives and the criteria to be used when assessing the quality of their written work. Homework is planned well, set frequently and marked carefully. Most teachers provide students with constructive comments to help them to improve their performance. The college's value added system provides a good framework for planning and monitoring students' progress. Target minimum grades, calculated from GCSE points scores, are set for all subjects. Formal progress reviews take place four times each year. The college regularly sends progress reports to parents. Consultation evenings occur twice each year and parents are encouraged to contact the college if they have any concerns regarding their son's or daughter's progress at other times.

14. The college has effectively implemented Curriculum 2000. Students are able to choose the combination of subjects they need from the range of GCE AS and A-level subjects offered. A wide range of additional activities are provided to enrich the curriculum. Examples include: millennium volunteers; Young Enterprise Award; safe driving; and a variety of sport and recreational activities.

Many subjects, for example, geography, chemistry, sociology and mathematics, also offer workshops to enable students to extend their understanding or provide help with work they find difficult. Enrichment activities are well attended. However, students on health and social care courses cannot attend the activities they wish because of timetable clashes. Opportunities for students who wish to take part in acts of collective worship are very good. The college has developed a prayer room and other facilities to enable students to fulfil their religious obligations. The college takes full account of religious and cultural festivals. There are several thriving religious clubs and societies that promote communication and understanding within the college's diverse community.

15. Provision for key skills is unsatisfactory. In performing arts and visual arts and media, key skills are successfully employed to enhance the development of students' understanding of communication and IT. However, on the majority of programmes, key skills are not integrated into the work in this way. Opportunities for the identification and assessment of key skills are often missed. There are poor assessment practices for key skills. Many students' portfolios are unsatisfactory because they do not reference key skills evidence clearly enough and students are therefore unable to gain credit for the work they have completed. There is little evidence of achievement in key skills as, at the time of the inspection, many students had not completed their portfolios. Students do not see the key skills element of their programmes as important. The college identified most of these issues in its self-assessment and has recently appointed a key skills manager, created a specialist resource area for communication skills and introduced new recording systems. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of these measures.

16. Prospective students receive very good information about college courses. The college has excellent links with local 11 to 16 schools, provides 'taster' courses, open days and master classes for school pupils and participates regularly in schools' careers events. Cultural diversity is celebrated in the college's literature. Effective interviews help to ensure that students make an appropriate choice of subjects. Students receive a good induction which includes an introduction to the college and its facilities, an assessment of their written communication skills and present level of subject knowledge, and an introduction to the essential skills they will need to be successful in their subjects. Appropriate procedures are in place to enable students to make changes to their subject choices during the first few weeks of term.

17. All full-time students complete an initial assessment during induction to their programme to identify whether they will require additional help with their studies. The support they receive is effective. Specialist support teachers work with individual students both in the classroom and in separate lessons. Sometimes the support teachers join subject teachers to teach whole classes. Some 89% of students who received individual support from specialist support teachers in 2002/03 successfully achieved their qualification. However, communication between subject teachers and specialist support teachers who operate away from the classroom is weak. Information from the study support sessions is not used to inform subsequent lesson plans by subject teachers, or in the assessment of students' progress.

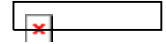
18. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive particularly good support. Their needs are carefully and sensitively assessed. Specialist equipment, materials and additional staffing are provided according to the needs of individual students.

19. College staff and advisers from the Connexions service provide excellent advice on careers and progression to HE. Students speak highly of the help they receive. Useful booklets on HE application are provided for parents. A community placement scheme enables students to have weekly work experience related to their career aspirations, for example, assisting teachers in primary schools. The range and effectiveness of personal support for students are very good. Students are able to obtain emotional and practical help through the confidential college counselling service. A multilingual community liaison officer acts as a link between families and the college. The student project worker provides inclusive support for both individual students and groups. Financial help is provided appropriately through the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme or a number of charitable trusts which are known to the college.

20. The college's tutorial procedures are clear and well documented. Each tutorial comprises a

group session which is followed by a series of individual meetings. Students prefer the individual tutorials. During these, tutors help students to review progress and check that their attendance meets the target they have been set. Many group tutorials are ineffective. Tutors do not organise activities that are compatible with group work and fail to maintain the interest of students.

## Leadership and management



21. Leadership and management across the college are outstanding. Strong leadership is provided by the principal, senior managers and the corporation, and contributes significantly to the continuing improvements in the quality of the students' experience at the college. Most students achieve higher GCE AS and A-level grades than those predicted for them from their GCSE entry grades. Pass rates have improved and are now close to the national average. Retention rates are high and attendance is excellent. Teaching is highly effective. Students appreciate and benefit from the happy, safe and harmonious environment which the college provides for them, regardless of their background.

22. Governors and senior managers provide a clear strategic direction for the college and ensure that it is meeting its mission. Strategic planning is effective. The strategic plan is a thorough document with clearly stated aims and objectives. Targets contained within the strategic plan and the annual development plan are realistic and challenging. The college met or exceeded most of the targets set in 2002/3. However, the recruitment target was not met. The consequent repayment of £750,000 of funding was well managed, and the college still achieved an operating surplus in the year. Staff are kept well informed about college policies and strategic and operational objectives, and the straightforward management structure facilitates effective communication throughout the college. The senior management team work well together.

23. Managers at all levels in the college attach a high priority to improving standards. Intervention by senior managers when standards are not being met is swift and in most cases effective. A performance monitoring group made up of the principal and vice-principals meets with course teams to examine any under-performance and action plans are written to identify the remedial action that is needed. The college has made a significant investment in staff development. This year, the staff development priorities have been to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to provide management training for curriculum managers. A well-trained team of internal observers conduct lesson observations and produce critical and accurate assessments. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Most curriculum managers are highly effective leaders. Course management is very good. However, the good practice demonstrated in some subjects in humanities and science is not shared with other subjects in the same curriculum area.

24. The college has a well-established quality assurance system that is underpinned by a sophisticated and effective self-assessment process. The college's judgements on the quality of provision broadly agreed with those of the inspectors. However, the college did not identify the difference in quality of the teaching of full-time and part-time teachers, or the significance of the weaknesses in group tutorials. Management information is generally accurate and accessible to those who need it. Data held centrally match data held by course leaders. The well-founded confidence that college managers have in the reliability of the information enables them to make accurate judgements about students' performance and set appropriate targets.

25. The college's equality strategy and equal opportunities policy and practices are outstanding. The policy reflects the college's overall mission and emphasises the need to value all individuals. In surveys of their views, students report high levels of satisfaction with the way they are treated. Appropriately detailed reports on the enrolment and academic performance of different groups of students are routinely produced and prompt action, such as the provision of additional language classes, is taken when it is needed. The GCE A-level pass rate of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani students all increased in 2002/03. Curriculum areas are required to identify how they have amended their provision to take into account cultural diversity. Helpful guidelines are produced: for example,

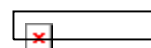
advice on how to ensure that materials used are appropriate to all the students in a group, a checklist on equality in the classroom for teachers, and guidance to teachers and students on lesson planning. Professional development activities on equality and diversity are innovative and successful. A diversity awareness programme led by students has been highly valued. These students have successfully been involved in raising awareness of diversity issues and the training of staff, governors, and local school and further education college teachers. Students and staff from different backgrounds and faiths mix well and build up trust, understanding and tolerance. There are effective arrangements in place to deal with appeals and complaints. The college responds promptly to the few formal complaints it receives.

26. The college has excellent relationships with local schools, which aids the smooth transition for students from school to college. Staff from the college help local schools by, for instance, giving advice on ICT and the introduction of Vocational General Certificate of Secondary Education (VGCSE) courses. The college is working with a neighbouring general further education college to ensure that the courses offered at the two colleges are complementary. Formal compacts with the two local universities have led to large numbers of students progressing from college to HE.

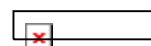
27. Governance is very good. Members of the corporation are drawn from a variety of backgrounds in the local community and know the college well. Induction for new members of the corporation is effective and highly valued by them. Their training needs are carefully considered and a variety of avenues are explored to ensure that governors are kept up to date. Most governors are linked to specific areas of college activity, for example, curriculum areas, marketing, personnel, finance and student services. They attend events in each of these areas and report back to their colleagues, providing them with a valuable insight into how the college's strategic priorities are being addressed.

28. Financial management is strong. The college enjoys a good financial position and is adjudged to be in category A for financial health by the LSC. Financial control procedures are clear and well understood. Budget holders receive regular reports to help them in the effective control of expenditure. The overall achievements of students, the large class sizes and effective financial controls ensure that the college provides good value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- well above the national average pass rate for GCSE mathematics
- very good GCE A-level achievement relative to students' prior attainment
- confident, enthusiastic and exciting teaching with effective learning

- effective subject support that helps students to learn
- very strong curriculum leadership and a good team ethos.

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient use of ILT in the teaching of mathematics.

### **Scope of provision**

29. The college offers a broad range of mathematics and numeracy courses from foundation to advanced levels. Recruitment to mathematics courses is high. There are currently 865 students; nearly all of them are full time and aged 16 to 18. Large numbers take GCE AS and A-level mathematics. Other options include GCE AS statistics and GCE AS and A-level further mathematics, and the entry certificate in adult numeracy. Some 500 students take GCSE mathematics each year. The small number of adult students follow GCE A-level and GCSE mathematics courses in the evening.

### **Achievement and standards**

30. Mathematics students achieve well. Pass rates for GCE AS and A-level mathematics are close to the national average. However, in most GCE AS and A-level options, students do much better than might be expected from their previous GCSE grades. In 2003, the pass rate for GCE AS further mathematics was 100%. The pass rate for GCSE mathematics has improved significantly during the years 2001 to 2003. In 2003, the pass rate of 52% was well above the national average of 39%. Of the 38 students who took the certificate in adult numeracy, 32 achieved full certification. Retention rates are very good on all courses. The college encourages participation in the national Mathematics Challenge competition. Results have been good. Seven students achieved certificates in 2001 and twelve in 2002, with one student recording a score which was in the top 0.5% nationally. More than 180 GCE A-level mathematics students have progressed to university in the last 2 years. The quality of students' work is very good. Most students display a good grasp of mathematical techniques relevant to the level of the course that they are following.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	364	366	428
		% retention	86	86	90
		% pass rate	27	35	52
GCE AS mathematics	3	No. of starts	190	173	156
		% retention	93	86	91
		% pass rate	66	82	71
GCE A-level mathematics *	3	No. of starts	164	109	131
		% retention	73	98	99

		% pass rate	77	90	**
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Source: ISR (2001, 2002), college (2003)

\* 2001 data relate to the former two-year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one-year course

\*\* data unreliable

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

31. The overall standard of teaching is very good. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic. Students are encouraged to think for themselves and work hard. Attendance at lessons is good. Lessons are well planned.

32. Each lesson begins with an initial test, revision or review questions, which provides a stimulating start and a chance to reinforce students' understanding of earlier work. Lessons feature significant amounts of discussion and debate which successfully develop students' understanding of mathematical concepts. In one outstanding statistics lesson, the two teachers introduced the topic of data analysis through a well-planned group activity in which students measured each others' arm spans and foot length. The activity immediately captured the interest of the students and, once they had aggregated the data they had collected, they were able to extend their understanding of measurement, hypothesis and correlation. Teachers produce excellent worksheets and encourage the use of graphical calculators in lessons. In one GCE A-level lesson, students used graphical calculators to test the way in which a mathematical series of terms could enable function values to be found and convergence investigated. Through this exercise, the teacher enthusiastically communicated the magic of mathematics to the students. However, other aspects of ILT are not used as effectively. An agreed policy committing the department to planning integration of ILT into teaching has led to some related professional development, but mathematics classrooms have one computer at most. Class use of networked computers is restricted to booking into available computer rooms and this option is only occasionally used. Many staff are not convinced that increasing the use of ILT in the classroom would benefit students' learning.

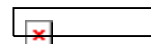
33. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. They produce excellent learning materials. Worksheets are carefully constructed to enhance students' understanding; practice questions and a GCE A-level bulletin board are available on the college's intranet. Homework is regularly set and marked. Teachers' constructive comments enable students to improve their work.

34. There is much effective subject support for students. Initial diagnostic testing and self diagnosis identifies the additional help and practice that students need. Mathematics teachers provide double staffing in most GCSE and numeracy classes for one lesson each week. This extra staffing is particularly helpful to students with poor language skills. Students make good use of the open access mathematics resource centre, which is staffed for part of each day, their additional mathematics enrichment sessions, and the informal support they get from their teachers outside of lessons and tutorials. Teachers are highly regarded by students for the timely and patient help they provide.

### **Leadership and management**

35. Very strong leadership and effective teamwork have underpinned the improvement in mathematics provision since the last inspection. Teachers share expertise and good practice through informal contact or through the well-managed course team leaders' meetings. Students' results are carefully monitored and analysed. Excellent schemes of work detail resources required and indicate suitable learning activities for lessons. Staff have undertaken a good range of professional development activities, many of which have been organised within the department, covering issues such as syllabus changes, coursework, teaching techniques and aspects of ILT. All staff were involved in the preparation of the well-written self-assessment report.

## Science



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

### **Strengths**

- high retention rates for most subjects
- good teaching of physical science subjects
- regularly set and rigorously marked work
- thorough self-assessment.

### **Weaknesses**

- poor pass rates for GCE AS and A-level human biology
- insufficient sharing of good practice between science subjects
- students on physics and human biology courses not achieving as well as predicted from their entry qualifications.

### **Scope of provision**

36. The college offers GCE AS and A-level science courses in biology, human biology, chemistry, physics and geology. There are currently some 640 students, nearly all of whom are full time, aged 16 to 18. A small number of adult students follow the GCE AS and A-level courses in human biology and chemistry that run in the evening. Many science students have only barely achieved the minimum entry requirement of five GCSEs at grades A\* to C.

### **Achievement and standards**

37. Pass rates, although improving, are at, or slightly below, national averages for most subjects. The pass rates for GCE AS and A-level human biology are well below the national average. Most students achieve the grades that are predicted for them, based on their previous academic performance. However, students in physics and human biology do not achieve the grades they



should. Retention rates are high for most subjects. Students are highly motivated and take their work seriously. They demonstrate a good use of technical language and an understanding of scientific terms. Their written work is at least at the standard expected for this stage of the course. Practical work in laboratories is carried out with due regard to health and safety. However, students' practical skills, for example, in analytical chemistry, are at an early stage of development. Weak number skills slow the progress of students in practical work. A high proportion of students progress to HE. In 2003, some 80% of science students progressed to degree courses in science, including medicine and paramedical subjects.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE AS biology	3	No. of starts	66	63	55
		% retention	86	89	91
		% pass rate	68	80	86
GCE AS physics	3	No. of starts	60	48	61
		% retention	87	100	95
		% pass rate	79	75	78
GCE A-level biology *	3	No. of starts	58	30	35
		% retention	81	97	100
		% pass rate	98	97	83
GCE A-level chemistry *	3	No. of starts	70	71	56
		% retention	81	97	98
		% pass rate	79	89	89
GCE A-level geology *	3	No. of starts	19	31	16
		% retention	57	75	100
		% pass rate	100	100	94
GCE A-level physics *	3	No. of starts	39	34	31
		% retention	74	97	100
		% pass rate	76	82	87

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one year course

***Quality of education and training***

38. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, and teaching of physical sciences is good. The best lessons are planned carefully, have clear learning outcomes and a good range of activities to hold the interest of students. In a successful GCE AS chemistry lesson on mass spectrometry, the teacher used group work, discussion and student presentations to develop the topic. A computer-generated exercise was then used to reinforce what students had learned before the class moved on to an appropriate practical activity based on mass spectrometry theory. Lessons in biology and human biology are not as well planned. In a GCE AS human biology lesson on plasma membranes, the teacher had organised a good range of activities including constructing a model of plasma membrane from a plastic compound. However, the introduction to the task was unclear and students could not visualise the structure they were modelling. The students became confused, and the effectiveness of subsequent activities was considerably reduced.

39. Learning materials in chemistry and physics are mostly well produced and fit to meet the purpose they are designed for. In biology, many of the handouts and past examination questions being used are more than ten years old. Teachers have received training in equality and diversity issues and make an effective contribution to maintaining the harmony of the college's multicultural community through their teaching. In practical lessons, groups are carefully selected to ensure a good mix of backgrounds, gender and ability.

40. Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities, including field trips and participation in national science competitions. 'Focus on pharmaceuticals' is a useful programme for students aspiring to medical and biomedical careers. There are well-established links with an international pharmaceutical company and the local hospital. Both organisations are used to provide work experience for science students.

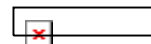
41. Assessment of students' work is systematic and rigorous. When teachers assess students' work they check that it is up to the standard required for students to achieve their target grades. Students who have not completed their homework on time complete a questionnaire to explain their reasons and agree a revised date for handing it in. Teachers make constructive comments on written work which help students to improve. Individual tutorials are used effectively to monitor progress and provide additional help to students. Extra mathematics lessons are available for students who need them.

42. Teachers possess teaching qualifications and are well qualified and suitably experienced in their specialist subjects. All have at least a first degree in their specialist subject and most have a higher qualification. Nearly all teachers possess a teaching qualification. Science technical staff are well-trained and experienced. They support practical work effectively. Laboratories contain a good range of resources. They are well maintained, although the fixed benches are a hindrance when the accommodation is used for other activities, such as tutorials. Use of the ICT facilities available varies. In chemistry, there is a good range of computer generated presentations. However, biology teachers are only just beginning to use ICT in the classroom.

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

43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The curriculum manager has only recently taken over responsibility for all science provision. At the time of the inspection, there were few systematic arrangements for teachers to identify and share good practice. Schemes of work are detailed. Students' attendance and punctuality are closely monitored and prompt action is taken if they fall below acceptable levels. Self-assessment is thorough and the current report is accurate. The college has identified that its provision in biology and human biology is less effective than that in other science subjects. Teachers are deployed effectively. Workloads are analysed carefully to ensure that there is parity between different subjects.

### **Business studies**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good achievements on AVCE and GCE A-level courses
  
- effective and thorough planning of teaching and learning

- wide range of provision and good progression
- effective help for students in the classroom and through tutorial programmes.

### **Weaknesses**

- poor achievement on GCE AS economics and GNVQ courses
- insufficient sharing of good practice on the GNVQ intermediate business course.

### **Scope of provision**

44. The college offers a wide range of courses in business for students aged 16 to 18. Courses are provided from foundation to advanced level and include: GNVQ foundation and intermediate; AVCE business, single and double awards; national certificate in e-business; and GCE AS and A-level business, accounting and economics. There are currently 822 students following business courses, of which 782 are aged 16 to 18. The small number of adult students follow GCE AS and A-level business studies courses in the evening.

### **Achievement and standards**

45. Pass rates on most courses are at or above the national average. Pass rates for GCE A levels are good, and the number of high grades achieved is above the national average. Achievements on AVCE courses are very good. Students on these programmes are exceeding expectations based on their prior achievements and entry qualifications. However, on GNVQ foundation and intermediate and GCE AS economics courses, pass rates are below the national average. On most courses, retention rates and attendance are good. Progression to more advanced courses and to HE is good. In 2003, some 82% of the GNVQ foundation students progressed to intermediate courses and 51% of GNVQ intermediate students progressed to advanced level. Some 47% of the students who completed the intermediate course in 2001 entered HE in 2003.

46. The standard of students' work in lessons and in their written assignments is good. Students have a good understanding of business terminology and key concepts, and can apply these concepts effectively to case studies and business situations. Their analytical and evaluative skills are well developed. Students cope well with number work and graphical presentation. For example, GNVQ intermediate business students are able to draw up a personal budget, including tax calculations; GCE AS accounting students can cope with double entry book-keeping and are able to produce a trial balance. In most lessons, students make good progress. They listen attentively, apply themselves well to tasks set and respond well to the questions directed to them.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	55	49	57

business		% retention	89	84	88
		% pass rate	92	78	54
GCE AS accounting	3	No. of starts	95	107	124
		% retention	87	79	85
		% pass rate	80	64	59
GCE AS business	3	No. of starts	200	207	146
		% retention	92	87	84
		% pass rate	67	80	81
AVCE business (double award)	3	No. of starts	**	46	48
		% retention	**	78	73
		% pass rate	**	86	91
GCE A-level business *	3	No. of starts	190	84	121
		% retention	74	100	99
		% pass rate	79	96	98
GCE A-level economics *	3	No. of starts	37	36	30
		% retention	78	100	100
		% pass rate	90	94	93

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two-year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one-year course

\*\* course not running

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

47. Teaching was good or better in most lessons. Lessons are well planned and structured and take good account of students' prior learning. In one very good GCE A-level business lesson on ratio analysis, the teacher had identified that many of the class had previously studied GCE AS accounting. The teacher prepared activities to extend their knowledge and understanding while concentrating on helping the students who had not studied the topic before. By the end of the lesson, all of the students could demonstrate a good understanding of the topic. Much of the teaching is imaginative. Teachers use relevant case studies to introduce up-to-date topics from the business world. In one GCE AS business lesson the teacher used current business newspaper headlines at the beginning of the lesson to stimulate students' interest. In the lessons which contain aspects of teaching that are less effective, students are not given opportunities to discuss what they are learning and teachers do not recognise the different levels of understanding in the group. Some very good materials are used to promote learning, particularly for GCE AS and A-level lessons. Materials are chosen to reflect the multicultural origins of the students and their wide range of ability.

48. Students speak highly of the guidance and support they receive from their teachers. Learning support teachers provide valuable help to students on foundation and intermediate courses. This additional staffing is particularly effective in the management of group work and helping to maintain a good working atmosphere. Students can also attend the extra activities provided through the enrichment programme. Tutorials are well managed and are used effectively to monitor students' progress towards their target grades. Work is set regularly, marked accurately and returned quickly, usually with some helpful comments from the teacher to help students to improve their performance. However, some of the written feedback is brief and of limited value.

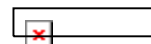
49. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Most are teacher trained and many have substantial industrial and commercial experience. However, there is no formal process in place for updating

industrial experience. Classrooms are clean and bright. Most rooms are equipped with a fixed television and video and some also have data projectors and interactive whiteboards. Although ILT facilities are good, teachers currently make insufficient use of them. Students' access to IT facilities is good; computers are available in some of the non-specialist IT rooms.

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

50. Leadership and management are good. Regular course team meetings focus on raising standards. Quality assurance arrangements are generally good. All staff participate in the self-assessment process. Each course team completes a primary report which feeds into the overall report for the department. Action plans to remedy the identified weaknesses are thorough. The lesson observation scheme is rigorous. Most teachers also participate in the optional peer observation programme. There is good sharing of ideas and resources for GCE AS and A-level subjects, but not on the GNVQ intermediate course. Two different groups were observed covering the same topic and using different learning materials. The quality of one of the lessons was much higher than the other.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high success rates on vocational courses
  
- very good progress made by students with poor prior achievements
  
- good progression to higher level courses
  
- good teaching of practical skills.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient subject support on GCE AS computing and GCE AS ICT courses.

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

51. The college provides a good range of vocational courses including foundation and intermediate level GNVQs in ICT and AVCE single and double awards. GCE AS and A-level courses are offered in computing and ICT. There are currently 604 students aged 16 to 18 following ICT courses.

Enrolments on the AVCE course have doubled in the last three years. A small but increasing number of older students follow short courses including European computer driving licence (ECDL) and computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) in the evening.

### **Achievement and standards**

52. Pass rates are very good on vocational courses. In 2003, 94% of students on vocational courses were successful, many of them achieving high grades. Pass rates on most GCE AS and A-level subjects are below the national average. However, many of the students possess low levels of prior attainment and achieve much higher grades than their GCSE results suggest. Retention rates and attendance are good. Students are attentive and highly motivated. They make good progress in lessons and learn new skills quickly, particularly when they first begin their courses. Students are quick to learn the characteristics of new software packages and use technical language confidently. Written work and assignments are generally good and demonstrate the correct use of computer screen printouts and diagrams. Most students progress to higher level courses. In 2003, 84% of foundation level students progressed to the intermediate level course and 94% of those on the intermediate level course progressed to an advanced level course. Over two-thirds of the students studying for the AVCE double award progressed to HE. There are several examples of students progressing from foundation level right through to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	25	26	26
		% retention	84	88	96
		% pass rate	95	96	96
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	90	94	81
		% retention	92	94	93
		% pass rate	88	99	100
AVCE ICT (double award)	3	No. of starts	66	55	102
		% retention	76	65	78
		% pass rate	94	86	94
GCE AS IT and ICT	3	No. of starts	199	168	112
		% retention	86	84	90
		% pass rate	72	67	71
GCE AS computing	3	No. of starts	101	59	65
		% retention	90	83	92
		% pass rate	79	71	73
GCE A-level ICT *	3	No. of starts	**	87	62
		% retention	**	100	97
		% pass rate	**	85	93
GCE A-level computing *	3	No. of starts	91	47	26
		% retention	71	96	96
		% pass rate	74	71	96

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two-year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one-year course  
\*\* course not running

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

53. Most teaching is good. Schemes of work are comprehensive. The best lessons are well planned, make good use of resources such as digital projectors and provide a range of activities to capture and maintain students' interest. In a very good lesson on visual basic arrays for second year AVCE students, the teacher used exposition, questioning, group work and students' demonstrations to develop learning. The teacher added relevance to the topic by relating it to everyday problems encountered in programming. By the end of the lesson the students had made very good progress towards writing a simple visual basic program. Where lessons are less successful, teachers provide encouragement and give good technical advice but overlook ways in which learning could be made more effective for students of different abilities. In these lessons, more able students are not provided with work that is sufficiently demanding to develop their potential. In a GCE AS IT lesson which covered the naming of cells and the use of look-up tables in spreadsheets, the teacher relied too heavily on group work activities which did not extend the more able students. Although the general level of progress was satisfactory, the more able students were not provided with additional exercises until the end of the lesson.

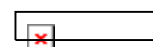
54. Assessment is fair and reliable. Students' work is regularly marked and teachers give detailed feedback on the quality of the work and how it could be improved. Students and parents are kept well informed of progress. Students are provided with appropriate pre-entry advice. `Taster' days are offered for Year 11 pupils from local schools. Initial assessment is used successfully to identify students who need additional help, but the support that is provided is unsatisfactory. Extra lessons are arranged for GCE AS students but attendance is poor. Information on students who are receiving additional support is not analysed or used to inform teachers' lesson planning. Individual tutorials are well organised and valued by students. In these, students' progress and attendance are carefully monitored and appropriate remedial actions agreed. Students do not see the value of group tutorials.

55. Most teachers are well qualified and experienced. Specialist accommodation and resources are generally good. Rooms are well decorated and bright, but can become stuffy and uncomfortable if class sizes are large. There are two well-resourced private study areas. The library is well stocked with reference materials and periodicals. Computers are up-to-date and there is a wide range of industry-standard software. Students are able to store their work on the college network and use e-mail to communicate with their tutors. The college intranet is under-used as a teaching resource.

### **Leadership and management**

56. Leadership and management are good. The regular curriculum area meetings are managed effectively and demonstrate a clear focus on students. Managers use management information to identify trends and targets for both individual students and courses. Self-assessment is rigorous and involves all staff. The college identified most of the strengths and weaknesses in its ICT provision. Senior managers observe lessons and provide constructive feedback to teachers. Students' views of the quality of teaching are sought and acted upon. For example, in response to a request from students, more small-group work has been introduced into some GCE AS lessons.

### **Health and social care**



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

### **Strengths**

- excellent pass rate for GNVQ intermediate health and social care
  
- high retention and pass rates on the AVCE (double award) course
  
- very good progression from GNVQ intermediate health and social care
  
- a lot of interesting teaching which motivates students.

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient account taken of the wide range of abilities in some classes
  
- lack of vocational relevance in the teaching of health and social care courses.

**Scope of provision**

57. The college offers a good range of full-time health and social care courses at foundation to advanced level for students aged 16 to 18. There are currently 16 students on the GNVQ foundation health and social care course and 47 students on the GNVQ intermediate course. Some 31 students are enrolled on the Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) AS course and 9 on the VCE A2 course, as well as 58 undertaking the AVCE course leading to a double award. A vocational GCSE is offered in conjunction with local schools.

**Achievement and standards**

58. Pass rates are excellent on the GNVQ intermediate and AVCE (double award) health and social care courses. Retention rates are mostly good and are very good on the AVCE course. Students make good progress in relation to their prior achievement. They produce very good written work. Completed assignments show that students take pride in their work. They demonstrate good levels of word processing skills and abundant evidence of individual research. Standards of work in the classroom are also good. AVCE students gave an impressive presentation based on their research into genetic disorders such as cystic fibrosis, Turner's syndrome and thalassemia. They handled the material confidently and imparted a good level of information to the rest of the class. Students on the GNVQ intermediate course were able to define technical terms, such as statutory services, with well-chosen examples and demonstrated a high level of understanding. There is very good progression from the GNVQ intermediate course to more advanced courses including the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma course, cadet nursing and AVCE. Progression for AVCE students is good, with all students entering HE or employment in the caring services in 2003.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
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GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	19	20	26
		% retention	89	60	85
		% pass rate	100	100	96
GNVQ advanced health and social care / AVCE health and social care (double award) *	3	No. of starts	23	22	25
		% retention	65	95	96
		% pass rate	93	100	92

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

\* 2001 data relate to the AVCE course

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

59. There is much interesting teaching which motivates students. Most lessons are well planned within a well-structured scheme of work. Lessons that include practical activities are particularly effective. A group of AVCE students learnt how to use medical measuring equipment including spirometers, sphygmomanometers and thermometers by taking readings on each other. In a good role play exercise based on interviews in a health care setting, VCE AS students gave very careful thought to the verbal and non-verbal skills required, such as eye contact and the use of open and closed questioning. However, teachers do not always make their lessons relevant to the vocational context of health and social care. Realistic practical examples are not always linked effectively with theory. In some lessons, teachers do not ensure that the needs of all of the students are met. More able students do not receive sufficiently demanding tasks and their interest wanes.

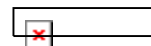
60. Marking is thorough and students receive detailed feedback on their work. There is good initial guidance for students. Initial diagnosis is used to identify additional support needs. However, at the time of the inspection, the results had not been analysed sufficiently to enable teachers to take account of individual needs in their lesson planning. There is a strong tutorial system with a well-structured programme of group and individual tutorials. Target setting and the monitoring of progress are effective. Students value the support they receive from their tutors. Representatives from care organisations and current care practitioners frequently attend the college to provide students with up-to-date knowledge of the caring services and provide helpful advice on career opportunities. There are some good links with local partnerships, such as the Safer Luton Partnership, but the college has yet to establish links with health and social care and early years organisations. Work experience is offered to all students. However, it falls at the end of the year for the AVCE first-year students. This restricts the integration of the experience into the course. There is little uptake of the enrichment programme.

61. Some 50% of teachers possess teaching qualifications, with the rest studying for a qualification. Teachers have a good range of social care qualifications including social work, care manager and experience in social care settings. Classrooms are light and bright but frequently too small for the size of the class. This restricts the opportunities for group work. Overhead projection is unsatisfactory and some whiteboards are poorly sited. There are some good displays of students' work. A particularly good example incorporated a photographic record of environmental hazards in the local area.

### **Leadership and management**

62. Leadership and management are very good. Staff work with commitment and enthusiasm and display excellent teamwork. New staff are well supported, not only by their course team but also through a well-managed induction process and subsequent mentoring. Changes in staffing have been well managed.

## Art, design and media



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

### **Strengths**

- good achievements and value added on most courses
  
- imaginative teaching leading to high standards of work
  
- excellent resources that enhance teaching and learning
  
- very effective support for students
  
- excellent leadership and management.

### **Weaknesses**

- GCE A-level graphic design students achieve lower grades than those predicted from their GCSE results.

### **Scope of provision**

63. The college offers a wide range of subjects, mainly GCE AS and A level, for students aged 16 to 18. These include GCE AS and A-level art and design, graphic design, media studies and textiles and GCE AS communications and photography. A GNVQ intermediate course in art and design is offered, but does not run every year. A small number of adult students follow GCE AS photography in the evening. There are currently 478 full-time students and 15 part-time students.

### **Achievement and standards**

64. Pass rates and retention rates are excellent on nearly all courses. Although high-grade pass rates are below the national average, students in most GCE AS and A-level subjects achieve grades which are above those predicted from their GCSE results. The one exception is GCE A-level graphic design, where students did not do as well as expected in 2003. Attendance and punctuality are generally good. Large numbers of students progress to university, including a number whose first course was at intermediate level.

65. Students produce high standards of theory and practical work. At the time of the inspection, most

students had only recently started their course but much of their work in progress was very good. Students have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the design process and a high level of practical skill. They have a good understanding of the formal elements of two-dimensional work and are fully conversant with the language and terminology used in design. They are confident, discuss their work openly and show great pride in the displays of their work which are prominently displayed throughout the college.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in art, design and media, 2001 to 2003***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCE AS fine arts	3	No. of starts	129	141	123
		% retention	82	89	89
		% pass rate	91	91	98
GCE AS graphic design	3	No. of starts	**	41	30
		% retention	**	79	94
		% pass rate	**	88	100
GCE AS photography	3	No. of starts	42	19	34
		% retention	76	89	76
		% pass rate	63	100	96
GCE AS media studies	3	No. of starts	121	123	94
		% retention	76	90	80
		% pass rate	95	93	93
GCE A-level art and design *	3	No. of starts	63	54	36
		% retention	70	69	97
		% pass rate	74	95	100
GCE A-level graphic design *	3	No. of starts	23	28	***
		% retention	65	64	***
		% pass rate	73	93	***
GCE A-level media studies *	3	No. of starts	**	57	78
		% retention	**	95	97
		% pass rate	**	98	100

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one year course

\*\* course not running

\*\*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

66. Most teaching is imaginative and leads to high standards of work. Teachers make effective use of their skills as artists and designers and ensure that the work is suitably demanding. Schemes of work are detailed and lesson planning is thorough. Teachers devise imaginative and often demanding assignments which provide students with good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. They generally include interesting exercises to test students' retained knowledge and observational skills. In a successful lesson for the GNVQ intermediate group, the teacher devised a project that integrated contextual studies and creative painting. Students had to explain why they

liked the work of contemporary artists. They then had to interpret their preferred artistic style for themselves, experimenting with pigment and other media to realise their ideas. Students were stimulated by the activity and produced a variety of colourful images. Teachers make effective use of ICT in lessons. In a successful GCE AS photography lesson, the teacher quickly realised that students had not remembered the elements of the visual language, put aside the lesson plan, and retrieved an earlier powerpoint presentation on the topic. After a short period of revision, the students were able to complete the learning objectives of the lesson successfully.

67. Teachers help students to develop effective research and study skills. In a successful introductory lesson for the GCE A-level media studies critical research module, the teacher provided a film review which students examined for examples of the different sources of evidence used by the author. The teacher then encouraged students to relate what they had found to their own research, pointing out how the overuse of information gathered from single sources, such as the Internet, could adversely effect the quality of their work. The development of research and study skills is well supported by the effective teaching of key skills, which students are then able to apply as their studies progress.

68. Assignments and homework are well marked and students receive constructive feedback on their progress and what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers encourage students by offering appropriate praise. Extra guidance is given to students to clarify how individual elements of an assignment brief are to be completed. External verifiers' reports confirm the rigour of assessment.

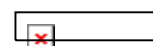
69. Students receive effective support from their teachers. Pre-course information is informative and interesting. Taster days help students find out more about the different subjects, and interviews ensure that students are placed on the correct course. Students speak highly of the value of enrolment and induction and feel well prepared to make a confident start on their course. Tutorials are good. Tutors monitor students' progress effectively against their learning goals and target grades, and intervene when additional support is required. GCE A-level students receive excellent support with their university applications. Teachers have a good knowledge of HE and help students make appropriate choices.

70. All teachers are well qualified in relevant subjects and possess teaching qualifications. Technical support is effective. Accommodation and specialist resources are outstanding. The art, design and media area has recently been refurbished and re-equipped to provide a stimulating environment in which to work. Specialist studios, such as the excellent video studio, and workshops are well resourced. Computer rooms provide up-to-date software, interactive whiteboards and access to the internet.

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

71. Leadership and management are excellent. The department has a distinctive ethos in which the creativity of different cultures is celebrated. The clear management structure and regular team meetings ensure that communication between managers and teachers is effective and that high standards are maintained. Teamwork is strong. Good practice is shared through discussion, shared teaching and the moderation of assessment. New teachers receive effective induction and mentoring.

### **Performing Arts**



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

### ***Strengths***

- outstanding or very good pass rates on all courses
  
- outstanding progress made by students on GCE A-level performing arts and GCE AS drama course
  
- creative teaching that effectively links theory and practical work
  
- innovative and imaginative performance work
  
- strong curriculum leadership.

### ***Weaknesses***

- too few industry links.

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

72. The college offers a wide range of performing arts courses from levels 2 to 4. These include: GNVQ intermediate in performing arts and entertainment; national diploma in performing arts; GCE AS and A-level drama and theatre studies, music and music technology; GCE AS dance and performance studies; and GCE A-level performing arts. There are no courses available at level 1. The varied enrichment programme includes a jazz band, an orchestra, a street dance and a Christmas show. There are currently some 203 full-time students aged 16 to 18 years. The few older students are mostly following music courses.

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

73. Pass rates are outstanding or very good on all courses. During the years 2001 to 2003, the number of high grades achieved for GCE A-level performance studies and GCE AS performing arts and drama was well above the national average. Students achieve higher grades than those predicted from their GCSE results, especially on drama and theatre studies courses. Retention rates are at, or slightly above, the national average in most subjects, but have been below the national average on GCE AS performance studies for the past two years. Progression to more advanced courses is good. In 2003, 83% of GNVQ intermediate performing arts students progressed to the national diploma in performing arts. Some 70% of students taking performing arts courses progressed to HE.

74. Students display outstanding commitment to their work. Performance work is imaginative and of a high standard. In performing arts, students achieve controlled and articulate physical and vocal characterisations. For example, in a GNVQ intermediate drama lesson, students' work on spatial awareness demonstrated outstanding imagination, humour and focus. Students are able to articulate their ideas and understanding of the subject well.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GNVQ intermediate performing arts and entertainment	2	No. of starts	16	16	18
		% retention	88	75	89
		% pass rate	86	92	100
National diplomas in performing arts *	3	No. of starts	26	28	***
		% retention	77	86	***
		% pass rate	100	100	***
GCE AS performing arts (2001) and performance studies (2002, 2003)	3	No. of starts	18	34	28
		% retention	89	74	86
		% pass rate	100	100	96
GCE A-level theatre and dramatic arts **	3	No. of starts	***	16	23
		% retention	***	94	96
		% pass rate	***	100	100

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

*\* course changed to national diploma in drama in 2002 and 2003*

*\*\* course changed to GCE A-level drama/theatre studies in 2002 and 2003*

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

***Quality of education and training***

75. Teaching is very good. Schemes of work are comprehensive and lesson plans demonstrate how the needs of all students in the class will be addressed. Teachers use a wide range of teaching styles and actively encourage students to develop personal responses in practical work. Group work is effective. Students work together with self-discipline and focus. In a drama and theatre studies lesson, students helped each other through a demanding rehearsal of a choral piece from Oedipus. They showed very good practical understanding of recently learned techniques like pace and tone. Teachers effectively link theory and practice. In one dance lesson, students were asked to act out the significant moments in an American musical. This developed their perceptions of the piece in preparation for a written assignment. There are insufficient links with industry. Students' appreciation of the fast-changing pace of the performing arts industry is not sufficiently informed by contact with the industry through visiting dance companies, theatre companies, music business personnel or professional audition panels.

76. Teachers mark work promptly and provide students with constructive advice on how it could be improved. There is a well-documented internal verification system. However, national assignment briefs do not give start, deadline or feedback dates, and links between assessment criteria and grading are weak.

77. Students receive good pre-entry advice, guidance, and induction. There is early diagnosis of additional learning needs and the support provided is good. It includes a 'study club' two evenings a week, revision sessions in specific subjects within the enrichment programme and individual help. Good working relationships between staff and students result in much informal help. Tutorials are effective.

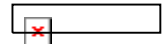
78. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Specialist accommodation is very good. There is a large, fully equipped theatre with sprung floor and well-equipped dance and drama studios. The music technology suite provides a good stock of computers with appropriate specialist software. There is also a sound recording studio, three music practice rooms and changing rooms with

showers. Technical support is good. IT access for students is very good. There is a pleasing display of students' composition work in the main music teaching room. However, some practical spaces are used inappropriately for theory lessons.

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

79. Leadership and management are very good. There is strong curriculum leadership with a clear focus on improving the standard of teaching and learning. Staff morale is high. Course teams are well organised and work closely together to promote high levels of achievement. Self-assessment is rigorous. Sharing of good practice, particularly through the lesson observation scheme, is encouraged. Induction of new teachers is effective. There is a strong commitment to equality and diversity in the department. Course content is carefully researched for its appropriateness and consideration is given to the varied backgrounds of students. Issues such as prejudice, injustice and oppression are explored and dealt with sensitively through lessons, tutorials and enrichment activities.

### **Humanities**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on most courses
  
- well-planned, knowledgeable and engaging teaching
  
- effective differentiation relating to ability and language in religious studies and philosophy
  
- excellent provision in geography.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- retention rates below the national average on several courses in the three years to 2003
  
- students on the GCE A-level history course not achieving as well as predicted from their GCSE results.

### **Scope of provision**

80. The provision covers GCE AS and A-level courses in history, geography, religious studies and philosophy. There is a part-time evening course in history, but all other courses cater predominantly for full-time students aged 16 to 18. There are currently some 380 students enrolled on humanities subjects. GCE AS religious studies has proved increasingly attractive, with 105 students taking the examination in 2003; the course is particularly popular with female students from minority ethnic groups.

### **Achievement and standards**

81. There are good pass rates on most courses and outstanding pass rates for geography. Very good results have been achieved for GCE AS and A-level religious studies. The philosophy courses introduced in 2001 had poor examination results for two years but improved to above the national average in 2003. In the same year, the proportion of high grades achieved in all GCE A-level subjects was good and was excellent in geography. Students do better than the results predicted from their GCSE results in most subjects. However, GCE A-level history students do not sustain the improvement they make in their first year and are not achieving as well as expected from their GCSE results. Retention rates are generally below the national average. Attendance and punctuality are good.

82. The standard of students' work is good. They generally organise their work well. Written work is appropriate to the level of the course. Students display good critical skills, particularly in relation to the analysis of texts. In most lessons, students work well both individually and in groups, and make thoughtful contributions to class discussion.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCE AS geography	3	No. of starts	57	29	30
		% retention	86	90	83
		% pass rate	86	81	100
GCE AS history	3	No. of starts	93	78	55
		% retention	95	90	97
		% pass rate	83	89	93
GCE AS philosophy	3	No. of starts	45	41	36
		% retention	93	90	88
		% pass rate	43	68	83
GCE AS religious studies	3	No. of starts	46	62	105
		% retention	100	85	95
		% pass rate	96	92	91
GCE A-level geography *	3	No. of starts	26	29	15
		% retention	77	100	93
		% pass rate	100	97	100
GCE A-level history *	3	No. of starts	64	53	52
		% retention	77	96	98
		% pass rate	78	94	94



GCE A-level philosophy *	3	No. of starts	**	23	17
		% retention	**	91	77
		% pass rate	**	86	100
GCE A-level religious studies *	3	No. of starts	24	37	27
		% retention	88	95	93
		% pass rate	100	97	93

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one year course

\*\* course not running

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

83. Most teaching is good. There are detailed schemes of work. Lessons are well planned. Most lessons begin with a brief recap of earlier work and the quality of recall shows that students are retaining what they have learnt. Lessons employ a variety of appropriate teaching strategies and resources that sustain students' interest. Teachers use questions skilfully. In a very effective lesson on civil rights in America, 1945-68, the Brown Judgement was explored through questioning. This clarified, reinforced and consolidated the work. All students had the opportunity to respond and were able to make the necessary social, political and economic links.

84. Group work is often employed effectively. In a successful religious studies lesson, Mohammed's journey to Messina was considered in groups. Each group included at least one Arabic speaking student who helped the others with pronunciation and translation. In religious studies and philosophy, students are placed in groups according to ability. This enables the additional support teacher to help with the development of students' language and study skills more effectively and gives the subject teacher a good opportunity to engage the more able students in challenging conceptual work. In a minority of lessons, group work is not used well. Too much time is allocated to the activity for it to be useful. There is particularly effective use made of ILT in geography lessons. In one example, students looking at rural planning in the Imilil area of Morocco were divided into three groups, each group looking at a different question. Their results were presented to the class by the use of laptops. A similar format was used in another lesson where students working in groups developed skills for interpreting different kinds of weather data. They used this information to account for the occurrence of a flood at a specific time, date and location. The findings were made available to all the students before the end of the lesson.

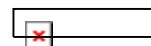
85. Many students come from homes where English is not the first language. Particular care is taken in the first year to develop language skills and to teach the necessary specialist vocabulary. Students are able to evaluate and express themselves clearly. They develop the confidence to contribute their views in lessons effectively. Even in first-year lessons early in the academic year, there is a good degree of student participation. There is an appropriate but not excessive focus on the needs of the examinations. However, common procedures on the marking of work are not applied with uniform thoroughness.

86. Resources are generally good. Teachers are well qualified, up to date in their subjects and fully informed regarding course specifications. Classrooms are large and bright but, where there are large classes, some rooms become hot and stuffy and too cramped to allow flexible use of the teaching area. The resource bank for geography is excellent. Access to ICT facilities is good. Textbooks are issued when needed and there are sufficient stocks of relevant texts, videos and periodicals in the library. Where video recordings are used, only the strictly relevant extracts are shown and viewing is linked to relevant questionnaires.

### **Leadership and management**

87. Leadership and management are good. There is an effective balance between the need for common departmental procedures and the academic autonomy of the curriculum teams. Communication is good. Department meetings are held regularly. There is a strong emphasis on improving teaching, learning and achievement. There is a well-embedded culture of self-assessment, which begins with a rigorous self-review at subject level. Self-assessment outcomes are also informed by the views of students. The college has identified the variation in the quality of provision between subjects and recognised the outstanding provision in geography.

## Social sciences



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

### **Strengths**

- good pass rates on GCE A-level government and politics and sociology courses, and on the GCSE sociology course
  
- imaginative and effective teaching of sociology
  
- rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress
  
- good resources which reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of students
  
- effective support and guidance.

### **Weaknesses**

- underachievement on GCE A-level and GCSE psychology course
  
- underdeveloped strategies to meet the needs of all students in some lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

88. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses in psychology, sociology, government and politics, and law. GCSE courses are also offered in psychology and sociology. The majority of students are full time and aged 16 to 18. There is part-time evening provision for adults in GCE AS

and A-level law, psychology and sociology. There are 857 enrolments on full-time courses: 377 in psychology, 177 in sociology, 78 in government and politics, and 225 in law. There are 69 part-time enrolments.

### **Achievement and standards**

89. Pass rates for GCE A-level government and politics and for GCE A-level and GCSE sociology are above the national average. The percentage of students achieving high grades for GCE A-level government and politics is well above average. Students achieve higher grades than would be predicted based on their GCSE results for GCE A-level sociology and for GCE AS and A-level government and politics. Law students achieve the grades predicted for them based on their entry grades. However, a significant number of GCE A-level psychology students underachieved in 2003. Pass rates for GCE AS law, psychology and sociology are below national averages. Only 8% of GCSE psychology students achieved grades A to C. Retention rates are generally above or close to national averages. Attendance is good.

90. Standards achieved in lessons, in students' files and in marked work are appropriate to advanced level study. GCE AS students are acquiring a sound knowledge base. For example, students of law demonstrated a good understanding of the British parliamentary system. Sociology and psychology students understand and apply a variety of basic research techniques. GCE A-level students have a good depth of knowledge and understanding. They apply the complex techniques of research and analysis effectively. For example, psychology students successfully carried out an experiment on visual perception. Students of government and politics showed a particularly good understanding of the processes involved in electing the president of the United States of America. Many students produce a good standard of written and oral work.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCSE sociology	2	No. of starts	16	18	17
		% retention	75	61	88
		% pass rate	92	45	73
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	105	147	141
		% retention	94	80	89
		% pass rate	77	81	75
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	210	294	266
		% retention	86	85	84
		% pass rate	65	75	81
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	49	38	32
		% retention	78	97	97
		% pass rate	82	97	100
GCE A-level psychology *	3	No. of starts	117	92	134
		% retention	74	97	97
		% pass rate	86	96	93
GCE A-level sociology *	3	No. of starts	74	64	42
		% retention	66	95	95
		% pass rate	86	95	98

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

*\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one year course*

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

91. Most teaching is good or better. Teachers have an enthusiasm for their subjects, which they share with their students through interesting and stimulating activities. Lessons are carefully planned and form part of detailed schemes of work. In the best lessons, teachers encourage students to think for themselves. In a GCE A-level law lesson, students formed judgements based on authentic case law and compared their judgements with the actual outcome. Teachers create opportunities to develop higher level thinking skills and train students in the conventions of academic research. Students of sociology skilfully analysed cultural aspects of secularisation, drawing on their own cultural experiences. Teaching in sociology lessons is imaginative and stimulating. A variety of interesting activities involve the students fully in their learning. In one lesson, projected images of high-profile celebrities from the contrasting worlds of popular culture, politics and business provoked lively discussion.

92. In the less successful lessons, teachers spend too much time presenting information without checking students' understanding, or fail to monitor adequately written tasks set. There is insufficient account taken of the wide range of ability in classes. Some students have difficulty keeping up with the pace of lessons. Others have difficulty understanding the language in learning materials.

93. Assessment is rigorous. Work is marked carefully and regularly using clear assessment criteria. Students receive guidance on how to improve and appropriate targets are set. There is careful cross-moderation of their work. Teachers know their students well. They monitor their work closely and keep students and parents informed of their progress.

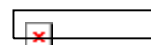
94. Students receive very good pre-entry information and guidance. College staff and students visit local high schools. There are taster sessions before enrolment to help students make informed choices. Induction on entry to the college is good and there is high student satisfaction with the process. Equality of opportunity is vigorously promoted. Individual support and guidance for students is good. Group tutorials are less effective. Careers information and guidance is of a high quality. Preparation for university is good and is valued by students.

95. Teachers are well qualified and have good subject knowledge. Many are examiners and use this experience to the benefit of students. Classrooms are in good decorative order and provide a stimulating learning environment. Teachers use a wide range of resources, including internet and video, and there is a very extensive intranet facility. Students make good use of computers, which are readily available. Teachers produce helpful study guides and course booklets which effectively support learning. Teaching materials reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of students.

### **Leadership and management**

96. Leadership and management are good. There are effective procedures and practices in place to monitor learning. Teams meet regularly to discuss students' progress and curriculum issues. There is a strong emphasis on raising attainment. Self-assessment is rigorous. Areas of weakness are identified and strategies put in place to address them. Quality assurance is thorough. Teachers are regularly observed. In-service training enables staff to keep up to date with teaching and learning methodology. Training on meeting the needs of the full range of ability of students in lessons is not yet embedded in practice. Strategies to address underachievement in psychology have not yet fully impacted on performance.

### **English and modern foreign languages**



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

### ***Strengths***

- excellent pass rates
  
- inspiring and knowledgeable teaching which promotes conscientious learning
  
- very good support for students
  
- regular and rigorous assessment and monitoring of students' progress
  
- varied and exciting enrichment activities in English
  
- strong curriculum and course management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- no significant weaknesses.

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

97. The college offers GCE AS and A-level courses to some 420 full-time students aged 16 to 18 in English language, English literature, French, German and Spanish. More than 300 students take GCSE English each year, usually to improve on the grade they achieved at school. Evening provision for part-time adult students is small, with one course on combined GCE AS and A2 English language and one on GCSE English.

98. The college provides a small range of other language courses. A course at beginners' level in Spanish is offered, aimed specifically but not exclusively at second year students on the leisure and tourism course. There are two evening language courses for adults: GCE AS German, and Cambridge Business Language Certificate (CBLC) beginners' Spanish. Numbers on many language courses are in decline and in the current academic year GCE AS German has failed to recruit. Enrichment activities in English are varied and exciting. They include theatre trips, visits, poetry, conferences and journalism competitions. The advanced extension English course offers talented English students the opportunity to broaden their knowledge.

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

99. Pass rates are excellent in English and modern foreign languages. In 2003, the pass rate on both GCE A-level English language and GCE A-level English literature was 100%. Students achieve higher grades than predicted from their GCSE results. The pass rate for GCSE English at grades A\* to C increased to 80%; more than 30 percentage points above the national average. The pass rate on GCE A-level French and Spanish courses has been 100% for each of the last three years. Pass rates for GCE AS in all three modern foreign languages have been mostly at, or above, the national average. Retention rates have improved on most courses. In 2003, the retention rates for GCE A-level French, German and Spanish were 100%, and were over 90% in English language and English literature. However, the retention rates on GCE AS French and Spanish courses are slightly below the national average. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

100. The standard of students' work is very high. Written work is well presented and demonstrates good knowledge, understanding and skills. Students' use of literary and linguistic terminology is impressive. GCSE English students use terms such as gothic, genre, context and narrative structure confidently, while GCE AS English language students are able to discuss semantic fields and how the phonology of language affects meaning. Modern language students participate well in lively discussions in their target language. Those at the beginning of their GCE AS course in a modern foreign language, finding the transition from GCSE difficult, are still prepared to engage with the spoken language and are beginning to speak with some confidence.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	318	372	301
		% retention	80	84	91
		% pass rate	38	67	80
GCE AS English language	3	No. of starts	137	146	160
		% retention	83	88	93
		% pass rate	93	98	100
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	90	92	73
		% retention	91	85	90
		% pass rate	93	100	98
GCE AS French	3	No. of starts	25	26	28
		% retention	80	85	82
		% pass rate	90	73	83
GCE AS Spanish	3	No. of starts	21	17	**
		% retention	86	65	**
		% pass rate	56	82	**
GCE A-level English language *	3	No. of starts	103	72	99
		% retention	80	97	97
		% pass rate	98	99	100
GCE A-level English literature *	3	No. of starts	61	39	64
		% retention	77	97	97
		% pass rate	98	97	100

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one year course  
\*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

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

101. Teaching is excellent and often inspirational. Teachers plan imaginative lessons incorporating a range of teaching and learning strategies and use innovative resources. In a GCE AS English language lesson, the teacher recapped on Labov's narrative theories by using a game-show-style quiz to check understanding. In GCE AS English literature lessons, drama texts are explored imaginatively through dramatic readings and set designs. The students' versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* showed their grasp of how to make theatre out of text as they created a Hollywood style Titania on a stage set of moving trees. Students in another lesson acted the unveiling of Olivia from *Twelfth Night* as preparation for close study of the scene.

102. Modern foreign languages teachers promote students' confidence and effectively develop the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. Excellent use is made of the language laboratory. In one GCE AS French lesson, students were eagerly discussing 'what it means to be young.' The teacher drew on their ideas by skilful questioning and introduced new vocabulary and expressions. After listening to a tape, students were divided into pairs to discuss what they had heard. This was followed by an exciting whole-class debate. There was excellent use of the target language throughout.

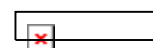
103. Marking is meticulous and feedback is rigorous yet constructive. Assignments carry a detailed duplicated cover sheet which records students' progress and targets as well as grades on key skills' achievements. Teachers' experience as examiners helps ensure that marking is realistic and that students understand the assessment criteria and know how to improve their performance. Class files allow quick access to information on individual students' prior grades, initial assessments, progress and targets.

104. Students receive very good support from their teachers. Students with additional learning needs and those who have missed work gain individual help from their teachers in subject workshops. The excellent learning resource base rooms provide independent learning and extension tasks. Students on English literacy and GCSE courses gain valuable in-class support from the learning promotion team. Pakistani boys join a mentoring group for support with their GCSE English.

### **Leadership and management**

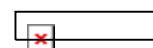
105. Curriculum and course management are strong. Courses are regularly reviewed and good practice is shared. Equal opportunities are promoted effectively. Teachers adapt resources and teaching strategies to suit the needs of their students. Texts and topics are chosen to reflect an ethnically diverse culture. Self-assessment is generally critical and accurate. However, in the modern foreign languages review, no mention is made of the issue of declining numbers in the area, or of any college initiatives to arrest the decline.

### **Part D: College data**



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

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
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<b>1</b>	4	21
<b>2</b>	15	17
<b>3</b>	81	62
<b>4/5</b>	0	0
<b>Other</b>	0	10
<b>Total</b>	100	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2003

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>16-18 No.</b>	<b>19+ No.</b>	<b>Total Enrolments % *</b>
Science and mathematics	2,039	67	26
Land-based provision	9	0	0
Construction	14	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	78	3	1
Business administration, management and professional	956	48	12
Information and communication technology	1,203	39	15
Retailing, customer service and transportation	35	1	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	122	1	1
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	31	1	0
Health, social care and public services	89	0	1
Visual and performing arts and media	612	17	8
Humanities	1,247	35	16
English, languages and communication	1,486	36	18
Foundation programmes	76	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,997</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2003

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



**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
1	Starters excluding transfers	292	332	185	48	16	22
	Retention rate (%)	88	94	95	52	69	100
	National average (%)	80	78	*	70	72	*
	Pass rate (%)	84	90	67	64	82	67
	National average (%)	66	71	*	70	75	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,276	1,303	1,135	80	63	22
	Retention rate (%)	85	85	94	75	78	73
	National average (%)	80	81	*	72	71	*
	Pass rate (%)	93	94	94	60	86	93
	National average (%)	85	84	*	68	71	*
3	Starters excluding transfers	5,528	*	4,438	157	135	132
	Retention rate (%)	73	*	91	61	67	72
	National average (%)	80	89	*	64	69	*
	Pass rate (%)	80	84	85	60	71	73
	National average (%)	86	88	*	67	75	*

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

*Sources of information:*

*1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.*

*2. College rates for 2001 to 2003: College ISR..*

*\*data not available*

**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)	81	18	1	145
Level 2 (intermediate)	81	15	4	26
Level 1 (foundation)	90	10	0	10
Other sessions	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>181</b>

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