



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Isle of Wight College

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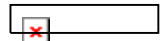
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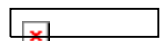
**Basic information about the college**



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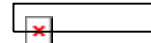
Name of college:	Isle of Wight College
Type of college:	General further education
Principal:	Bill Grady
Address of college:	Medina Way Newport Isle of Wight PO30 5TA
Telephone number:	01983 526631
Fax number:	01983 521707
Chair of governors:	Paul Smith
Unique reference number:	130724
Name of reporting inspector:	Neil Edwards
Dates of inspection:	6-16 October 2003

**Part A: Summary**



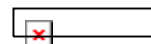
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## Information about the college



The Isle of Wight has a population of about 133,000, of which over a quarter are aged over 60. There are high levels of social deprivation on the island and the local economy is heavily reliant on the tourist industry, which employs about 20% of the island's workforce. This industry is largely seasonal, with the majority employed between May and October. The Isle of Wight College is the island's major provider of further education (FE) and training. The college offers courses across a wide provision to serve the needs of the local population, although numbers on some courses are small. They also provide training for students through adult and community learning courses, Learndirect, as well as for international students. In addition, the college also provides the education service for the three local prisons. Collaborative links have been established with local training providers to ensure that there is good breadth of work-based learning provision on the island. One of these links has recently led to a successful application for Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for hospitality and catering. Most of the work of the college is concentrated on a single site which is situated in a central island location on the outskirts of Newport, the island's county town. The college has three satellite centres around the island to deliver outreach programmes for adults. During 2002/03, 6,188 students attended the college, of whom 54% were aged 19 or over. The current number of students is 4,055, of whom 73% are aged 19 or over. The college's mission is 'to deliver a high quality, effective and efficient, vocational, higher and adult educational curriculum, targeted to the community of the island'.

## How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged teaching and students' achievements to be good in five of the curriculum areas and satisfactory in three. In one curriculum area, hairdressing and beauty therapy, inspectors judged the provision to be outstanding. No curriculum areas were judged unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- good support for students' individual learning needs
- effective integration of modern technology into teaching and learning
- effective partnerships with local training providers.
- good promotion of educational inclusion

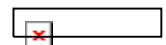
- good teaching and help for students to achieve
- good involvement of staff in helping to drive forward improvements
- clear leadership with an open and responsive management style.

***What should be improved***

- work placement opportunities for students
- retention rates on level 3 courses
- links with employers
- the range of enrichment activities.

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**

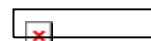


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Construction	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates are high across the provision. Practical teaching is generally good, although theory teaching is uninspiring. Students benefit from good learning and pastoral support. Workshop accommodation is inadequate for the number of students, and full-time students lack opportunities for progression.

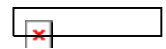
Engineering	<b>Good.</b> The quality of teaching in the student-centred learning areas is good. Retention and pass rates are high on most courses, as is the standard of students' work. Leadership and management are strong and effective. Some workshop space is cramped.
Information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on most full-time courses although retention rates are unsatisfactory on part-time courses. There are effective support, assessment and monitoring arrangements in place. Teaching is good, although teachers rely too heavily on text-based materials. Links with local information technology (IT) employers are not well developed.
Hospitality and leisure and travel	<b>Good.</b> Retention and pass rates are high for hospitality and catering. On travel and tourism courses, retention and pass rates are satisfactory although on some courses the pass rates are low and declining. Teaching and learning are challenging and effective in hospitality and are satisfactory in travel and tourism. Leadership and management are good in hospitality and catering and effective links with external organisations have been established.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Outstanding.</b> Teaching and learning are very good and retention and pass rates are very high. Students gain extremely high levels of skills and the quality of their work is outstanding. Curriculum management is very good and links with employers are effectively used to support students' learning. Quality assurance is rigorous and thorough and students are well supported.
Health, social care and public services	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is well planned and effective use is made of the good learning resources available. Pass rates are high on most courses. Students are well motivated and their academic and pastoral needs are effectively met and supported. Courses are well managed and clearly led.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is good in performing arts. The quality of students' work on performing arts courses is high. The work of some art and design students is not at the standard required. There are high retention and pass rates on courses in popular music and desktop publishing, although retention and pass rates on other courses are not so high. The leadership and management of performing arts programmes are good.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates for access to HE and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English courses are consistently high but for General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) English literature the pass rate was below the national average for 2002/03. Retention rates are low for GCE AS psychology. Imaginative and well-planned teaching on the access to HE course is supported by effective use of high-quality resources. Leadership and management are good.
Foundation programmes	<b>Good.</b> Teaching and learning are good, with good attendance and punctuality. Students produce a high standard of work that enables them to progress well. Leadership and management are effective, and there is a good range of provision and links with external partners. There is insufficient additional learning support on some key skills programmes.

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



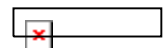
Leadership and management are good and the leadership provided by the principal is exemplary. The college recovery plan has been effectively implemented. Governors provide effective oversight of the strategic direction of the college and the college curriculum has been rationalised to better meet local needs. The college has not prepared a detailed strategic plan to succeed its recovery plan. Communication within the college is effective and staff morale is high. Students' achievements have improved significantly over a two-year period and are mostly good. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 on advanced courses are below the national average. The level of good or better teaching is above the national average. Effective use has been made of consultancy support to bring about improvement, but routine quality assurance procedures have not been fully embedded. Financial management is good and the financial position of the college stabilised. The college provides good value for money.

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



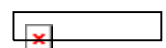
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college has a detailed equal opportunities policy and appropriate procedures covering discrimination, harassment, bullying, appeals and complaints. There is an active equal opportunities working party that has representation from a cross-section of students, staff and the community. The college is complying with the obligations placed upon it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Education Needs and Disabilities Act (SENDA) 2001. Partnerships with community organisations enable the college to meet the needs of socially excluded and other disadvantaged groups. A flexible curriculum delivery, combined with effective timetabling of classes that considers students' transport and personal needs, is a significant factor in increasing participation on college courses. Outreach work and initiatives are focused on targeted areas of the population and are linked to community regeneration. Extensive literacy and numeracy provision forms a key element in the college's response to social inclusion. The college has satisfactory facilities to allow easy access for students with restricted mobility.

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



Support for students is good. A broad range of support is offered to students through the personal tutor system, careers advice, the college personal advisor, academic tutors, learning support tutors, trained counsellors and the college welfare officer. A nursery is also available on campus for staff and students. The identification of additional support needs of full-time students and the provision of additional support are good. Teaching staff, personal tutors and the college personal advisor work well together to provide appropriate guidance and support for students. Induction is thorough and is valued by students. Tutorial provision and the use of academic review to monitor the progress of all students are good. The support provided for part-time adult students is effective. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored and absences followed up promptly.

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



presented below.

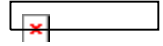
***What students like about the college***

- help with child care
- advice on careers and progression to higher education (HE)
- friendly, approachable staff who treat students as equals
- accessible counselling support.
- financial support service
- good information and communications technology (ICT) equipment
- well-stocked library and learning resource centre
- good learning support.

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

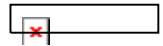
- more areas for private studies
- more opportunities for higher level study at the college
- better travel arrangements to help students get to college
- more opportunities to take part in sport.

## 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



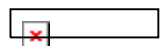
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	66	28	6
19+ and WBL*	76	24	0
Learning 16-18	61	30	9
19+ and WBL*	78	22	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 learning

## Achievement and standards



1. Data on students' achievements drawn from the individualised student records (ISR) for 2001/02 were provided by the LSC. Data provided by the college were used for 2002/03. Inspectors also used additional data held by the college to help them form their judgements, particularly with regard to the individual progress made by students in respect of their starting point. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses.



2. The college offers mainly vocational courses in all 14 curriculum areas. The college also offers a small number of academic qualifications for the GCE Advanced level (A level), access to HE and GCSE. The college is successful in ensuring that students improve their personal and study skills in addition to gaining accredited qualifications.

3. The overall attendance rate of students at classes observed by inspectors was 84%, which is above the national average for the sector. In these classes, there were an average number of 12 students present. Student and staff punctuality is very good, with all lessons starting promptly.

4. For 2002/03, most college retention and pass rates for all levels and ages are above the national averages and, in some instances, the pass rates are significantly higher, although not at level 3. This is the third consecutive year of improving retention and pass rates. The greatest overall improvement is at levels 1 and 2. High levels of achievement are evident in many curriculum areas, with pass rates for hair and beauty therapy, hospitality, performing arts, humanities and foundation programmes particularly noteworthy. Achievement of key skills qualifications covering all levels and ages has increased significantly over the past three years to a pass rate of 63% for 2002/03.

### **16 to 18 year olds**

5. Retention and pass rates have shown year on year improvement over the three years to 2003. Retention rates on level 1 courses, at 85% for 2002/03, are above the national average. At levels 2 and 3, the retention rates are 73% and 68%, respectively, which for the latter is below the national average. In 2002/03, there were 2,853 students enrolled on long courses with a pass rate of 84%. In the same year, 319 students enrolled on short courses, with a pass rate of 81%. Pass rates on level 1 and 3 courses, at 81% and 83%, respectively, are high. The pass rate of 78% for level 2 courses is also well above the national average.

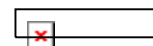
6. Students display considerable levels of determination and, during their courses, become highly motivated to succeed. They develop confidence and improve self-esteem, which helps prepare them for employment or further study.

### **Adult learners**

7. Overall, pass rates for adults are high on most courses and well above national averages. The pass rate for the 3,335 students aged 19 and over on long courses for 2002/03 is 82%. For short courses in the same year, 2,780 enrolments produced a 97% pass rate. These figures represent continuous improvement over the last three years. The pass rates on courses at level 1 and 3 for 2002/03 are high, at 83%, with level 2 pass rates also good at 79%. Retention rates on all adult courses have also improved over the last three years and are currently at or slightly above national averages.

8. The college is successful in enabling students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities to progress beyond entry level courses and into employment. Many adult students with few educational achievements progress to courses at a higher level.

## **Quality of education and training**



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 150 lessons and tutorials. Teaching was good or better in 69% of lessons, satisfactory in 27% and less than satisfactory in 4%. This is above the national average for comparable colleges. Teaching and learning are particularly successful in hairdressing and beauty therapy, foundation programmes and humanities. The proportion of good or better lessons is smallest in visual arts and media, and travel and tourism. The grades awarded for learning in all subjects are slightly lower than those for teaching.

10. Teaching is most effective on entry level programmes. The lowest proportion of good or better teaching was at levels 2 and 3. Most of the teaching in practical lessons is good or better, with students developing occupational skills to professional standards. Teaching in theory lessons not as good overall.

11. In most curriculum areas, teaching and learning are well planned. In the more effective lessons, learning objectives are clear and are shared with students. There are very good working relationships between teachers and students in most lessons. Most students are highly motivated to succeed. This is particularly evident in hair and beauty therapy and in hospitality, where students are able to use their experience of college and relate it to a work environment. Many lessons are presented in an interesting and innovative style, and students actively research additional learning material. Students develop a good understanding of key concepts and are able to use and explain them well. Teachers are skilled at using questions to reinforce and further develop learning. Generally, good use is made of IT to assist in the learning process. The quality of learning that takes place is enhanced significantly by the work of the learning support staff in the classroom. These help students to develop a clearer understanding of the topics and overcome a range of individual barriers to learning.

12. In the small number of less successful lessons, preparation is sometimes poor and the work does not always stimulate and enthuse students. Some teaching in theory lessons is uninspiring and often involves copying excessive notes from the whiteboard, or handouts. In these lessons, there is infrequent checking of students' understanding and monitoring of individual progress. In other lessons, teachers talk for long periods of time and the students' concentration wavers. Occasionally, teachers fail to set learning activities that take account of the wide range of abilities within each group.

13. Resources to support learning are generally good. Most full-time teachers hold recognised teaching qualifications and are suitably qualified in their subject areas. However, only 36% of part-time teachers hold teaching qualifications. Students with learning support needs are well supported by qualified and experienced learning support assistants. There are well-established and fully implemented staff appraisal, review and development arrangements. Staff have good access to staff development activities. Opportunities for industrial updating are not systematically planned or identified in all curriculum areas. The college has a good mentoring system to support new teachers. A team of advanced practitioners works effectively to support improvements in teaching and learning.

14. Since the last inspection, conducted by the Further Education Funding Council in 1999, the college has made significant improvements to its accommodation. There is a clear property strategy that identifies proposed improvements to accommodation and buildings. There is good access to accommodation and resources for students with physical disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Teachers make good use of displays and students' work to give a vocational context to classrooms and corridors. The quality of specialist facilities is very good in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in performing arts. Some specialist areas are unsatisfactory. The plumbing workshop is poorly laid out, making it difficult for teachers to monitor students doing practical work. The carpentry and joinery workshops do not provide sufficient space for all students. Changing facilities for chef students are inadequate. The composites workshop in engineering is cramped and impedes the progress of students in practical lessons. A new building to house art and design, media and photography is approaching completion. This will provide state-of-the-art facilities for students in these areas of learning.

15. Specialist learning resources are very good. The central learning resource centre is well stocked with a wide range of texts, journals, trade papers, CD-ROM and videos which students can access. Learning advisors located in the learning resource centre have established effective links with curriculum areas. All full-time students undertake an accredited course in Library and Information skills delivered through the learning resource centre. There is a good ratio of computers to students and staff, 1:4.6 and 1:1, respectively. Technician support is good, and IT equipment is maintained to a very high standard. The college has made a considerable investment in information and learning technology (ILT) and high-quality learning materials. As a result there is a real commitment from all staff to integrate learning technologies within their schemes of work and lesson plans. Staff and

students make excellent use of the college intranet and virtual learning environment to support independent learning and research.

16. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Initial assessment of all full-time and substantive part-time students' literacy, numeracy and key skills is thorough. Subject teachers use the results of learning styles questionnaires to inform their teaching and assessment methods. Students' learning support needs are identified effectively. A team of learning support staff works successfully to offer additional support to students both in class and in one-to-one sessions. The college has taken the strategic decision to decentralise learning support into curriculum areas. As a result, the number receiving support for learning has increased substantially, with 294 currently receiving it. This high level of need reflects the educational context of the island. The impact of learning support is systematically monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

17. Students' work is marked regularly and returned with constructive and encouraging comments. Students are clear about how they will be assessed and the standards they need to achieve. In humanities, teachers make regular reference to examination criteria both in lessons and in marked work. Teachers aim to return assignments within three working weeks, and usually do so.

18. The cross-college internal verification procedure is comprehensive and well established on vocational courses. National standards are consistently maintained in most areas. The college policy on internal moderation is not adhered to on access to HE and GCSE courses. As a result, not all students' coursework is cross-marked to ensure consistency between individual teachers. In travel and tourism, internal verification is ineffective and there is insufficient focus on the quality of assessment. In construction, too much emphasis is placed on sampling portfolios and not enough on observing assessment practice. The college's response to awarding body external verifier reports is timely and rigorous.

19. Full-time students take part in termly academic reviews with their subject teachers. In addition, there are termly tutorial reviews in which students agree targets on personal effectiveness. Links between personal tutors and subject teachers are highly effective and targets agreed with students are monitored regularly. Students are aware of their progress and the steps they need to take to improve their performance or achieve their qualification. Parents and employers get regular feedback on students' progress.

20. The college works hard, in collaboration with other providers, to offer a diverse curriculum ranging from pre-entry to higher national diploma. Progression routes in construction are poor. There was a strategic decision in 2002 to withdraw full-time GCSE and GCE AS and A2 courses, these still being available part time or through Distance Learning. The support for students with special needs, both on the college site and in the community is very good, with high numbers recruited. There is a good range of provision in foundation studies. A recently opened nursery enables parents with children to continue their studies.

21. The college is pivotal to the development of strong local partnerships aiming to increase the range of provision available to island learners. Links with local schools, for example, have resulted in a significant 14 to 16 intake across six areas of learning. This has been particularly successful in engineering and ICT. Local education authority (LEA) staff and college tutors co-operate in 24 schools across the island to facilitate a family learning programme. There are many good outreach initiatives. For example, in collaboration with the Island Library Service, a mobile library and resource centre goes out twice weekly to remote areas of the island to teach basic skills. The college music and media courses regularly undertake performance tours and run workshops in the island high schools.

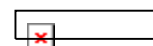
22. Curriculum enrichment is generally unsatisfactory, although in some areas of learning, such as hairdressing, public services, construction and hospitality, it is good. There is no sports provision apart from a weekly football club. Work placement on the island is limited, although the hair and beauty department work well in partnership with salons across the island. The college is involved in a local learning partnership to help develop appropriate programmes of study. The college is responsible for the islands employer learning hub.

23. Students' support and guidance are good. Staff from all departments work well together to ensure students are placed on the right course and receive appropriate guidance and support. After initial assessment, tutors are alerted to any issues and students are closely monitored. Learning support tutors work closely with subject tutors to ensure that the most appropriate levels of support are provided. Teaching in tutorials is good. In 2002/03, 613 students received learning support. Of these, 93% passed their course. There are good links in place with external organisations that often refer disaffected Year 10 pupils to the college. In 2002/03, 25 pupils were successfully integrated into college vocational programmes and 43% of these are now on full-time programmes. Productive links are in place with the local schools. Information about college courses is made available through the Year 11 careers education and advice sessions in the autumn term. The college has open days throughout the year and all are well attended. Course information sheets and the college prospectuses for full-time and part-time courses are widely circulated on the island. Effective links with community groups in outreach centres have been established, which has resulted in adults with disabilities, single parents and those with financial problems returning to education.

24. Induction arrangements are effective in preparing students for their course of study and in providing information on college support systems. Analysis of the first impression student survey indicates that 91% of new students felt the first week at college helped them to settle in and 97% of students felt they were on the right course after induction. Of the current 2003/04 starts, only four full-time students have transferred to a different course, and less than 1% of adult students have either transferred or withdrawn from their course. Student focus groups representing all courses meet monthly and make an effective contribution to curriculum teams. Parents, guardians or employers are informed about students' progress each term.

25. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored and absence is followed up immediately. The college has introduced an effective attendance and incentive scheme. The overall college attendance during inspection was 84%, compared with the national average of 78%. There is a full range of welfare services available for students. Advice and guidance on applying to university are good. In 2002/03, a high number of students progressed to HE from level 3 courses. Financial support is available through a comprehensive range of funding and grants.

## Leadership and management



26. Leadership and management are good. Much has been achieved during the two years prior to the inspection and problems of poor leadership and management have been overcome. The leadership provided by the principal during this period has been exemplary. Actions to support recovery have been effectively prioritised and managers have made good use of consultancy support to bring about improvement. Students' success rates have improved and are above the national average for general FE colleges for all age groups and levels of work other than for students aged 16 to 18 on advanced courses. Communication within the college is now good and staff are well informed and regularly consulted. Teachers are motivated, work well in teams and feel ownership of developments. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and the level of good or better teaching is above the national average.

27. Governors and senior managers work well together and operate within a sound framework for governance. The majority of governors have been appointed since the last full inspection of the college and bring a range of valuable skills and experience to the corporation. A new chair was appointed just prior to the inspection. The corporation meets monthly and governors are committed to raising standards and are focused on monitoring all aspects of the performance of the college. They are very clear about the distinction between governance and management and receive good advice from an independent clerk. Responsibilities were being transferred to a new internally appointed clerk at the time of the inspection.

28. The corporation has reviewed the educational character of the college and revised its mission.

To achieve its mission, the college has adopted a strategy of working co-operatively with other providers. This has allowed the college to align its curriculum more closely with the achievement profile of 16 year old students on the island, courses offered by other providers and the education and training needs of adults and employers. The college has discontinued most of its GCE A-level provision, which has reduced competition with secondary schools and the college is providing opportunities for mostly disaffected school pupils aged 14 to 16. The numbers of foundation level students have doubled over a three-year period and the numbers of students on advanced courses have halved. The average GCSE point score of students aged 16 enrolling at the college is significantly lower than the average for the island. Effective partnership and collaborative working relationships have been developed with three of the main work-based training providers on the island and the college has developed good working relationships with other bodies such as arts organisations on the island. Collaboration with employers is at an early stage of development.

29. The college has not produced a comprehensive strategic plan to succeed its recovery plan but has prepared a development plan as required by the local LSC. There has been some preliminary analysis of data concerning training needs on the island, but there is no comprehensive marketing strategy to support the college's aim to further raise the participation of adults in education and training. There is no single member of the senior management team with a clear brief to increase adult participation and diversify the curriculum.

30. The college has prepared clear policies and action plans for promoting equality of opportunity and race relations but policies have still to impact fully at curriculum level. The numbers of students from minority ethnic groups on the island and at the college are low. Over a three-year period, there has been an increase of 13% in the numbers of students enrolling at the college from areas of deprivation and there has been some narrowing of the achievement gap between male and female students aged 16 to 18.

31. The leadership and management of most curriculum areas are good but there is some variability in the impact of actions taken to raise standards across the college. The leadership and management of hairdressing and beauty therapy courses are outstanding. There is good teamwork in most areas. The curriculum in the humanities has been rationalised through collaboration with schools and changes are leading to improvements in students' performance. There is effective dissemination of good practice and exchange of ideas in health and social care. Engineering teachers work well together to identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision and to plan improvements. Managers and teachers in foundation studies share a common purpose and are committed to helping students achieve. Effective leadership and management of construction courses have resulted in significant improvement in students' retention and pass rates. Full-time courses in computing and IT are well managed but the management of short courses and part-time provision is fragmented with insufficient co-ordination across different college departments and sites. The management of hospitality courses is highly effective, although the management of travel and tourism courses is satisfactory. Leadership and management across the visual and performing arts are inconsistent, being strong in the performing arts but satisfactory in the visual arts and media.

32. The college has been rigorous in identifying poorly performing courses and places a strong emphasis on monitoring performance and setting targets for improvement.

33. Managers and teachers have good access to reliable management information and the senior management team and corporation receive regular reports on enrolments, retention and achievement. Reports are clearly set out and make good use of performance indicators. College-wide targets are challenging, and are set in the context of relevant national averages and the historical performance of the college, but some of these targets have been over-ambitious and have not always been met.

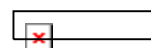
34. Overall pass rates have improved for all age groups and are above the national averages at all levels and for all age groups. There have been significant improvements in retention rates but these have not been consistent across all levels of work. Retention rates have greatly improved for foundation level courses and retention rates of students on intermediate level courses are at the national average for all age groups. While retention rates for adults on advanced courses have improved and are just above the national average, retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 on

advanced courses have not improved and are below the national averages. However, data for the retention of students on the second year of two-year courses show improvement on the preceding year.

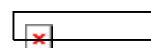
35. The college has developed clear procedures for quality assurance which are well documented and systematically implemented but are not yet fully embedded. Managers and teachers are self-critical and external consultants have been used well to support improvement by providing advice and conducting lesson observations and mock inspections. Lessons are observed regularly and the quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly during the two years prior to the inspection. The outcomes of lesson observations are used constructively to inform both individual teacher appraisals and staff development programmes. A team of specialist teachers provides teachers with good advice and support to bring about improvements in the standards of teaching and learning and promote the sharing of good practice. The rigour with which course reviews are carried out varies across the college and they are not yet achieving their intended role in quality improvement fully. Course reviews do not contain sufficient analysis of the effectiveness of teaching at course level and analyses of students' achievements focus mostly on retention and pass rates. Action plans do not focus sufficiently on improving teaching and learning. The college was addressing this weakness at the time of the inspection through increasing the level of lesson observations carried out by managers responsible for different curriculum areas. Students' attendance is carefully monitored at course and programme area level, but there is no routine central monitoring of attendance by the senior management team. The college was piloting the use of electronic registers at the time of the inspection. Self-assessment procedures are well understood by staff and judgements are carefully moderated by the academic board and the corporation. Reports are well presented, judgements are mostly accurate and action planning to bring about improvements is effective. The use of methodologies for determining improvements in students' performance compared with their achievements at enrolment has not been developed to any significant extent.

36. Financial management is sound and financial aspects of the college recovery plan have been implemented effectively. Expenditure, income generation and student retention are carefully monitored by the senior management team and the corporation, and managers receive clear information about expenditure to date. The college has developed reliable methods for costing courses. It monitors staff deployment carefully and has the capacity to respond quickly to changes in demand for provision. Funding targets have been achieved and historic cost deficits eliminated. A major capital building programme was being implemented effectively at the time of the inspection and the college was forecasting financial surpluses. On the basis of achievement of financial stability, improvements in students' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning, the college provides good value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Construction



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

#### **Strengths**

- good and improving pass rates

- good retention rates
- high standard of teaching in practical lessons
- good support for students
- effective leadership and management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- uninspiring teaching in theory lessons
- inadequate workshop accommodation in some areas
- limited progression routes.

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

37. Courses in construction are available in four areas; brickwork, carpentry and joinery, electrical installation and plumbing. These are predominantly at levels 1 and 2. Level 1 programmes are offered as foundation craft awards in all four areas and are run in conjunction with a foundation General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in construction and the built environment. Level 2 programmes are offered as full-time and part-time intermediate awards in carpentry and joinery, brickwork and electrical installation is offered part time. There is evening provision for adults in all four craft areas. A small number of construction crafts National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are available at levels 2 and 3. There are 139 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 25 full-time adult students. Of the 137 part-time students, 118 are adults and 19 are aged 16 to 18. School link courses in carpentry and joinery and brickwork have 44 pupils aged 14 to 16.

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

38. Achievements and standards are good in construction. Pass rates are well above national averages for most courses and are improving across all areas. The GNVQ built environment, for example, had a pass rate of 93% for 2002/03 compared with a national average rate of 53%. Retention rates for 2002/03 are also good, with most courses above national averages. There have been few early leavers in the current year.

39. Standards of work are high in construction workshops. Students who have only attended college

for six weeks are producing work to high standards. Carpentry and joinery students have developed good hand skills and plumbing students produce pipework test pieces which are neat and accurately measured. Electrical installation students have a very good understanding of industry terminology. Schools links pupils are also producing good work after four weeks on programme. All students have a good understanding of health and safety issues.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Foundation GNVQ built environment	1	No. of starts	28	59	55
		% retention	71	78	76
		% pass rate	0	87	93
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	33	33	37
		% retention	82	82	84
		% pass rate	15	84	84
City and Guilds 6988 certificate in plumbing	1	No. of starts	*	15	**
		% retention	*	87	**
		% pass rate	*	54	**
City and Guilds 2360 electrical installation theory and practice	2	No. of starts	19	19	**
		% retention	89	68	**
		% pass rate	41	62	**
NVQ bricklaying (two years)	2	No. of starts	**	32	23
		% retention	**	47	57
		% pass rate	**	40	68

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

\* course did not run

\*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

40. Most teaching is good or better and there are no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers have lesson plans which set realistic learning objectives and these are communicated to students. Tests developed for students are realistic and are set at the right level. Key skills teaching is good and is integrated into the main programmes. Practical teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate practical techniques to students. Students are given the opportunity to practice work and request assessment of this when they feel confident that it has reached expected standards. Self-assessment of practical work is an integral part of assessment. Monitoring of students' progress in workshops is good. Learning logs help track students' progress and allow teachers and students to record practical skills development. Attendance in lessons is good. Students' punctuality is also good and lessons start on time.

41. Teaching in theory lessons is uninspiring and often fails to motivate students. In those lessons, there is little variation of teaching styles. Many involve too much talking by teachers, with whiteboards used as the main resource. Not enough use is made of ILT to enhance teaching. Access to data projectors to assist learning of theory is poor, and only a small number of lessons involve use of an overhead projector. One classroom situated off a workshop has no whiteboard or other learning aids. In one session, this room was overcrowded, with insufficient desks for the number of students attending. Task-based learning is seen as integral to construction students'



development; however, at the time of inspection, students were still being introduced to this.

42. Workshop accommodation in the construction area is inadequate. The plumbing workshop is poorly set out, which makes it difficult for staff to monitor students doing practical work. The two carpentry and joinery workshops are equipped to accommodate 32 students, although there are 36 students in the level 1 full-time group. The brickwork shop is spacious and well set out, but demand is high and evening students often have difficulty finding space to work. There is a good supply of computers and learning software, industrial standard tools and materials to support learning. There is a well-equipped student-centred teaching and learning area, and most teaching rooms are large and well furnished.

43. Assessment is well planned, rigorous and comprehensive. Initial assessment, including learning styles, key and basic skills testing, is consistently applied. Good use is made of the results of this testing to develop individual learning plans. There are good assessment practices in the area. Portfolios, assignments and practical exercises are well marked, with good feedback given to students. There is a sound cross-college internal verification process which ensures the quality of assignment work given to students and the quality of the assessment of completed work. Students' progress is well recorded and they are generally aware of the progress they are making towards completion of their qualification. Progress is regularly reported to employers and parents. Awarding bodies' external verification reports confirm that national standards are consistently maintained. The verification process depends on reviews of portfolios and does not pay enough attention to the observation of assessors.

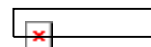
44. There are limited progression routes for full-time students who are unable to find employment when they finish their course. Students cannot progress from the foundation plumbing course without employment. There are insufficient opportunities to progress to level 3 in many trades. The vast majority of the provision is at level 1. Links with employers are ineffective. There is no formal forum for construction employers to contribute to the development of the construction programme area and there are few work placement opportunities for students in brickwork, wood occupations and plumbing. A good partnership has recently been developed with a private training provider. The college provides technical certificate courses for students of this provider. There are many opportunities to enrich full-time students' experience at the college. At induction, paintball, snooker and trips are used for team building. Throughout the year, there are regular trips to construction sites and exhibitions.

45. The good support provided has helped students who have previously not been successful in compulsory education. Students are introduced to support either by self-referral, through their vocational tutor or through the result of initial assessment. Initial assessment is good and considers learning styles as well as basic and key skill needs. Students' basic skills levels are mapped against the national curriculum levels, although results of initial assessment are often slow to reach support and teaching staff, making it difficult to effectively plan learning support. Students who have had difficulties in attending college on particular days due to employment commitments have had their timetables altered so they are able to continue training.

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

46. Leadership and management are good. Retention and pass rates, which were previously poor, have improved recently and are now above national averages. Effective strategies have been introduced to improve these. Examples include close monitoring of students at risk of leaving and close monitoring of performance linked to better learning and pastoral support. A system of phone calls to students on the first day of absence has contributed to improved attendance and punctuality. Lateness is dealt with in an effective way, with a system of recording and sanctions which results in an interview by the programme area manager. Staff understand and use performance measures. Information on retention rates and achievement is readily available to all staff through the management information system. The self-assessment report was largely accurate and contained a useful context statement. Staff development is satisfactory, with many part-time teachers attending teacher training courses. Construction staff and students benefit from supplier and manufacturer demonstrations at the college, although there is no formal process for industrial updating.

## Engineering



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on most courses
- effective school link programme
- high standard of students' work
- very good teaching in student-centred learning classes
- effective leadership and management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor short-term target setting and reviews in tutorials
- inadequate workshop space for the composites course.

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

47. The college provides an appropriate range of mechanical, motor vehicle, welding and computer-aided design courses from levels 1 to 3. Most students study at level 1. Adult students generally attend courses alongside younger students, but some welding and computer-aided design courses are offered in the evening and these attract predominantly older students. All areas of the curriculum, including electronics, are offered to 65 school pupils aged 14 to 16, with progression to level 1. There are 241 students, of whom 86 are full time. Three of the full-time students and 108 of the part-time students are aged 19 or over.

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

48. Pass rates on most courses have been high for the last three years. Retention rates for many of

these courses are also high. Full-time engineering students undertake additional qualifications and the pass rates for most of these are satisfactory. Key skills achievement is satisfactory on most courses.

49. All engineering students work safely and produce work of a high standard in both theory and practical lessons. Mechanical engineering students operate engineering machinery and equipment safely, and demonstrate good practical skill in fitting and turning. Motor vehicle students jack and support vehicles safely and use wheel balancers competently to rectify steering faults. Composite students accurately calculate mixing ratios, resin volumes and theoretical masses of the products they form in practical lessons. In one key skills lesson, students used their theoretical knowledge and calculated engine measurements to determine compression ratios. School link pupils mark and cut out sheet metal with care, form close fitting joints and produce watertight soldered joints.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ performing engineering operations	1	No. of starts	*	32	47
		% retention	*	75	79
		% pass rate	*	21	70
City and Guilds 4100 motor vehicle (formerly City and Guilds 3830)	1	No. of starts	28	45	27
		% retention	75	87	81
		% pass rate	100	92	82
City and Guilds 6983 progression award	1	No. of starts	**	25	33
		% retention	**	56	88
		% pass rate	**	71	69
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	*	**	25
		% retention	*	**	89
		% pass rate	*	**	86
City and Guilds 4351 computer-aided design	3	No. of starts	42	29	23
		% retention	88	76	78
		% pass rate	89	95	89
National certificate in mechanical engineering	3	No. of starts	17	19	18
		% retention	82	84	78
		% pass rate	86	69	93

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

\* course did not run

\*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

50. The majority of teaching and learning is good. Lessons in the student-centred teaching and learning areas are very good. They are carefully planned, clearly identifying links to key skills. Schemes of work are detailed and comprehensive. Lessons successfully build upon previous learning. Teachers select a range of teaching methods that are appropriate to their students' abilities and needs. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of high-quality teaching aids to reinforce learning. For example, in a very good lesson on engine cooling, the teacher had set out a range of tasks for students to complete. They researched Internet sites, studied CD-ROMs, investigated and

compared system layouts on running vehicles and devised check lists for servicing. Teachers often draw upon their own industrial experience to illustrate and reinforce important points. Teachers' expectations are high, but they praise good work, which encourages and motivates students. In a minority of lessons, insufficient account is taken of individual learning needs and there are insufficient checks made of students' understanding.

51. Teaching staff are suitably qualified. The staff development programme enables them to improve their teaching skills and update their industrial and subject knowledge. Many teachers maintain productive links with local industry and organise specialist industrial training events. Classrooms are bright and spacious and provide a stimulating working environment. However, there is a lack of specialist computers in motor vehicle and mechanical workshops to support learning. Most workshops provide a good training facility, although the composites workshop is cramped, which impedes the progress of students in practical lessons. The library contains an adequate range of books and has a subject-specialist librarian to support independent learning. The student-centred teaching and learning area is an inviting and stimulating environment. Engineering students can access training materials from home through the college website.

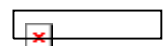
52. Assessment practices in the engineering programme area are fair and accurate, and meet the requirements of the awarding bodies. Internal verification is rigorous, providing evaluative feedback to assessors. Assessments are carefully marked with grammatical and spelling mistakes corrected. Feedback to students is supportive and gives advice on areas to revisit or how to improve performance. Assessments are tracked closely, and wall charts are effectively used to monitor individual progress. However, most students are unaware of the college's assessment appeals process.

53. There is a good range of learning opportunities in motor vehicle and composite engineering. Over 70% of level 1 students progressed to level 2 in 2003. Full-time and part-time students are able to study for additional qualifications and there are some opportunities for students to visit local industries. Staff maintain strong links with employers. Support and guidance for engineering students are good. Students receive effective academic and personal support. Individual tutorials take place regularly but there is little effective use of short-term targets or reviews of the action plans developed.

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

54. Management is good and the staff work effectively as a team. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood. Staff appraisals are regular and use teaching and learning observations to help plan staff development needs. Teachers keep up to date and maintain their professional practice skills. The department is taking measures to increase the number of women in engineering by hosting a two-day 'women into science and engineering' event. Productive links are developing with local industry and an effective school link programme allows pupils opportunities to begin formal engineering training. Course teams set and monitor targets for retention and pass rates closely, and compare them with national averages and previous performance to measure success. There is effective monitoring of students' attendance, and action is taken in response to poor attendance. Staff are directly involved in quality assurance. The self-assessment process clearly identified key strengths and weaknesses.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on full-time courses
- good specialist resources
- thorough assessment and monitoring
- good support for individual students in practical sessions.

### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory retention rates on part-time courses
- over-reliance on text-based resources in computing
- weak links with local employers.

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

55. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses at levels 1 to 3 in computing and IT. These courses include the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma and City and Guilds certificates and diplomas for IT users. Administration students work towards the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and CLAIT plus qualifications. Currently, 184 students are on full-time courses at the college. Part-time courses cater for 160 adult students at the main college site; these include computing for beginners, building and maintaining computers, web design and computerised accounts. The college has adopted a unitised curriculum at levels 1 and 2, enabling part-time students to undertake single units of qualifications rather than whole programmes and increasing students' choices and opportunities. Increasing numbers of students are being attracted to Learndirect programmes and open learning courses.

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

56. Pass rates on full-time and part-time courses are high. In 2003, pass rates were above national averages for CLAIT and CLAIT plus, Internet technologies, European computer driving licence (ECDL), integrated business technology (IBT) at level 2 and the diploma for IT users. The national diploma in IT has had a pass rate of 100% in both of the last two years. Retention rates on most part-time courses are unsatisfactory. In both 2002 and 2003, retention rates on the ECDL, CLAIT and IBT 2 and 3 were well below national average. The quality of students' work is satisfactory on most courses, although students on the national diploma course produce work of a high standard, displaying good programming skills. Standards in numeracy are high but computing students' hand-written work suffers from poor spelling and grammar.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Internet technologies (24 weeks)	1	No. of starts	*	16	46
		% retention	*	56	57
		% pass rate	*	56	50
CLAIT (24 weeks plus)	1	No. of starts	78	517	159
		% retention	71	50	59
		% pass rate	60	85	80
GNVQ IT (replaced by City and Guilds diploma in 2002/03)	2	No. of starts	17	15	51
		% retention	88	60	82
		% pass rate	67	67	93
IBT (24 weeks plus)	2	No. of starts	42	150	132
		% retention	57	49	56
		% pass rate	33	82	64
ECDL (one year)	2	No. of starts	17	39	58
		% retention	82	82	83
		% pass rate	50	91	85
City and Guilds diploma in networking	2	No. of starts	28	19	20
		% retention	79	89	90
		% pass rate	86	100	100
BTEC national diploma (two years)	3	No. of starts	*	16	20
		% retention	*	56	90
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled*

***Quality of education and training***

57. The best lessons are well planned. In these lessons, students are given well-designed learning materials and are set a variety of appropriate activities. They find these interesting, which motivates them to develop and reinforce their IT skills. In one lesson on web design, students were provided with a good demonstration of techniques using a data projector. They were then encouraged to explore the capabilities of the industry-standard web page software. The end result was some very high-quality web pages. Tracking sheets are used to record students' progress during lessons. These tracking sheets are used as a basis for setting targets for the college task-based learning sessions. Good use is made of a touch typing computer programme. However, there is an over-reliance on workbooks in IT lessons. The most-able students often finish tasks early and are not given work to extend their learning. Students often make inappropriate use of network resources, for example, to play games.

58. Staff are well qualified, many with post-graduate qualifications, but there has been little recent industrial and commercial updating. Rooms are well furnished, with good wall displays reinforcing students' learning, and are well lit. Students and staff have good access to high-standard software

and hardware and a well-maintained network. Good use is made of the intranet for CLAIT and level 3 students. Students are able to access this facility from home.

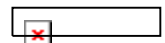
59. Assessment and monitoring are thorough. Full-time students are set individual targets based on prior achievement. Effective regular reviews take place with all full-time and many part-time students. Targets are regularly monitored and detailed records are kept. Students' work is well marked with helpful comments. Good records of progress are kept for most students. Teachers meet regularly to review the progress of individual students and take appropriate action if needed.

60. The college has adopted a unitised curriculum at levels 1 and 2. This enables part-time students to undertake single units of qualifications rather than whole programmes, increasing students' choices and opportunities. The college has reviewed its offering to the local community and as a result directed more students to more appropriate Learndirect programmes. There are insufficient links with local IT employers. Students do not have regular contact with industry and commerce and lack a clear understanding of the realities and applications of ICT in the workplace. Teachers provide good support for individual students in practical lessons. Knowledgeable tutors give unobtrusive advice and guidance in a positive manner to students at all levels. Students are generally well advised when joining programmes and are effectively advised on suitable progression routes. Tutorial support outside the classroom is well managed.

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

61. Full-time programmes are well managed and there are good quality assurance procedures in place. Full-time courses have been reviewed regularly. The GNVQ intermediate course was dropped in 2002 and replaced by a diploma in IT. This has increased students' satisfaction and given better results. A new level 1 course has also been introduced, widening students' opportunities. Weekly staff meetings are clearly recorded and have standing agenda items that cover such things as students causing concern, equal opportunities issues and sharing good practice. The intranet is well used for course management and for staff communications. Short course and part-time provision are not so well managed, with responsibilities shared across sites and programme areas and with inadequate co-ordination.

### **Hospitality and leisure and travel**



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

Contributory grade for leisure and travel is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates in hospitality
- challenging and effective teaching and learning in hospitality
- good learning resources

- effective induction programme
- excellent links with external organisations
- good learning support
- highly effective management of hospitality provision.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) travel and tourism and low pass rates on Association of British Travel Agents Certificate (ABTAC) travel agents' certificate
- ineffective teaching in some travel and tourism lessons
- ineffective internal verification in travel and tourism.

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

62. The college offers a range of programmes in hospitality, catering and travel and tourism. There are 181 students on hospitality programmes and 47 travel and tourism students. Courses include NVQ food preparation at foundation, level 1, level 2 and level 3. The department also offers NVQ level 1 food preparation for students aged 14 to 16 through the partnership developed between the college and local schools. First and national diplomas are offered in travel and tourism. A range of additional courses are offered in both hospitality and travel and tourism. These include basic food hygiene, Open College Network (OCN) study skills certificate, level 1 competence certificates in Spanish and Italian, travel agency certificate, overseas representatives course and communication and IT key skills.

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

63. Retention and pass rates are high on all hospitality programmes. The pass rates on NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking have been 100% for the last three years. The level 2 pass rate in 2002 was 75%, which represents a 22% improvement over the last three years. There has been significant improvement in retention rates on the NVQ food preparation and cooking course at both levels. At level 2, in particular, retention rates have improved dramatically and are now 28% above the national average. Students have developed good IT skills and good practical skills in catering at level 1. The standard of work in portfolios is good in hospitality. Attendance and punctuality are very



good across all programmes. There are poor retention rates on the AVCE travel and tourism course. Since 2000/01, retention rates have declined by 18% to the current rate of 41%. The number of AVCE students achieving high grades in 2002 was low: only 14% of second-year students and 8% of first-year students. Progression to HE for travel and tourism students is poor, with only two students progressing to higher courses in the last two years. Achievement on the ABTAC travel agents' certificate is particularly low and declining. In 2000/01, the pass rate was 59% but in 2002/03 the figure had dropped to 33%. The college identified this poor performance in its own self-assessment report.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	29	*	21
		% retention	52	*	76
		% pass rate	53	*	75
ABTAC travel agents' certificate	2	No. of starts	21	34	21
		% retention	67	79	86
		% pass rate	71	59	33
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	29	*	17
		% retention	59	*	41
		% pass rate	88	*	86

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

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

64. Teaching and learning in hospitality are challenging, interactive and fun. Lessons successfully engage and motivate students. Theory lessons in particular are effectively taught. In one example, a variety of vegetables were taken into the class so students could identify them easily. Games are played to check understanding and help to the students remember what they have learnt. Videos of current television programmes are used effectively to demonstrate different methods of recruitment, interview techniques and cookery. Good use is made of available texts and the college learning resource centre for internet research. Overall, lessons use a broad range of teaching methods which keep the students motivated and enhance their learning. Teaching in travel and tourism is mostly satisfactory. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, students are not effectively engaged. Lesson planning in travel and tourism fails to acknowledge the range of abilities within the group and to provide effective activities to enable higher-level achievement.

65. The induction programme is very effective across the programme area. Catering students follow a well-planned programme in the first four weeks to develop their basic skills and confidence. The attainment for these students is high at this early stage of their training. In travel and tourism the induction is planned over an extended period to allow students the opportunity for a one-week taster to ensure they are on the right programme. Visits are arranged to tour operators and visitor attractions. All students start on an OCN qualification in study skills, which they complete by week ten. Catering students achieve their basic food hygiene certificate in the first four weeks.

66. Learning resources are good. Handouts and books in the theory classes are of a high quality and most learning materials provided for students have website links. Students make good use of the Internet to research assignment work. Classrooms are well resourced. The IT suite is particularly good. Library stock is extensive and includes a wide range of text, journals, trade papers, CD-ROMs and videos for both areas. The college has opened a fully Association of British Travel Agents

(ABTA) bonded travel shop, which provides students with work experience opportunities. Each area of learning has a dedicated advisor in the library. The catering department has bought specialist equipment to accommodate a wheelchair user who enrolled this year. Staff in hospitality are well qualified and experienced and update their skills regularly. Travel and tourism staff have extensive, recent and relevant industrial experience. The catering facilities for catering students are inadequate. They are cramped and lockers are too small to hold students' clothes. There are insufficient lockers for part-time students and there are no shower facilities.

67. Assessment practices for hospitality and catering are satisfactory. However, there are inconsistent practices in travel and tourism. Assignment briefs are not imaginative and do not always cover the assessment criteria for the units. Assessor feedback fails to highlight key areas for improvement and internal verification is ineffective. For example, it failed to identify work that had been over graded. Recording documentation was, in many cases, incomplete. Some issues raised by the external verifier have not been actioned and there have been no assessor meetings in the last 12 months. There are an insufficient number of qualified internal verifiers to adequately co-ordinate assessment in travel and tourism.

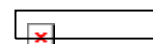
68. Links with external organisations are excellent. The hospitality department have a highly effective working relationship with a local work-based learning provider. The learning process is shared between the college and provider throughout the student's programme and high-quality work placements provide valuable and realistic industry experience. Catering students have been successful in a wide range of national competitions. In travel and tourism, very good links have been established with English heritage, national tour operators, retail travel agencies and local shipping and cruise companies.

69. There is good support to help individual students in lessons. A dedicated learning support tutor works closely with the tutor and dedicated in-class support is provided for students. There is close monitoring of progress through academic and personal tutors. Targets are set for attendance, punctuality and completion of work. Study skills support is in place to enable students to make the most of the college's approach to flexible learning. A support log is maintained by the tutor and the students' action plan is regularly reviewed to check progress being made.

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

70. The management of hospitality is highly effective. In travel and tourism, management is satisfactory. In hospitality, there are clear strategic plans for the provision. In both areas, there is very good and effective communication between the staff and students. Hospitality has developed an excellent and productive partnership with a local work-based learning provider. In travel and tourism, an effective employer forum has recently been established. In hospitality, there are clearly planned progression routes for students. In both areas, tutors are fully informed of targets and work hard to achieve them. Staff and students are well motivated and keen to progress. There are monthly meetings with the staff. In hospitality, this extends to the partnership. In both areas, good use is made of management information to identify slow progress and attendance, and good action planning ensures continuous improvement. The manager has good industrial links which effectively enhance students' learning. Students benefit from work experience at racecourses and for a large national company in London.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

### ***Strengths***

- very good teaching and learning
- high levels of practical and theoretical skills
- outstanding retention and pass rates on most courses
- good support for students
- effective use of links with local employers
- excellent leadership and management
- good quality assurance.

### ***Weaknesses***

- no significant weaknesses identified.

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

71. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapies. NVQs at levels 1 to 3 or their equivalents are offered for hairdressing and beauty therapy and at levels 2 to 3 for holistic therapy. Full-cost courses are also offered in hairdressing. Courses in hairdressing allow prospective students to start throughout the academic year. Hairdressing students also have the opportunity to train full time at college or through a combination of work-based and college-based training. Timetabling takes account of parents who have to organise childcare. The college has developed programmes in both hairdressing and beauty therapy for school pupils aged 14 to 16. There are 5 local schools that participate in these programmes, with 38 pupils working towards NVQ level 1. Over one-quarter of the pupils who complete these programmes progress to full-time FE courses in the area.

72. There are 177 full-time students and 228 part-time students enrolled. Of those on full-time courses, 107 are hairdressing students, 54 beauty therapy students and 16 holistic therapy students. Students on holistic therapy courses have the opportunity to acquire additional qualifications, such as body massage and nutrition. Of the part-time students, 62 are studying for beauty therapy qualifications, 113 students are enrolled on holistic therapy programmes, 53 students are enrolled on NVQ level 1 to 3 hairdressing and short courses. There is a separate programme for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Achievement and standards**

73. Retention and pass rates for hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapy courses are excellent and well above the national average for the majority of courses. Progression routes are good and many students successfully progress to higher levels. One student recently progressed from NVQ level 2 and level 3 to a degree course in complementary therapies. Key skills training is effectively delivered within the curriculum and achievement for communications at level 1 is outstanding.

74. Students' written work is of a very high standard and is neat, tidy and well referenced. Some students demonstrate high-level skills of IT application in their assignment work. Second-year students showed higher levels of commercial competence in their vocational skills than expected at this stage of their course. In hairdressing sessions, students worked on an extensive and varied client base, working independently and requiring little advice and guidance. Second-year students produced foil highlights whilst paying particular attention to detail. Sectioning of the hair was meticulous and the foil application was of an extremely high standard.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
NVQ hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	45	48	53
		% retention	47	60	70
		% pass rate	81	97	95
NVQ beauty therapy (one year)	2	No. of starts	28	42	38
		% retention	93	71	84
		% pass rate	81	77	94
Indian head massage diploma (one year and delivered as a short course)	2	No. of starts	29	67	32
		% retention	97	69	97
		% pass rate	100	87	100
Body massage certificate (one year)	3	No. of starts	27	45	30
		% retention	85	87	93
		% pass rate	100	97	100
Diploma in reflexology (one year)	3	No. of starts	*	16	17
		% retention	*	81	88
		% pass rate	*	100	100
Diploma in holistic therapies (one year)	3	No. of starts	29	*	16
		% retention	83	*	100
		% pass rate	96	*	100

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

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

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

75. Teaching is excellent. Teaching and training effectively support the students to produce work to industry standards. Teaching was good or better in most of the lessons observed. Students' progress is regularly checked and assessed. Lessons are stimulating and challenging and planning is thorough. Staff are highly qualified and maintain high levels of industrial competence by working

regularly in the industry.

76. In one outstanding hairdressing lesson, a feature of the activity was a vocationally relevant quiz. The lecturer skilfully guided students through discussion. First-year students, in particular, demonstrate very high levels of practical competence within the first six weeks of their programme. In one holistic therapy class, students gave a back, neck and shoulder massage to a professional standard. Students also accurately identified the position and action of all facial muscles.

77. There is very good support for students. Pre-entry guidance is thorough and includes assessment of manual dexterity and checks of students' understanding of the industry. Initial assessment is good and clearly identifies individual learning styles for students to follow. This fully informs the teaching. There are good gender, ethnic and age mixes on many courses. Learning support assistants are effectively utilised by lecturers in the delivery of teaching and learning. They discreetly and effectively support those students identified as requiring additional support. Physical resources are excellent and the hairdressing facilities have recently been updated, with the help of a leading hairdressing company. The hairdressing salons have modern equipment and furniture to support learning. Beauty therapy has good equipment to support learning, and salons are bright and airy. The new laundry facilities in beauty therapy are excellent and are used effectively. Both areas use high-quality lotions and materials for teaching. Students are punctual and latecomers are challenged appropriately. There is consistently high attendance.

78. There are excellent industrial links in hairdressing, which uses 39 salons across the island to extend learning. There are 30 work-based assessors who work in these salons and who are used effectively to assess students in the workplace. This association with the industry reflects the students' high levels of commercial competence and understanding. Hairdressing students on the full-time salon course attend college one day a week and then work in the salons four days a week. Hairdressing students on the full-time college course attend college four days a week and work in the salons for one day. Students have a good opportunity to acquire additional qualifications. They also participate in shows and competitions on the mainland and on the island to further develop their interest and skills.

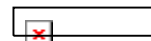
### ***Leadership and management***

79. Leadership and management are excellent. All staff are fully involved with setting targets and ensuring the quality of the curriculum within their area. There is excellent communication at all levels within the area, with regular meetings and updating sessions between full-time and part-time staff. Good practice is shared to enable staff to maintain and deliver high-quality programmes. The programme area manager maintains a high profile and keeps staff regularly updated on all issues. Course managers and teaching staff work hard to maintain the high quality of teaching and learning. All procedures and targets are rigorously monitored to maintain extremely high levels of retention and pass rates in all programmes. These are checked regularly throughout the year and during course reviews.

80. Quality assurance is thorough and rigorous. The application of internal verification is outstanding across the curriculum. All assessments are closely monitored, standardised and consistently applied. Managers regularly review internal verification at every stage. Students fully understand the assessment and verification procedures. All assignment work is thoroughly internally monitored and standardisation checks take place across the curriculum area. The quality and content of handouts are good and are checked for quality before use.

81. The teaching and learning observation process is effective and leads to continual improvements. There are very good professional development and staff development opportunities. These are clearly monitored and reviewed during appraisals.

### **Health, social care and public services**



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

### ***Strengths***

- Well-planned teaching
- high pass rates on most courses
- very good support for students
- good curriculum management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient resources for some tutorials
- insufficient monitoring of students' progress in some lessons.

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

82. There are currently 207 full-time and 208 part-time enrolments across levels 1 to 3, including foundation award in caring for children, first diplomas and national diplomas in caring and public services, certificate and diploma in childcare and education, and NVQs in care and early years. There is a small off-site counselling training provision and an evening certificate in welfare studies course. Other specialist part-time courses in care practice, playwork and community mental health are available. The college offers school links provision for students aged 14 to 16. Enrichment opportunities include a number of relevant additional courses including library skills, food hygiene and community sports leader award. Placements are available in the local community in a variety of settings including local schools, private day nurseries, residential care homes and hospitals and in the college's own nursery.

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

83. Pass rates on many courses are above national averages. Pass rates on the NVQ in early years child care and education have been above national averages for the past three years. Pass rates are also good on the AVCE health and social care course. There was a 100% pass rate for the national diploma in public services in 2002/03. There have been declining retention rates on some courses. Retention rates on the AVCE and the certificate in child care and education have declined to below the national average. Changes have been made to counter this trend and improvements are already evident.

84. Students' portfolios display sound theoretical understanding of key concepts and an appreciation of current work practices. Students plan effectively and present findings of their learning activities. Skills in independent learning are well developed. For example, students creating a display are expected to consider not only its purpose but also the cost of creation and the potential for recycling materials. The task outline requires students to research, plan, find resources, break down costs and, finally, put up the finished work in a communal area. Students' oral contributions show high levels of knowledge and understanding. Key skills are clearly identified and developed.

85. Extension activities challenge higher level students. Students are highly motivated and are encouraged to achieve high standards. A points system for full-time courses establishes a baseline from which to monitor achievement and progress. This uses exam grades on entry and results of initial assessment. Planned progression is related to FE, HE or employment in relevant vocational areas. There are good links with local schools and good teaching in vocational subjects for students aged 14 to 16.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	20	22	26
		% retention	70	86	69
		% pass rate	93	95	94
Certificate in counselling skills	2	No. of starts	35	37	43
		% retention	77	89	91
		% pass rate	96	94	90
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	15	*	21
		% retention	60	*	48
		% pass rate	100	*	80
NVQ early years child care and education	3	No. of starts	*	24	25
		% retention	*	88	100
		% pass rate	*	90	92
NVQ care	3	No. of starts	*	24	15
		% retention	*	96	87
		% pass rate	*	57	85

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

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

86. Teaching is thoroughly planned, with detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. A flexible student-centred approach to teaching and learning has recently been introduced across the area, and staff explore the best approaches to teaching. Tasks support students' preferred learning styles, but also develop styles in which they may be weak. Well-produced materials to support task-based learning are available in classrooms and online through the use of the college's managed learning environment. Access to this is monitored centrally and is particularly well used by students on care, early years and public services courses. Equal opportunities issues are specifically emphasised in teaching materials. Attendance rates are high and students are enthusiastic about their work. The atmosphere in most classes is purposeful, with a good mix of activities taking place.

87. Teachers provide carefully designed exercises and activities for students to manage their own learning through the task-based methodology. In better lessons, students are engaged in meaningful activity throughout. In one outstanding lesson, students had researched childhood development theories and made a short dramatic presentation of this using a variety of props, make-up and music. This was very humorous and enjoyable for all. Teachers constantly reinforced and checked learning throughout the lesson. The activity was videoed for future reference. Work experience placements complement classroom teaching. There is an effective holistic approach to assessment for NVQs in the workplace. NVQ students use workbooks for their underpinning knowledge. This controls amounts of paperwork produced and allows students to concentrate on practical tasks.

88. There is some unsatisfactory teaching. In poor lessons, there is an over-didactic approach, with insufficient challenge and checking of knowledge. Some students are not engaged in learning and do not participate in the lesson at any time.

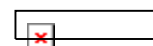
89. Individual support for students is good. Following initial interview and assessment, students are placed on courses which match prior attainment and experience. Targets and action plans monitor progress and students are well informed about their development. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from very good support tailored to their particular needs, for example, help with physical tasks. Tutorial support is valued and regular one-to-one sessions provide feedback on the outcomes of assessment and progress review. There is detailed and positive feedback on assessments in most cases, including practical work. Students are very complimentary of the college as a whole, and their immediate teaching team and pastoral support in particular. They value the advice and guidance received on personal issues, coursework and planning for progression. There is some dissatisfaction with central careers guidance. The learning resource centre contains a good range of up-to-date materials and these are well used.

90. There is good progress between levels, and many students have moved from level 1 to level 3 over time. The NVQ, welfare studies and counselling courses have an adult focus which is valued by students. A new and developing programme is in place for students aged 14 to 16 in care and public services. Staff have a wide range of relevant vocational experience. There is an expectation of three days professional updating annually. Teachers have produced a wide range of effective teaching materials. The main teaching block is lively and there are good displays of students' work.

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

91. Leadership and management are good. The management is particularly proactive and the team work well together. Commitment to the college vision is shared across the area, and there are frequent and regular exchanges of ideas and resources. Good communications exist between all team members, including the small number of part-time staff, via formal and informal systems, through meetings and the circulation of minutes. Staff value, and take advantage of, opportunities for continuous professional development. The advanced practitioner has a clear brief for supporting the development of staff and their approaches to teaching and learning.

### **Visual and performing arts and media**



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

Contributory grade for performing arts is **good (grade 2)**

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on national diploma in popular music and desktop publishing course



- high standard of students' work on performing arts courses
- good teaching and learning on performing arts courses
- effective curriculum management of performing arts.

### ***Weaknesses***

- art teaching which inadequately addresses students' weak skills.

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

92. The college provides a range of courses in the visual and performing arts. These include first diplomas in design and media, part-time courses in photography and computer graphics, and national diplomas in design, media and performing arts. There are 204 students enrolled on these courses. Most students are aged 16 to 18 attending full-time courses. The department utilises outside resources to complement its teaching, as well as teaching on the visual arts curriculum offered in the five Isle of Wight high schools. Some art classes, including ceramics, which were previously run in the college, are now provided in collaboration with a local public arts facility. A unique feature of the curriculum is the collaboration with an external, independent provider. This is a well-resourced and well-managed area which now provides the music and media curriculum.

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

93. Pass rates are high for the national diplomas in art and design and popular music. Retention rates on the popular music course have been high for the past three years, although on the art and design course they are unsatisfactory.

94. Students on national diploma courses have a good basic understanding of their subjects, and have acquired high levels of skills and factual knowledge. Many have developed the critical and evaluative skills required to achieve high grades. However, many students on the part-time art and design courses have not developed appropriate levels of skill, especially in photography and design. They have insufficient understanding of simple design ideas and are not fully engaged in their work, finding it hard to apply knowledge and skills to new situations.

95. The best students demonstrate good progress in acquiring and applying knowledge and understanding in music, media and art and design. Most work well independently, using a satisfactory range of resources and materials. The techniques and processes demonstrated by students are also satisfactory. Students on the national diploma in art and design, for example, produced particularly high-quality electronic drawings and colour work. They were totally absorbed in their work and design outcomes. The quality of work achieved was very good and showed disciplined craftsmanship, innovation and attention to accuracy and detail. However, the quality of work produced by some level 2 students was not so good.

96. Music students are highly motivated and are competent performers, with performance disciplines

well above the usual standard for the stage of their course. For example, a group of first-year BTEC national diploma students demonstrated excellent samba drumming techniques and were focused, energetic and in complete unison. Their tutor played along with them, demonstrating good drumming skills and conducting through the use of a whistle and mime simultaneously. Another group of students performed blues music to professional standards.

97. Standards of written work in art and design are sometimes poor. Some students have insufficient knowledge to choose and handle appropriate material to achieve their objectives. However, some of the best students' design work is impressive, where drawings and initial visual ideas contain well-written analysis. These students have the ability to effectively evaluate the use of materials and processes.

98. In music, very good standards of research and presentation are encouraged and received. For example, in one class, students were engaged in a detailed and sensitive study on Jimi Hendrix and his influence on subsequent music developments.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Desktop publishing	2	No. of starts	97	94	90
		% retention	69	82	89
		% pass rate	75	69	70
Foundation diploma in art and design	3	No. of starts	15	*	17
		% retention	73	*	71
		% pass rate	100	*	92
National diploma in popular music	3	No. of starts	17	18	25
		% retention	94	89	88
		% pass rate	78	100	91

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

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

99. Lessons are carefully planned and their content accurately reflects the requirements of awarding bodies. Students are highly motivated and teachers are able to hold their interest well. For example, in a first diploma in design class, students were introduced to clay work for the first time; they all produced surface designs and cut-out clay shapes of exceptional visual form and quality.

100. Art and design teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and are effective at ensuring that students learn and understand basic factual knowledge. A comprehensive range of teaching methods is used across most courses. Classroom management is good and teachers demonstrate skills in motivating students, although some art and design students are unmotivated. On the first diploma in design course, some teaching is too technical for students to clearly understand and is often over-prescriptive.

101. Students are provided with a wide range of well-designed handouts and worksheets which support the teaching. The best of these provide demanding tasks for students. The resources and accommodation at the external area used for music are of a very high standard and are well used and valued by students. The systems for monitoring and improving students' performance are good. Most students submit their coursework and produce sufficient written work. There is good emphasis on the development of the skills of analysis and evaluation. Most homework is marked promptly and

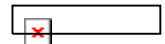
accurately, and many of the teachers' comments give adequate guidance to students on what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. There are clear arrangements to set targets to encourage them to improve.

102. The learning resource centre is well stocked with a good range of books and other learning materials for art and music. These are well used. Guidance and support for students are effectively managed. Additional learning support is well provided for by vocationally qualified tutors.

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

103. Management and leadership of the performing arts section are good. There is a clear organisational structure and allocation of responsibilities through the course manager. The management of media has recently transferred to the performing arts curriculum leader and improved standards of leadership are already becoming apparent in the area. Management and leadership of the art and design provision are satisfactory. There is a clear focus on improving students' achievements and retention rates on some level 3 qualifications. The self-assessment reports for these areas were accurate and a fair reflection of the provision.

## **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- consistently high pass rates on access to HE and GCSE English courses
- imaginative and well-planned teaching on the access to HE
- high-quality resources that enhance learning
- effective personal and academic support for students
- good leadership and management of the area.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor pass rate for GCE AS English literature

- poor retention rate for GCE AS psychology
- some teaching does not meet the needs of all students.

### **Scope of provision**

104. The main provision in humanities is the access to HE course, which is offered on a daytime, full-time or part-time basis. Students can choose from a good range of modules including psychology, sociology, gender studies, literary studies, communication studies, human and social biology and history. All other courses are part time only. These include GCE AS and A2 psychology, GCE AS law and GCE AS English literature. Other GCE A-level provision has been transferred to local high schools. GCE AS psychology and GCSE English language are offered as either day or evening classes. GCE AS law and English literature are offered as evening provision. The majority of students on GCSE and GCE AS and A2 courses are adult students. There are 222 students in this curriculum area, 158 on day courses and 64 on evening provision.

### **Achievement and standards**

105. Pass rates have been consistently high on access to HE and GCSE English courses. For GCE AS psychology, the 2003 pass rate was high and the percentage of high grades is above the average for similar colleges. Pass rates for GCE AS law have been consistently above the national average, but numbers have declined. Numbers have also declined for GCE AS English literature, where pass rates are below average. Retention rates are above the national average on all courses except GCE AS psychology.

106. Standards achieved are appropriate to the demands of the course. Standards of oral presentation are high on access to HE. In an access to HE human and social biology lesson, students ably presented the outcome of their research findings on the calorific value of food and the structure and function of the digestive system. In gender studies, students confidently and fluently reviewed texts dealing with feminist issues. One student competently evaluated *Big Women* by Fay Weldon, incorporating an interesting personal response to the text. Students displayed good knowledge and understanding of radical feminism, patriarchy and second wave feminism. The use of humour enlivened presentations for the audience. Standards of research are good. Sociology students successfully researched and evaluated functionalist, interpretive, Marxist, Weberian and feminist perspectives. GCSE students are able to make good use of their experience and maturity to promote their learning.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	72	92	75
		% retention	72	73	84
		% pass rate	85	78	73
Access to HE (one year full time)	3	No. of starts	19	21	*
		% retention	89	81	*
		% pass rate	88	100	*
Access to HE (two year	3	No. of starts	*	29	26

part time)		% retention	*	34	35
		% pass rate	*	100	100
GCE AS psychology	3	No. of starts	35	39	38
		% retention	80	51	63
		% pass rate	54	55	92
GCE AS English literature	3	No. of starts	45	16	15
		% retention	71	75	87
		% pass rate	97	92	69
GCE AS law	3	No. of starts	33	26	*
		% retention	73	81	*
		% pass rate	92	76	*

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

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

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

107. Teaching on most courses is good. Lessons are well planned and interesting. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they share with their students through interesting and stimulating learning activities. Students are acquiring the appropriate higher level thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In a GCE AS English literature lesson, students engaged in lively discussion on the various merits of the film and the text version of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. They identified the key features of character and plot and compared and contrasted the linguistic features of the film and text versions. Teachers effectively develop students' oral and writing skills. In a GCSE English lesson, students wrote interesting short fiction stories and personal anecdotes. Students can use appropriate technical terminology and can argue logically, taking account of ethical considerations in research. Access psychology students accurately identified the conditioned and unconditioned stimulus and response in classical conditioning experiments and evaluated the ethical considerations of experiments involving human participants. GCE AS psychology students make appropriate reference to primary research and are familiar with key theorists and perspectives. GCE AS psychology students critically considered the Atkinson and Shiffrin model of 'memory'. GCE A2 students successfully evaluated different theories of abnormality and deviance. In the less successful lessons, the needs of all students are not fully met. Teaching is insufficiently student-centred and there is too narrow a range of activities.

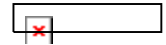
108. Staff are well qualified and have appropriate teaching qualifications. They make effective use of high-quality resources to support learning. Handouts are used effectively for revision. Teaching materials are available for students on the college intranet, which also provides valuable research material. Library materials are up to date and appropriate to advanced level study. Computers are readily available for independent study and used regularly and effectively by students.

109. Assessment is frequent and thorough. Students' work is marked regularly using examination board criteria, which helps them to identify how close they are to their target grades. It is annotated with constructive comments to help raise standards of performance. Clear assessment timetables enable students to prepare for assessed assignments and tests. Reviews of students' performance are effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses and planning actions. Personal and academic support and guidance are of a high standard and are valued by students. Weekly tutorials form an integral part of the access to HE course. These effectively cover a range of topics including study, essay writing, oral and communication skills. The induction process enables students to make a smooth transition into regular study. Tutors give freely of their time to meet with students on a one-to-one basis to meet individual needs.

## ***Leadership and management***

110. Leadership and management are good. There is clear strategic direction in the area. Strenuous efforts have been made to enable students with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences to find courses which meet their academic and personal needs. The introduction of a pre-access course at GCSE level successfully prepares students for advanced level courses, and provides progression within the college. Advertising in a wide range of locations has encouraged more male students to join courses. Provision has been rationalised in partnership with local high schools. Management is collaborative and consultative. Teams meet regularly to focus on curriculum and attainment issues. Strategies are put in place to address areas of weakness or to try and enhance the provision. Effective procedures and practices ensure good quality assurance. Tutors are observed regularly by managers and share good practice. Students' work is closely monitored. There is a firm focus on equal opportunities and widening participation of the local community. Strategies to redress the gender imbalance are starting to have effect and sensitive timetabling takes account of the needs of students with children.

## **Foundation programmes**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good teaching and learning
- high standard of students'; work
- effective use of resources
- good range of provision
- good leadership and management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient additional learning support for students on key skills programmes in some areas.

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

111. The area for foundation programmes makes provision for students to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills and key skills, and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and additional learning support needs. The area provides a comprehensive range of full-time and part-time courses, which are responsive to local requirements. Courses include family learning, which is offered in schools across the island. A unique course for students with social, emotional or health-related needs is also provided. In addition to supporting students across the college who have additional learning needs, the department provides additional support for students on HE courses and for school pupils aged 14 to 16 on vocational taster courses. A range of qualifications is offered including courses in literacy and numeracy, OCN library and research skills, essential skills award and other courses to suit the needs of individuals. There are 224 students receiving additional learning support, 59 full-time and part-time students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and 119 full-time and 171 part-time students attending various programmes of study.

### **Achievement and standards**

112. Students produce high-quality work and in some cases the standards are above those expected. Retention and pass rates are above the national averages for most courses. The life skills programme, Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) and the City and Guilds 3792 literacy programme are above the national average for retention and pass rates in most cases. Students' attendance and punctuality is good. Students are set realistic goals to achieve, enabling them to progress well.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Life skills	E	No. of starts	195	85	86
		% retention	95	94	90
		% pass rate	100	99	99
OCR adult literacy	E	No. of starts	*	89	23
		% retention	*	61	91
		% pass rate	*	37	90
City and Guilds 3792 basic numeracy	E	No. of starts	*	*	18
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	100
City and Guilds 3792 literacy	1	No. of starts	*	*	126
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	90
City and Guilds 3792 adult numeracy	1	No. of starts	*	*	30
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	97

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

\*denotes courses not run

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

113. Teaching and learning are good. Courses are well planned with the needs of the community in mind. Students' interest is maintained by using a wide range of teaching strategies and resources.

Students develop confidence, self-assurance, communication skills and social skills. In one lesson, students were encouraged to learn about quality control: they had to identify which Christmas ornaments were not up to standard and the reasons why. They successfully achieved this. Students were interested and highly motivated in all aspects of what they were learning. In another lesson, a student successfully learnt and remembered how to spell 'library'. The strategy used was to think of the word 'bra' and then visualise the item of clothing, linking it to the word.

114. There is a good range of learning resources. Some 41 learning assistants support students with literacy and numeracy difficulties across the college. The support that is offered is effective and enables students to achieve. The learning resource centre has a wide range of books for students of all levels to use. All materials are clearly linked to the national literacy and numeracy standards. Students have access to a wide range of IT, both in and out of class. Materials and handouts are produced in formats to suit the individual needs of students.

115. There is insufficient additional learning support for students on key skills programmes across the college. Programmes at levels 1 to 2 in some areas have very large class numbers. Students lose interest and become involved in unrelated conversations with other students. Teachers spend time with students who need help with tasks whilst other students wait for help and are not engaged in learning. Students are easily distracted by classroom intrusions and learning is interrupted. Some students struggle to complete tasks.

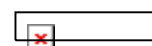
116. There is effective initial assessment. This is ongoing for an extended 6-week induction period and forms the basis of students' personal development plan. During this time, students' support needs are assessed. Individual students' programmes are amended to take into account the results of the initial assessments and targets are set for learning and personal achievement. Students' progress is regularly assessed and monitored, although recording of progress is not always clear.

117. There is a good range of provision to meet the needs of students in the college and those in the community. Times of classes are flexible to accommodate individual students. Free computer training linked to literacy and numeracy is offered in rural areas to both adults and children. This training is successfully provided in the libraries and through the use of a library bus. Library staff undertook literacy and numeracy training in order to be more aware of the needs of students. Staff have created good links with the community, including social services, the LEA and schools.

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

118. Leadership and management are good. The self-assessment report is detailed and the resulting action plan is regularly monitored. Staff use data effectively to monitor the changing trends in provision, which in turn informs lesson and curriculum planning. The manager and staff share a common purpose of putting the students' learning and personal development first. There are effective quality systems that are monitored regularly for improvement. There are frequent informal discussions, good communication and regular meetings to discuss students and their individual development needs. Curriculum planning takes into account the diverse needs of students. The introduction of the extended induction period has proved successful in identifying appropriate personal and learning targets for students. There is good staff development linked to appraisal. The breadth and range of the curriculum offers equality of opportunity to all students.

## **Part D: College data**



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



Level	16-18	19+
1	39	41
2	28	25
3	10	11
4/5	0	1
Other	24	21
<b>Total *</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2003

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

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

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%) *
Science and mathematics	141	314	4
Land-based provision	39	90	1
Construction	219	422	5
Engineering, technology and manufacture	205	182	3
Business administration, management and professional	119	405	4
Information and communication technology	160	873	8
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	5	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	305	600	7
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	174	220	3
Health, social care and public services	331	1,364	13
Visual and performing arts and media	444	583	8
Humanities	482	253	6
English, languages and communication	958	680	13
Foundation programmes	205	213	3
Unknown AOL	1,397	1,286	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,179</b>	<b>7,490</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2003

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

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	553	1,048	1,210	616	1,389	1,261
	Retention rate (%)	66	72	85	73	68	77
	National average (%)	75	76	*	69	70	*
	Pass rate (%)	60	64	81	76	82	83
	National average (%)	69	71	*	68	71	*
2	Starters excluding transfers	931	787	754	1,225	1,371	1,069
	Retention rate (%)	68	68	73	61	67	70
	National average (%)	70	72	*	68	68	*
	Pass rate (%)	63	78	78	73	83	79
	National average (%)	69	71	*	68	72	*
3	Starters excluding transfers	692	433	348	912	835	605
	Retention rate (%)	61	74	68	63	71	73
	National average (%)	71	77	*	68	70	*
	Pass rate (%)	74	77	83	80	79	83
	National average (%)	77	79	*	69	72	*
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	**	**	**	70	49	49
	Retention rate (%)	**	**	**	59	63	61
	National average (%)	**	**	**	67	67	*
	Pass rate (%)	**	**	**	59	58	67
	National average (%)	**	**	**	55	56	*

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 2001 to 2003: College ISR

\* data unavailable

\*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

**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)	64	29	7	34
Level 2 (intermediate)	64	34	2	44
Level 1 (foundation)	76	21	3	58
Other sessions	93	7	0	14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>150</b>

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