



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Inspection report
City of Bath College

Dates of inspection: 12–21 January 2004

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Contents

Section	Page
Basic information about the college	iv
Part A: Summary	1
Information about the college	1
How effective is the college?	1
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas	3
How well is the college led and managed?	5
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?	5
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?	5
Students' views of the college	6
Other information	6
Part B: The college as a whole	7
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors	7
Achievement and standards	7
Quality of education and training	9
Leadership and management	13
Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas	16
Science and mathematics	16
Construction	19
Engineering	23
Business	27
Information and communications technology	31
Hospitality and catering, travel and tourism	34
Sport	38
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	41
Visual arts	45

Performing arts, media and music	49
Humanities	52
English and modern foreign languages	56
Literacy and numeracy	60
Part D: College data	63
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age	63
Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age	63
Table 3: Retention and achievement	64
Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level	65

Basic information about the college

Name of college:	City of Bath
Type of college:	General further education
Principal:	Liz McIntyre
Address of college:	Avon Street Bath BA1 1UP
Telephone number:	01225 312191
Fax number:	01225 444213
Chair of governors:	Chris Preston
Unique reference number:	130558
Name of reporting inspector:	Annella Mochan HMI
Dates of inspection:	12–21 January 2004

Part A: Summary

Information about the college

City of Bath is a medium-sized general further education (FE) college located in the centre of the city. The college serves the local communities of Bath and the wider area of North East Somerset. The economy of Bath and North East Somerset is dominated by the service sector. The area has a high concentration of public sector jobs. Almost all of the employers in the area are small-sized to medium-sized businesses. Unemployment in the area is low. However, there are pockets of considerable deprivation and disadvantage. Three wards within Bath are above the regional and the English national average in terms of multiple deprivation. The post-16 participation rate in Bath and North East Somerset is high. Overall, the area has a minority ethnic population of around 3%.

The college provides a wide range of academic and vocational courses from foundation and pre-entry courses to degree programmes and professional qualifications. It offers education and training in all 14 of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) areas of learning. The largest area of provision is visual, media and performing arts. The college's sixth form offers around 38 advanced subsidiary levels (AS levels) and general certificate of education advanced levels (GCE A levels). A significant number of international students study at the college. In November 2003, the college was awarded funding for a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in construction (stonemasonry) as part of a consortium with Weymouth College and York College. The college has established good working practices with the partner colleges to develop this unique CoVE. In 2002/03, the college enrolled around 1,700 full-time students and 8,000 part-time students. About 81% of students were aged 19 or over, of whom 91% were part time. There is a small amount of work-based learning provision, mainly in hairdressing and engineering.

The college's mission is to 'empower the people of our community through an inclusive high quality learning experience'.

How effective is the college?

Inspectors judged provision in visual arts to be outstanding. Provision in business, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and performing arts, media and music is good. Provision in science and mathematics, construction, engineering, information and communications technology (ICT), sport, humanities, English and modern foreign languages, and literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The provision in hospitality and catering and travel and tourism is unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- good strategic planning
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- good strategic leadership by governors and managers
- wide range of provision
- effective personal support for students
- the visual arts provision.

What should be improved

- pass rates, particularly on level 1 courses
- standards of attainment
- quality of teaching and learning
- provision in hospitality and catering and travel and tourism
- key skills teaching and pass rates
- attendance and punctuality
- the recording and use of data on students' achievements
- the rigour and effectiveness of quality assurance.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Pass rates on most AS-level subjects are high. Teaching of mathematical concepts is good. Much teaching fails to maintain students' interest and their learning is not checked sufficiently. Quality assurance is weak.
Construction	Satisfactory. Retention rates are high on most courses. The teaching of craft skills in stonemasonry is good. Pass rates on national vocational qualifications (NVQ) level 2 carpentry and joinery and NVQ level 3 mechanical engineering services are low. Some working practices in practical lessons are inappropriate.
Engineering	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on many courses are high. Teaching is mostly good or better. Resources for practical training are inadequate. Student attendance is poor.
Business	Good. Pass rates on GCE A-level business and law are high. Retention rates are high on professional courses. Students' evaluative and critical skills are good. In teaching, current business practice is insufficiently used.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) foundation and intermediate ICT and advanced vocational certificate education (AVCE) ICT are high. Learning resources are good. There are low and declining pass rates on many information technology (IT) courses. Some aspects of curriculum management are weak.
Hospitality and catering, travel and tourism	Unsatisfactory. There is much unsatisfactory teaching. Students' occupational skills are insufficiently developed. Curriculum management is unsatisfactory. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking are high. Links with industry in catering and travel are productive.

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Sport	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high in GCE A-level physical education. Pass rates on the community sports leader award are low. Students' practical skills are good. Teaching does not always meet the differing needs of students. Target setting with students is poor.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Retention and pass rates are high on full-time courses. Students' progress is thoroughly monitored. Links with employers are effective. Accommodation and equipment are poor. Tutorial provision is weak.
Visual arts	Outstanding. Retention and pass rates are high. The standard of students' drawing is excellent. Much teaching in the spacious studios is imaginative. Curriculum management is good. Students' punctuality is poor.
Performing arts, media and music	Good. Retention and pass rates on most AS-level and GCE A-level courses are high, but low on many national diploma courses. The standard of students' work in performing arts and media is good. Pastoral support for students is strong. Accommodation is inadequate.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Retention rates on most courses are high. Pass rates are low on the one-year GCE A level. Students' analytical and communication skills are good. Much teaching does not maintain students' interest. Quality assurance lacks rigor.
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on GCE A-level English, but low on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) English language. Teaching on GCE A-level English literature is lively and effective. There is a narrow range of learning activities in English. The good range of modern foreign languages meets local needs.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. There is much stimulating teaching which develops students' literacy and numeracy skills. The range of courses is innovative. The take up of literacy and numeracy support is poor. Liaison between teachers and the learning support team is weak.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers provide a clear strategic direction. The principal provides clear leadership and works closely with senior managers. Management of most curriculum areas is at least satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in hospitality, travel and tourism. Quality assurance procedures to secure improvement are appropriate, but they are not consistently and rigorously applied. Overall, they have helped to improve retention rates and the quality of teaching. Students' achievements are gradually improving. Self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous. The use of pass rate data to inform self-assessment and management is underdeveloped. Course level target setting is weak and is hampered by the variations between locally and centrally held pass rate data. Equality of opportunity is actively pursued. Students' pass rates are not effectively analysed for the different categories of students. Financial management is effective and the college's financial position is improving. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to education and social inclusion is satisfactory. Widening participation and inclusion are central to the college's strategy. Curriculum changes have been made to better meet the needs of less traditional students and those in deprived parts of the city. Community links are being extended. The college is an active member of many local partnerships. However, links with employers are limited. The college largely fulfils its duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. There is an up-to-date policy to promote race equality and a detailed implementation and monitoring plan. Staff, managers and governors have undertaken appropriate training in equality and diversity. There are reports on enrolments, based on ethnicity, gender and age, but there is little analysis of retention and pass rate data. The progress of the implementation plan is regularly reviewed by the equality and diversity committee. Good progress has been made in the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA). A thorough assessment of the physical environment has led to considerable adaptations to most buildings. Procedures for eliminating discriminatory practice in admissions and teaching are being developed. The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are considered fully. The arrangements to meet the needs of students who require additional literacy and numeracy support are good. Governors receive detailed reports on equality and diversity and carefully monitor progress against implementation plans.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Support for students is good. Students receive good initial advice and guidance. Induction is detailed and informative and provides students with a good understanding of their study programme and college life. The identification of students' additional literacy and numeracy needs is effective. The provision of one-to-one additional learning support for students who take it up, is good. In addition, on programmes at levels 1 and 2, additional learning support is provided in many lessons. There is comprehensive support for students with other learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Tutorial provision is good. Students have easy access to a

good range of additional support services such as welfare, counselling, student mentors, and financial support. Careers advice and guidance for students progressing to employment or applying to HE are good.

Students' views of the college

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

What students like about the college

- friendly supportive staff
- welcoming and good working environment
- the flexibility of study
- good access to computers
- the canteen with low prices
- meeting new people and being treated like an adult.

What they feel could be improved

- access to lockers
- common room space
- the poor heating
- the poor lift access
- not enough parking.

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 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 and 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	57	35	8
19+ and WBL*	72	24	4
Learning 16–18	53	39	8
19+ and WBL*	69	28	3

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. The college offers a wide range of courses that can be studied full time or part time. The college aims to meet the education and training needs of the local community and the wider region. All 14 of the LSC areas of learning are covered, as Table 2 in part D of the report shows.
 2. Over the period 2000/01 to 2002/03, there has been an improvement in the proportion of students who complete their courses. The retention rates on courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 show an improving trend and in the main are above the national averages. The only exception to this pattern is the retention rate on level 2 courses for students aged 19 and over, which fell to around the national average in 2001/02. There is significant variability in the pass rates of students both within and across curriculum areas. Over the last three years, the overall pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 on courses at levels 2 and 3 have improved to above the national average. However, over the same period, the overall pass rate on level 1 courses has fallen to well below the national average. Over the period 2000/01 to 2002/03, the pass rates for adults on courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 show an improving trend to slightly above the national averages. The overall attendance rate in lessons observed by inspectors was slightly below the national average, at 75%. It was high, at 83%, in performing arts, but low in both engineering, and science and mathematics, at 67%. The average number of students in lessons was at the national average.
 3. The standard of most students' work is satisfactory or better. Students are generally well motivated and enjoy their studies. Many students develop good study skills and make effective use of the wide range of learning resources including those available on the intranet.
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Most students gain in confidence. Many students display good communication skills when giving presentations in lessons. Students on literacy and numeracy programmes develop their study skills, work well with others and make good progress. Students in most vocational areas are well prepared for progression to employment. In engineering, students develop a wide variety of practical occupational skills and related computer skills. Students' practical skills in stonemasonry are particularly well developed. Students in construction benefit from being taught in a CoVE. In the 2003 'Skillbuild' construction competition, students were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals and in the 'World Skills' competition a student was awarded a bronze medal for stonemasonry. Sports students achieve a high level of practical skills and a good number represent their county and country in competitive sporting events. Many visual arts students produce exceptional work in life painting and drawing. The standard of practical work in performing arts is high and students display strong acting and dance skills. In most humanities subjects, students have good literacy and communication skills. Students of modern foreign languages generally develop good oral skills in the target language and gain in confidence.

4. In many curriculum areas, there is good progression to the next level of study. The college prepares students well for entry to higher education (HE). In 2002 and 2003, about 78% of applicants to HE were successful.

5. Overall, achievements in work-based learning are mixed. Between 1999/2000 and 2002/03, in hairdressing, all learners enrolled on the advanced modern apprenticeship successfully gained the full framework. Achievement of the foundation modern apprenticeship is also good. However, achievement of the foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship in engineering, construction, business administration, and hospitality and catering is unacceptably low.

6. Overall, pass rates on the three key skills of application of number, ICT and communication are very poor. The retention rate on one-year courses is generally good, but on the two-year courses it is low. Most modern apprentices who successfully complete their NVQ often fail to obtain qualifications in key skills and this hampers the achievement of the full modern apprenticeship.

16 to 18 year olds

7. At the time of the inspection, 20% of the students aged 16 to 18 were following courses at level 1, 28% at level 2, and 41% at level 3. On these courses, the retention rates have improved since 1999/2000. In 2001/02, the overall retention rates on courses at levels 1 and 2 were above the national average at 80% and 77%, respectively. The retention rate on level 3 courses was in line with the national average. College data for 2002/03 indicate that retention rates continue to improve at levels 1 to 3.

8. Overall, the pass rates for these students are mixed. Over the period 1999/2000 to 2002/03, the overall pass rate on level 1 courses has been well below the national average. On level 2 courses, the pass rate improved between 1999/2000 and 2001/02 from below the national average, to 6% above. Between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, the pass rates on level 3

courses have hovered around the national average. College data for 2002/03, show that pass rates on both courses at levels 2 and 3 have risen to slightly above the national average.

9. The college's data on value added show that in many AS-level and GCE A-level subjects, students do not achieve their expected target grade based on those predicted from their prior achievement at GCSE. The proportion of AS-level and GCE A-level students gaining high grades of A and B varies widely across the different subjects.

Adult learners

10. Most adult students study part time, either in college in the day or evening. Some 60% of adults are on courses at either level 1 or level 2 and 21% at level 3. Since 1999/2000, the retention rates for adults on courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 have been consistently well above the national average. The only exception to this was in 2001/02 on level 2 courses when retention rates were in line with the national average. Between 1999/2000 and 2001/02, pass rates on level 1 courses have risen significantly from 13% below the national average to 6% above. Over the same period, pass rates on level 2 courses also improved and in 2001/02 they were close to the national average. The overall pass rates on level 3 courses have improved since 1999/2000, and in 2001/02 matched the national average. College data for 2002/03 show that the overall pass rates on courses at levels 1 to 3 were above the national average.

11. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about students' achievement and standards of work on particular courses.

Quality of education and training

12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 201 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 62% of lessons, satisfactory in 31% and less than satisfactory in 7%. This profile is similar to the average for general FE and tertiary colleges. Teaching was most effective in visual arts and construction and least effective in hospitality and catering and travel and tourism. The grades awarded for learning were slightly lower than those for teaching. Teaching is significantly better in lessons primarily for adult students than in lessons for students aged 16 to 18. Attainment during lessons is also significantly better for adults than for younger students.

13. There was variation in the quality of teaching and learning depending on the level of the course. The best teaching was at level 1, with 71% of lessons graded good or better and no teaching less than satisfactory. In contrast, only 50% of teaching at level 2 was good or better and 11% was judged less than satisfactory. Lessons taught by full-time teachers were better than those taught by part-time teachers. The proportion of good or better lessons was about the same, but a higher proportion of lessons taught by part-time teachers were less than satisfactory.

14. Most lessons are well planned. Learning materials are often well thought out and well produced and encourage students to work on their own and develop independent

learning skills. However, in too many lessons, student handouts are of poor quality and teachers do not use visual aids effectively. In a few instances, teachers do not display competence in the use of basic teaching aids such as whiteboards. In the more effective lessons, teachers skilfully involve students in group work, discussions and presentations. These activities extend students' knowledge and consolidate their previous learning. In the best practical and theory lessons, teachers use an appropriate mix of learning activities to stimulate students and maintain their interest. In addition, teachers set challenging targets and take account of the differing needs of students. On most vocational courses, there is a strong emphasis on good professional practice which motivates students. There are many good examples of teachers making effective links between theory and practice and applying learning to the world of work.

15. In the less effective lessons, teachers pay insufficient attention to the wide range of students' abilities, fail to challenge the more able students, and do not provide weaker students with enough encouragement to enable them to progress. Students frequently arrive late at lessons, are rarely challenged, and disrupt the learning of others. In many lessons, students are not given the opportunity to share experiences and ideas and their learning is not checked frequently enough. Teachers seldom use information learning technology (ILT) to enrich lessons. Too few curriculum areas make effective use of the extensive range of learning materials on the intranet and in the learning resource centre.

16. Overall, assessment practice is satisfactory. Policies and procedures for assessment and internal verification are clear. Assessment meets the requirements of awarding bodies. Students are well prepared for examinations. Assignments are generally carefully planned to ensure a balanced schedule and avoid assessment overload. However, in a few curriculum areas, students are not assessed frequently enough which hinders their progress. The standard of feedback on students' work is generally good. Most work is marked and returned promptly. Poor punctuation and spelling are generally corrected. Feedback is often detailed and constructive with helpful guidance on what students need to do to improve their performance. Good work is celebrated and praised with encouraging comments. Most internal verification is well planned and verifiers provide appropriate guidance to assessors. Lead internal verifiers work with assessors to ensure consistency. In a small number of curriculum areas, internal verification is weak.

17. Teachers are appropriately qualified for the subjects they teach. Most have or are working towards relevant teaching qualifications. Some 80% of the college's 222 full-time and fractional teachers and 54% of part-time teachers have a recognised teaching qualification. The college's development plan sets realistic targets to improve these figures. Good staff development enables those who do not have a teaching qualification to gain one. A professional practice mentor works effectively with new and established teachers. There is a good range of personal and professional development programmes. Teachers in a few curriculum areas lack recent and relevant industrial or commercial experience. In science, there is a good level of technician support which benefits students and teachers. However, in engineering and catering, there is a lack of technical support.

18. The college operates from six main buildings located in the centre of the city, one of which serves as a sixth form centre. In addition, construction provision is offered at Bath Trade Park and stonemasonry is taught at Corsham. Much of the accommodation is good. The New Start centre provides a good learning environment for students aged 14 to 16. Strenuous efforts have been made to improve movement around the sites for people with restricted mobility. Most buildings have good access for people with mobility difficulties. There are lifts, ramps and remotely operated doors. However, the Gainsborough building which houses most of the visual and performing arts, media, and music provision is not fully adapted for wheelchair users or those with mobility difficulties. The college has been slow to address this issue. Social space for students is limited and the common room is small. Students make good use of a well-resourced cyber café. The crèche facilities are sufficient. The college also provides financial support to students who find childcare at an alternative and more convenient location.

19. Classrooms are clean and well maintained. A minority are untidy and cluttered with unnecessary equipment. Most classrooms have whiteboards and projectors. There is an ample supply of televisions and videos to support teaching and learning. A few rooms have good displays of students' work. However, too many rooms are drab and uninspiring. Some classrooms are too small for the number of students in the group and this restricts the teaching and learning activities. Many rooms are poorly ventilated and are often too hot or too cold for comfort.

20. Students have easy access to drop-in ICT facilities with a good range of general and specialist software. Online learning materials are well designed to help students with their work. Technology to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. For example, there is software to enlarge and read text for visually impaired students. There are good student study areas, including private booths and study rooms for groups. The learning centre is well stocked. There is effective liaison between learning centre staff and teachers to ensure that learning materials are available to students to enable them to complete their assignments successfully. At Corsham, the ICT facilities are poor.

21. A good range of full-time courses is offered in most curriculum areas. The part-time curriculum offer has been reduced in some curriculum areas, particularly visual arts, humanities and catering. Courses range from pre-entry level through to advanced level. There are clear progression routes in many curriculum areas. In a few curriculum areas, there is no level 1 provision and consequently some of the students put on a higher level of course struggle. Many students benefit from taking qualifications in addition to their main course of study.

22. The college's policy on key skills is clear. All full-time students aged 16 to 18 have an entitlement to be supported in working towards the key skills of ICT, communication and number at a level which best suits their needs. A senior manager has responsibility for key skills. A key skills co-ordinator oversees the work of co-ordinators for each of the three main key skills. The delivery method and the quality of teaching in key skills are variable across the curriculum areas. In the less effective lessons, key skills are not sufficiently related to

students' main programme of study and they do not understand their significance. Assessment opportunities are not always clearly identified. In too many curriculum areas students' progress is not formally recorded. The majority of students fail to achieve their key skills qualification. The management of the key skills provision is not fully effective.

23. Currently, work-based learning is offered predominantly in hairdressing and engineering with a few learners in management and hospitality and catering. Links with schools involved in the increased flexibility programme are productive. Over 200 pupils aged 14 to 16 are studying a range of programmes at level 1 in carpentry, catering, hairdressing and floristry. A further 56 pupils are part of the New Start programme for disaffected young people and are either on courses in curriculum areas or undertaking preparatory training in the New Start centre. Collaboration with other local schools is improving.

24. Students receive good initial advice and guidance. Course information and marketing materials are satisfactory. College open days and curriculum taster days help inform students about the choices available. The admissions procedures are clear, fair and effectively managed for all students including part time and late applicants. Interviews are carried out by curriculum staff who have been trained in interview techniques, equality of opportunity and disability awareness. Induction is detailed and informative and enables students to fully understand the demands of their course.

25. There is a good range of enrichment activities. For many students, their time at college is enhanced by participating in a diverse range of events such as cultural trips to Europe, visits to the theatre and taking part in national and international competitions. Timetabling of lessons on Wednesday afternoon prevents humanities students taking part in the good range of team sports and competitions organised by the students' union.

26. The learning needs of full-time students and most substantial part-time students are diagnosed through initial assessment. Just over 50% of the students identified in need of support have taken advantage of the additional help available to them. A small proportion of students have not received the support they need due to a shortage of staff. Students are not followed-up and encouraged sufficiently to attend learning support. Appropriate arrangements are in place to support students with dyslexia and those with other learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The one-to-one support for students who attend the learning support centre is good. Students' progress is closely monitored. In lessons for students on courses at levels 1 and 2, learning support staff provide valuable extra help. This support is effectively used in visual arts, but better communication is needed between teachers and learning support assistants in travel and sport to maximise its effectiveness. The arrangements for additional learning support for work-based learners are satisfactory. There is inadequate monitoring of the impact of additional learning support on students' retention and pass rates.

27. Tutorial provision is generally effective. Most tutorials are well planned and useful to students. Students value the support they receive from teachers and their tutors. Monitoring of students' progress is thorough. Student attendance and punctuality are

checked regularly by tutors. However, in some curriculum areas, attendance is poor and student lateness is tolerated by teachers. The monitoring of learners' progress on work-based learning programmes is generally sound. Progress reviews in hairdressing are used well to set challenging targets for learners.

28. Students have easy access to a good range of additional support services. These include welfare, counselling, and student mentors who are attached to the students' union. Students have access to good financial support through the learner support fund. The fund is well managed and students most in need are given priority. Students living in Bath and North East Somerset have access to a local authority fund to support travel to college. The director of students is responsible for ensuring that child protection legislation is complied with. Currently, a policy and procedures relating to child and vulnerable persons protection are in draft format. Training has not yet been undertaken by any member of staff, but this is planned. In the meantime, issues which arise are dealt with in consultation with the local authority with whom the college liaises closely.

29. Careers advice and guidance are good and for part-time students have improved since the last inspection. The careers library is well stocked with information on FE and HE courses and careers. Liaison between the Connexions service and careers staff is good. There is insufficient communication between the careers department and curriculum teams with regard to course changes and the impact this has on career and HE opportunities for students.

Leadership and management

30. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and senior managers provide clear strategic direction. Central to the well-articulated strategy is the recognition of the importance of the college's role to Bath and North East Somerset. The strategic plan for 2003 to 2006 is clear and detailed and links the college's objectives to local and national education and training priorities. For example, college improvement targets are set for student recruitment and success rates, and teacher qualifications. Every six months, governors rigorously monitor progress against objectives. They also review the strategic plan and objectives at their annual residential event, with senior managers and student representatives. Staff have good opportunities to contribute to the college's vision, mission and strategy. The strategic plan is used to inform the college's development plan.

31. The principal provides clear leadership and works closely with the senior management team. Appropriate arrangements for managing the curriculum are being established. However, managers' roles and responsibilities are still developing and in some instances are unclear. Many heads of centre and programme area leaders are relatively new to their roles or have extended or changed responsibilities. The management of most curriculum areas is at least satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in hospitality and catering, and travel and tourism. At programme area level, communication is insufficiently promoted by a regular programme of formal meetings. For example, there are few formal meetings in sport, ICT, and hospitality and catering, and travel and tourism. In humanities, there are few written minutes of meetings and, in English and modern foreign languages, attendance at

meetings is poor. The management of ICT, which spans different centres, lacks coherence and communications are weak.

32. The management of work-based learning is satisfactory. There has recently been an extensive revision and improvement to policies, procedure and practices. Delivery, assessment and monitoring of the programmes are the responsibility of the curriculum teams and designated tutor assessors. Currently, about 70 learners are on work-based learning programmes. The college has plans to expand this area of its provision.

33. Arrangements to secure quality improvement are clear. However, they are not consistently and rigorously applied. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection carried out by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in February 1999 and the proportion of teaching judged to be less than satisfactory has fallen. Retention and pass rates demonstrate gradual improvement. Quality improvement is given a high priority by governors and senior managers. Governors systematically and closely monitor course performance through the curriculum and quality committee. Their work is increasingly effective and some of the outcomes of debate are beginning to influence the planning of the provision.

34. The quality assurance staff handbook has recently been revised. There is a schedule for self-assessment and development planning and procedures are clear. In a significant minority of curriculum areas, self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous. In most self-assessment reports, insufficient use is made of retention and pass rate data. Course level target setting for improvement is underdeveloped. Locally held data on students' achievements, used by course teams, often differs from the centrally held college data.

35. The outcomes from teaching and learning observations inform self-assessment. All teachers are observed at least annually. Although the scheme is thorough and systematic, there is considerable overgenerous grading of lessons. The college has sought to address this issue with further training for observers. Teachers' performance reviews are detailed, but there is no systematic monitoring of the progress that teachers make with their individual action plans. The professional practice mentor works closely with programme area leaders and provides good ongoing support for teachers.

36. Staff development is good and focuses appropriately on improving teaching and learning. The strategic plan, development plan priorities, and the outcomes from performance reviews are used to inform staff development. The principal takes the lead in many staff development activities. The five annual cross-college development days provide a valuable opportunity to address development needs.

37. Equality of opportunity and diversity are actively pursued. They are central to the college's strategy and objectives. Management arrangements are clear and an effective equality and diversity committee oversees the formulation of policy and monitors its impact. Implementation for key legislation is regularly reviewed by managers and governors. All policies are up to date, including those to promote equality and diversity and race equality. Policies have detailed implementation and monitoring plans. There are two equality officers

for staff and students. The college is largely in compliance with its duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, but the collecting and reporting of data are weak. There is insufficient analysis of retention and pass rate data based on ethnicity, gender and age. The implementation plan recognises this weakness. Good progress has been made in the implementation of the SENDA. Staff have undertaken appropriate training. Procedures for eliminating discriminatory practice in admissions and teaching are being developed. Arrangements to anticipate the needs of students with learning difficulties are in place.

38. The key strategic objective of developing the college's role in the local community is beginning to have impact. The principal takes the lead in promoting involvement in the community and in collaboration. Most prominent is the Bath Community Partnership, an initiative to address the high degree of deprivation in the south-west of the City. This includes the Bath Trade Park initiative which provides craft training in construction. The college is actively seeking to develop its links with employers, which at the moment are limited. There are some good initiatives with local schools for pupils aged 14 to 16.

39. The college is developing its capacity to generate and use reliable management information. Data are available to managers and staff, using the intranet or through printed reports. An electronic registration system has improved the reliability of student attendance data. Reliable and agreed data on retention rates and students' pass rates are less common. Most programme area leaders keep their own records and there is no system which requires them to check this data against centrally held data. In most curriculum areas, the college's data on retention and pass rates, supplied to inspectors, differed to those held by curriculum managers. At college-wide level, there are satisfactory arrangements to inform management and their monitoring of progress against college-wide targets. However, during the inspection, the college had great difficulty in providing summary retention and pass rate data for 2002/03.

40. Financial management is effective. The appointment of the principal coincided with a recognition that the college's finances were not robust. The college's financial position is now much improved. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Careful attention to efficiency and value for money has moved the college from a situation of operational deficit in 1999/2000 to an operational surplus in 2002/03. Over the same period, borrowing has been reduced substantially. Staff are generally efficiently deployed. Overall, retention and pass rates place the college in the middle 50% of similar colleges.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Science and mathematics

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most AS-level subjects and GCE A-level mathematics
- good teaching of mathematical and physical concepts
- well-equipped and maintained laboratories
- good technician support.

Weaknesses

- much teaching fails to maintain the interest of students
- insufficient checks on students' learning in lessons
- too many students fail to reach their expected grade
- weak quality assurance.

Scope of provision

41. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and environmental science and GCSE mathematics and GCSE science. All subjects are offered during the day and many in the evening. There are no vocational science courses. At the time of the inspection, there were around 320 students enrolled on mathematics and science courses, of whom, 61% were aged 16 to 18. About 60 full-time students take GCSE mathematics in addition to their main academic or vocational course.

Achievement and standards

42. Overall, students' pass rates are satisfactory. The pass rate in GCE A-level mathematics is good and shows an improving trend. Pass rates in AS-level biology and physics are well above the national averages. Value added data show that about 15% of AS-level and GCE A-level students achieve a grade higher than that expected from their prior achievement at GCSE. However, around 50% of students do not reach the grade that they were expected to achieve. Between 2000/01 and 2002/03, in GCSE science, the proportion of students gaining high grades of A* to C improved significantly to above the national average. In 2002/03, in GCSE mathematics, some 43% of students achieved high grades of A* to C which is slightly above the national average.

43. The standard of students' work on GCE A-level science is good. Most students' work is well presented and demonstrates a clear understanding of mathematical and physical principles. In AS-level physics, students correctly and clearly described the principles of circular motion. The standard of students' work in GCSE mathematics and science is very mixed. Too much work is often incomplete. Statistics coursework contains poorly presented tables and graphs and students make no attempt to comment on the findings. Attendance at many lessons is low.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	137	128	77
		% retention	87	76	73
		% pass rate	30	40	43
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	38	31	*
		% retention	79	74	*
		% pass rate	20	13	*
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	62	36	27
		% retention	73	69	70
		% pass rate	35	80	74
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	27	25	24
		% retention	93	88	67
		% pass rate	48	41	81

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

* less than 15 starters

Quality of education and training

44. Most teaching in science and mathematics is good or better. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and work hard to support students. In lessons, mathematical and physical principles are explained clearly to students. Teachers prepare students well for examinations. In the best lessons, a range of resources are used to illustrate the topic. In a physics lesson on waves, the teacher used lasers, ripple tanks, springs and

prisms to help students visualise abstract ideas. In the less successful lessons, teaching is dull and unimaginative and fails to maintain the interest of all students. Frequently, the teacher explains an idea or demonstrates answers to questions on the whiteboard without sufficient or effective questioning of students to check their understanding. Students in the sixth form work towards the level 3 communication key skill and gather evidence for their portfolio from their AS-level and GCE A-level subjects. Good use has been made of guest speakers to give students an insight into industry. Overall, however, links with industry are weak.

45. Resources to support teaching and learning are good. Teachers have subject and teaching qualifications relevant to the subjects they teach. Course leaders are specialists in their subject and experienced teachers. Science subjects are well supported by technicians who manage the laboratories well and maintain safe working practices. Classrooms and laboratories for mathematics and science are located together giving a good subject identity. Specialist accommodation is clean, tidy, spacious and well furnished. Benches in the laboratories are suitably organised for practical work. Modern posters and displays of equipment and students' work in classrooms and corridors add to the organised and purposeful atmosphere of the area. Most laboratories have at least one computer for use by the teacher for demonstration purposes and modern data-logging equipment has recently been purchased. The use of ICT to support learning is developing slowly and progress is hindered by the lack of networked computers and fixed data projectors in classrooms and laboratories.

46. The assessment of students' progress is satisfactory. Most homework is marked thoroughly, regularly and accurately. Students receive formal written feedback on their performance twice a term. At regular intervals, students' progress is compared to their target grade and an action plan agreed. However, feedback is not always sufficiently detailed to help students and targets for improvement are not specific enough.

47. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Prospective students attend a useful introductory day where they can meet teachers and discuss course options. During induction, students undertake a diagnostic test to identify their learning support needs. Students are not encouraged sufficiently to take advantage of the support available to them. In many lessons, students receive a good level of support. Learning support assistants help students in all daytime GCSE mathematics and GCSE science lessons and are also present at some AS-level and GCE A-level lessons. Students value the support they receive from their personal tutor and subject teachers.

Leadership and management

48. The management of the science and mathematics provision is generally satisfactory. Teaching teams meet regularly to review courses, but the actions to be taken are seldom recorded. At meetings, teachers focus on monitoring the progress of individual students to identify those causing concern. Lesson observations are used effectively to identify staff development needs. However, the outcomes from lesson observations are not used well to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Course level self-assessment reports are not sufficiently rigorous. The performance of different groups of students is not routinely analysed.

Construction

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

Strengths

- consistently high retention rates on most courses
- high pass rates on national diploma construction
- good hand skills in stonemasonry
- much good teaching of craft skills in stonemasonry.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some NVQ courses
- poor achievement of key skills
- poor punctuality of students disrupts learning
- insufficient sharing of good practice
- insufficient attention to appropriate working practices.

Scope of provision

49. The college offers a range of construction courses at levels 1 to 3. These include craft and technician programmes in building services and carpentry and joinery. The college has recently been awarded a CoVE in construction (stonemasonry). At the time of the inspection, some 477 students were enrolled of whom 300 were part time and about 225 were aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates are consistently high on most courses. The pass rates are more mixed. In 2002/03, on the national diploma in construction, the pass rate was well above the national average. In 2001/02 and 2002/03, the pass rates on the NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery and NVQ level 3 mechanical engineering services were well below the national averages. For work-based learners, poor achievement on key skills prevents successful completion of the modern apprenticeship framework. Students are frequently late for lessons, which disrupts the learning of others. Students on stonemasonry courses demonstrate excellent skills and produce work of a very high standard. A number of these students have gained recognition for their achievement in national and international competitions. Students on national certificate and diploma construction courses attain good skills and there is a good record of these students progressing to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Electrical installation part 1 competencies	1	No. of starts	*	23	84
		% retention	*	100	92
		% pass rate	*	61	61
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	*	25	21
		% retention	*	60	95
		% pass rate	*	60	0
NVQ stonemasonry	2	No. of starts	29	39	75
		% retention	86	77	87
		% pass rate	88	90	59
NVQ mechanical engineering services	3	No. of starts	44	42	*
		% retention	64	69	*
		% pass rate	93	28	*
National certificate building services	3	No. of starts	24	*	16
		% retention	46	*	100
		% pass rate	100	*	94
NVQ stonemasonry	3	No. of starts	15	*	15
		% retention	93	*	93
		% pass rate	50	*	60

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

* less than 15 starters

Quality of education and training

51. Overall, most teaching in construction is good. The best teaching is on courses for stonemasonry. In these lessons, teachers plan activities well, and provide challenging tasks

for students that extend and effectively develop their practical skills. In many subjects, lesson planning is weak. Teachers often use a narrow range of activities which do not inspire students. There are few opportunities for students to use ICT. Key skills are not effectively integrated and related to the vocational content of courses. In the better lessons, teachers effectively link theory and practice and generate a stimulating learning environment.

52. Most teachers are suitably qualified and have appropriate industrial experience. Some 75% have a teaching qualification. However, across the curriculum area, there are too few teachers with appropriate assessor and verifier awards. Learning resources and specialist equipment at the main college site are satisfactory, but at the Bath Trade Park and Corsham campus they are poor. Much of the workshop accommodation is cramped and restricts the size of students' practical projects. Storage space for students' work is limited. Lighting and ventilation are often inadequate. Stonemasonry courses are located in an industrial building with minimal facilities. There is insufficient technician support in workshops which adversely affects students' learning. In workshops, there is poor use of safety signs and a lack of displayed risk assessments. In a few practical lessons, insufficient attention is given to the promotion of safe working practices. For example, students were not wearing appropriate footwear and, in wood machining, effective dust extraction was not used. Facilities and resources for teaching science and materials science are poor and there is a narrow range of appropriate software.

53. Monitoring of students' progress is satisfactory. Individual learning plans provide a good record of formative and summative assessments. Assessment schedules are well planned on national diploma and certificate courses and students are clear about what is expected of them. Internal verification on some craft areas is not planned effectively.

54. There are good partnerships with industry. An active employer advisory group meets three times a year. Good links are developing with local schools. A growing number of pupils aged 14 to 16 attend college-based courses. Good enrichment opportunities are available to broaden students' personal development. Students regularly enter competitions and participate in a good range of industrial visits. There is a narrow range of provision in the occupational area of construction and few courses are offered at foundation level.

55. Tutorial support is generally good. Students' progress is reviewed regularly. Action plans with appropriate targets for improvement are set. Students' additional learning needs are identified during induction. In lessons, support tutors provide effective help for those who need it. The quality of careers information, advice and guidance is good.

Leadership and management

56. Curriculum management is broadly satisfactory. However, the quality of course management varies widely. Communication across the different sites and teaching teams is not fully effective. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Self-assessment is not sufficiently self-critical. Students' pass rate data is not rigorously analysed. Target setting for improvement is underdeveloped. Staff development opportunities are good. Teachers

regularly take part in cross-college development events, but few have been involved in industrial updating.

Engineering

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses
- much good teaching
- good range of provision to meet local needs.

Weaknesses

- inadequate resources for practical training
- poor internal verification practices on electrical courses
- low attendance.

Scope of provision

57. The college provides a good range of full-time and part-time programmes that meet local needs. Courses include computer-aided draughting and design, electrical installation, first and national diplomas in engineering, refrigeration and national certificates in engineering and AS-level courses. There are 179 students on these programmes of whom 98 are full-time students and 81 are part-time students. Some 48 students are aged 16 to 18 and 85 are aged 19 or over. Courses are also provided for 46 students aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

58. Retention and pass rates are above the national averages on most courses. Between 2000/01 and 2002/03, the retention and pass rates on the electrical wiring regulation course have been consistently well above the national averages. Students develop good practical skills which include cable wiring, machining and hand skills. The standard of drawings in three dimensions using sophisticated computer-aided design equipment and software is particularly good. With younger students in the mechanical workshops, innovative projects using darts and bottle openers effectively maintain their interest and develop engineering skills. Students' work on research assignments and formative assessments is often of poor quality.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
City and Guilds 2380 wiring regulations	entry	No. of starts	21	*	36
		% retention	100	*	100
		% pass rate	100	*	92
City and Guilds 4351-02 computer- aided draughting and design	2	No. of starts	58	60	35
		% retention	100	90	83
		% pass rate	33	67	72
National diploma engineering	3	No. of starts	20	**	20
		% retention	35	**	40
		% pass rate	86	**	87

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

* less than 15 starters

** data not reliable

Quality of education and training

59. There is much good teaching. Teachers use their enthusiasm for their subject and explain engineering theories and workshop techniques well. Vibrant group discussions and effective practical demonstrations are often used to good effect. Frequent monitoring of students' practical work and the detailed feedback given is helping to improve student performance.

60. Teaching and learning are well planned. Students work through a series of theory and practical activities until they are confident about their ability to perform the task safely. In a mathematics lesson, students calculated the amount of lighting power required for the college car park. Students progress through their programme at a pace best suited to their needs. More competent students progress well and frequently assist other students in their class. For example, in an electrical installation workshop lessons, students worked productively and helped each other to complete the task successfully. The teaching of key skills is generally not sufficiently related to the occupational area.

61. Teachers are knowledgeable, understand their subject well and use their experience to effectively link the teaching of theory and practice. In practical lessons, teachers reinforce

correct and safe workshop practices and ensure students use the appropriate safety equipment.

62. There are inadequate practical resources and insufficient supervision to support practical training in the workshops. In some practical workshop lessons, there are too many students for the teacher to attend to. Consequently, students often spend too much of their time unproductively waiting for guidance from the teacher. The low level of supervision and support hampers the progress made by these students.

63. The standard of engineering workshops is poor, particularly in refrigeration and electrical installation. In some instances, the heating and lighting are inadequate. Practical training aids used in laboratories and workshops are not routinely maintained. For example, air conditioning units have been dismantled and rebuilt using components from other equipment to the extent where their practical use for training is limited. There is an inadequate range of consumable materials in the workshops.

64. Formative assessment of students' work is effective. Teachers meet every two weeks to review individual student progress. Where a student is underperforming a recovery learning plan is agreed. Students are actively encouraged to provide evidence from a wide range of activities in their assessed work. Students' work is marked accurately and fairly. Written feedback is clear and helpful. Internal verification on electrical courses is not well planned and insufficient time is allocated for it to occur.

65. The college offers a range of appropriate courses that meet local needs. Provision has been revised in response to the decline locally in general and manufacturing engineering. Low enrolments have been accommodated by combining courses with common or similar modules. There are limited partnerships with local employer groups. Many local engineering companies are small-to-medium specialist engineering companies with diverse, but not large, training needs. Flexibility in time-tabling is effectively used to enable shift workers to attend at times to suit their individual circumstances. There are good partnerships with local schools. The college has successfully attracted a good number of pupils aged 14 to 16 on to a wide range of engineering courses. These young people are introduced to a good variety of engineering tasks and activities and respond well to the learning environment in college.

66. Overall, support for students is good. Initial assessments are used well and identify the level of support required. Students with dyslexia are particularly well supported. These students have good access to portable computers and pastel coloured handouts and are given extra time in formal assessments. In lessons, support tutors provide sensitive support to students who have been identified as in need of additional help. In the curriculum area, there are few enrichment opportunities for students.

Leadership and management

67. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Appropriate strategies are in place to improve recruitment, retention rates and attendance. Management of the data on students'

pass rates is poor. There are significant differences between the centrally held college data and that used by the curriculum area. Data is not used effectively for target setting to improve the quality of the provision. Self-assessment is well established. Action plans are frequently reviewed and updated, but progress towards improvement is slow.

Business

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCE A-level business and law
- high retention rates on professional programmes
- consistently high retention and pass rates on certificate in personnel practice
- students' well-developed critical and evaluative skills
- good teaching of key skills on business studies and business administration.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on GCE A-level economics
- insufficient use of current business practice in teaching
- lack of rigour in self-assessment.

Scope of provision

68. The college offers a good range of provision for full-time students which includes GCE A-level accounting, business studies, economics and law, GNVQ foundation business studies, and NVQ business administration and accounting. Part-time provision includes courses in business administration, supervisory and general management, and professional programmes such as NVQ accounting, the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) certificate, legal executive training, marketing, and personnel practice. There are clear progression routes in finance and accounting. A range of bespoke courses is provided for local companies and public sector organisations. At the time of the inspection, some 130 students aged 16 to 18 and 53 adults were enrolled on full-time courses, and 31 students aged 16 to 18 and 191 adults following part-time courses. A small number of students aged 14 to 16 are enrolled on GNVQ foundation business.

Achievement and standards

69. The pass rates are consistently above the national averages on GCE A-level business studies and law. Retention rates are high on all professional courses, particularly on NVQ accounting, and the specialised CIPS and personnel training programmes. In 2001/02 and 2002/03, the retention and pass rates on GCE A-level economics were low. Over the same period, retention and pass rates on full-time business administration courses show a downward trend.

70. The standard of students' work is good. Many students develop good skills in the critical analysis and evaluation of business-related data, and are able to present logical and coherent arguments. In an NVQ accounting lesson, students presented and argued in favour of different balance sheets based on similar quantitative data. Students' written work in portfolios, assignments and essays is clearly and carefully presented. These skills help students to progress in the workplace and to the next level of study. Students develop in confidence and make good progress in their studies.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	28	35	41
		% retention	86	89	88
		% pass rate	83	74	71
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	53	47	56
		% retention	89	87	79
		% pass rate	46	56	55
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	30	39	35
		% retention	90	87	77
		% pass rate	74	85	89
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	38	34	25
		% retention	76	85	80
		% pass rate	76	69	70
Certificate in Personnel Practice	3	No. of starts	50	41	21
		% retention	92	95	95
		% pass rate	80	95	95

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply foundation	4	No. of starts	92	110	94
		% retention	95	100	94
		% pass rate	47	60	79
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	18	23	33
		% retention	100	96	96
		% pass rate	50	73	63

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

Quality of education and training

71. Most teaching is good or very good. Schemes of work and lesson plans are carefully planned and detailed. In the better lessons, teachers use a variety of methods to engage students' interest and promote learning. In a law lesson, students worked in small teams and analysed and presented interpretations of topical legal events. In another lesson, business administration students used their Internet research to discuss the best-value arrangements for business travel. In a GCE A-level business studies lesson, students worked in pairs to discuss the importance of numerical and literacy skills in business analysis and presented their findings to the whole group. The careful integration of key skills is particularly effective in business studies and business administration. For example, in one lesson, students analysed the different nuances and use of words in a variety of business contexts.

72. Teaching is planned to meet the different abilities and learning needs of students. Most lessons are lively and involve students fully. However, a small number of lessons are too teacher led for much of the time. These lessons are dull and uninspiring, and do not stimulate and challenge students. In such lessons, teachers do not use basic teaching resources effectively or make reference to websites for research to encourage different ways of learning. Punctuality is poor in a small number of lessons.

73. Assessment policies and procedures satisfy awarding body regulations. Internal verification is well planned. Curriculum teams meet regularly to review and moderate students' work. Written work is returned promptly and students' value the constructive comments provided by their teachers.

74. Resources are generally good. Teachers are well qualified with academic, professional and teaching qualifications. Staff development takes place regularly and helps teachers keep up to date with new examination board and professional body requirements. However, few teachers have recent business or professional experience. Consequently,

teachers frequently use secondary or dated business and professional information. Teaching rooms are bright and airy, but often lack subject identity. Teachers provide students with a satisfactory range of learning materials. The learning centre supplements these with a good stock of business and professional books as well as an easily accessible computerised databank.

75. Students are complimentary about the advice and support they receive from their teachers. The tutorial provision is generally good. Students' additional learning needs are diagnosed through tests and interviews. Learning support staff provide a good level of literacy and numeracy support. Students are well informed about the other specialist support available to them. There is insufficient analysis to measure the impact of additional support on students' progress and pass rates.

Leadership and management

76. Management of the curriculum area is generally effective. Teachers strive to ensure that they are delivering a high-quality curriculum. Teaching teams meet regularly to discuss and review progress. However, self-assessment reports are too descriptive, lack evaluation, and do not use pass rate data effectively. There is an inconsistent use of students' pass rate data to set and measure targets for improvement. The curriculum area is committed to promoting equal opportunities.

Information and communications technology

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate and AVCE ICT
- high retention rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate ICT
- good standard of students' work
- good learning resources
- thorough monitoring of students' progress on most courses.

Weaknesses

- low and declining pass rates on CLAIT and ECDL
- declining retention rates on many courses in 2002/03
- inadequate attention to the differing needs of students
- weak curriculum management in key areas of activity.

Scope of provision

77. The college offers a range of computing and IT courses from levels 1 to 4. Full-time courses, mainly for students aged 16 to 18, include GNVQ foundation and intermediate and AVCE ICT, and a national diploma for IT practitioners (systems support). Other provision includes AS-level computing, GCSE IT, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), and European computer driving licence (ECDL). There are 82 students enrolled on full-time courses and 107 part-time students. Some five students aged 14 to 16 are following the GNVQ foundation ICT as part of the New Start scheme.

Achievement and standards

78. Retention rates are consistently high on GNVQ foundation and intermediate ICT. Between 2001/02 and 2002/03, the retention rates on many other courses show a declining trend. For example, over this period, the retention rate on the AVCE ICT course fell from 100% to 58%. In AS-level computing, the retention rate is well below the national average. Pass rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate and AVCE ICT courses are exceptionally good. Over the period 2000/01 to 2002/03, all students who completed the GNVQ foundation ICT achieved the award. Retention rates for part-time adult students are satisfactory. However, the pass rates are low. In the three years from 2001, the pass rates on CLAIT and ECDL courses have been significantly below the national averages.

79. Most students show interest and enthusiasm for their subjects. Many part-time adult students have no experience of computers when they enrol, but quickly develop good skills and complete tasks competently and confidently. Students on AVCE ICT and national diploma courses have a good understanding of technical language and can discuss complex concepts confidently. Most students are adept at using the Internet to find source materials and information for their homework and coursework. Assignment work is well researched and presented and is often based on real commercial projects. The average attendance at lessons during inspection was below the national average.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
CLAIT stage 1 (1 year)	1	No. of starts	425	126	58
		% retention	82	92	78
		% pass rate	51	51	29
ECDL (1 year)	2	No. of starts	36	67	36
		% retention	53	91	72
		% pass rate	11	48	27
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	16	17	*
		% retention	88	59	*
		% pass rate	57	40	*
AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	**	20	37
		% retention	**	100	58
		% pass rate	**	100	86

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

* less than 15 starters

** course not running

Quality of education and training

80. There is some good teaching, but none is very good or excellent. In the better lessons, there are clear aims and objectives and teachers outline the skills students are

expected to develop and demonstrate. A feature of some lessons is the skilful use of a mix of whole-class, small group and individual activities to maintain student interest. In one GNVQ foundation lesson, after a discussion on advertisements, students produced a flyer for a pop concert. Many students worked enthusiastically and made improvements to their work by incorporating additional design features such as colour photographs. The teacher skilfully incorporated design concepts and the use of colour which extended students' knowledge.

81. Teachers have a good awareness of the different abilities of students. However, this information is not used effectively. The less successful lessons are characterised by ineffective planning which does not take account of the differing needs of students. In some lessons, the more able students are not always made to think for themselves and they are not sufficiently challenged. In a few lessons, teachers fail to check students' learning. Some lessons take place in a large open plan learning centre which provides a poor learning environment for whole class activities. Noise from other users and the nearby lift distracts students and adversely affects the quality of learning.

82. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Assessment of work is fair and accurate and satisfies the requirements of awarding bodies. Homework is set regularly by most teachers. Marked work provides good written feedback and advice to students on how to improve their performance.

83. Students value the support they receive from their teachers. In-class additional learning support is available to students diagnosed with a specific need. However, in some lessons, learning support tutors are not used effectively to meet the learning needs of students.

84. All teachers have a teaching qualification or are working towards one. However, none have recent industrial experience. Currently, there are no links with industry. There are effective partnerships with other providers as part of a local e-learning strategy. Specialist resources include a well-equipped network laboratory. Students have easy access to computers and are allocated space on the network to store their work. Software is of industry standard. The use of demonstration projection facilities or interactive whiteboard technology is underdeveloped. Students benefit from an ICT intranet site, which is well maintained and holds assignments, class notes and handouts. Teachers produce high-quality handouts and use them effectively in lessons. The learning resource centre carries a large stock of e-learning materials, books, and relevant computing magazines and journals.

Leadership and management

85. Some aspects of curriculum management are weak. There is no clear structure to ensure cross-college curriculum and resource planning for ICT courses. Communication between different managers, teams and teachers is sometimes poor. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Data on students' pass rates held centrally differs from that used by course teams for target setting. Self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous and action plans for improvement are not precise enough.

Hospitality and catering, travel and tourism

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking
- strong and productive links with industry in catering and travel
- good range of additional qualifications and enrichment in travel.

Weaknesses

- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- poor classroom management in some lessons in travel
- insufficient development of students' occupational skills
- insufficient industrial experience of teachers
- unsatisfactory curriculum management.

Scope of provision

86. The college offers the first diploma in travel and tourism and several short courses. These include the diploma in travel operations, the diploma in overseas resort operations and the national award in airline and airport operations. There is a full-time national diploma in hospitality and catering and NVQ level 1 and level 2 food preparation and cooking, and food and drink service. The basic food hygiene certificate is also offered. At the time of the inspection, there was a total of 63 full-time travel and tourism students, and 53 full-time and 2 part-time students in hospitality and catering. Most students are aged 16 to 18. There are 12 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools on catering courses.

Achievement and standards

87. Retention and pass rates for the 31 students who started the NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking course over the last three years are high. Over the period 2001/02 to 2002/03, the pass rates on NVQ level 2 food and drink service are high, but the retention rate fell to below the national average. The pass rate on the basic food hygiene certificate has fallen each year since 2001. Retention and pass rates on the diploma courses in travel and tourism and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) short travel and tourism course are satisfactory.

88. The number of students enrolled on hospitality and catering courses has declined over the last three years. In lessons, students on different levels of qualifications are

combined and this arrangement is generally satisfactory. In practical lessons, the standard of students' work varies considerably. In kitchens, most students plan and organise their work well to ensure that food is cooked and ready for service at the required time. Most students acquire a good level of technical skill in food preparation and cooking. In the restaurant, students' occupational skills are not always fully developed as the working environment is often unrealistic. There are often too many students in the restaurant and bar for the number of customers and students are not always fully occupied. Many students have not developed basic food service techniques. Students seldom clear tables proficiently. Students' communication and customer care skills are poor. Insufficient attention is given to the professional appearance of students working in the restaurant.

89. In travel, students' work is mainly satisfactory. However, students' course folders are untidy and not well maintained making it difficult to use them as a reference source. Most courses have externally set assignments, but many students do not have sufficient practice at completing assignments prior to tackling them. Most students in both hospitality and travel progress to related employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Basic food hygiene	1	No. of starts	444	400	423
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	99	94	81
NVQ food and drink service	2	No. of starts	20	**	19
		% retention	90	**	63
		% pass rate	72	**	100

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

** less than 15 starters

Quality of education and training

90. There is too much teaching and learning which is unsatisfactory in both hospitality and catering, and travel and tourism. Lesson planning is poor. In lessons, too little attention is given to the wide range of different abilities of students. There are insufficient checks on students' learning. In one travel geography lesson, students working on resource packs did not understand the relevance of national parks or the geographical terms straits and tors. The teacher referred them to the substantial text in the resource pack for the answers, rather than explaining it. Some tasks in lessons are too large to complete within the timescale and are set

at too high a level for most students. Classroom management in some travel lessons is unsatisfactory. Talkative students are not challenged and are allowed to remain unfocused and disruptive. During a theory lesson in a computer room, for which computers were not needed, students were distracted and used the computers to look at music websites instead of doing group work. Students arriving late for lessons are not dealt with appropriately and they disrupt the learning of others.

91. In food production and food service lessons, there is an over-reliance on traditional catering practices. Too many practical lessons fail to introduce students to the diverse range of operations which are currently found in the catering and hospitality industry. The better catering lessons are more relevant to current practice. In a good Pan Asian cookery lesson, students enjoyed broadening their culinary skills. In another lesson, a local chef demonstrated the preparation and cooking of fish including a whole salmon and sea bass. In theory lessons, some handouts are badly produced or photocopied directly from books. In the more successful lessons, students are challenged and respond appropriately to questions and effectively relate theory to industry practice. Plans to integrate the teaching of key skills into travel and catering lessons have not been implemented successfully.

92. Accommodation in catering is adequate and mainly good in travel. The restaurant area is spacious, but it is underutilised. Some of the kitchen equipment is old and it is not well maintained. There is a lack of technician support in catering. Hospitality and catering books are dated and do not inspire students to use them. Some travel books are out of date. The small travel shop has too few customers and insufficient links with tour operators to benefit students. Few teachers in catering have advanced level qualifications. Too many teachers do not have recent and relevant industrial or commercial experience. In lessons, teachers use too narrow a range of examples which do not fully reflect the breadth of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry.

93. In travel, most assessment is appropriate. A small number of assignments are over generously graded and some internal verification has been carried out by an assessor who does not have the appropriate qualifications. Student progress is adequately monitored through tutorials. In catering, the assessment of students does not take place frequently enough. The majority of practical assessments take place in one selected week each term. The number of assessments taking place simultaneously stretches the internal verification process.

94. The travel and tourism course provision has recently been revised. In travel, the range of new qualifications does not offer students the opportunity to gain qualifications to enable them to progress to HE. In hospitality and catering, there is no level 3 provision for students who wish to follow a more practical route in food production or food and beverage service.

95. Links with industry are productive. In travel, two large tour operators recruit students from the college and a ground handling agent offers extended work experience. Links with the local airport are good. In hospitality and catering, good links with industry

provide work placements for students. Local hoteliers are involved in some of the assessments for national diploma students.

96. There is a good range of additional courses and enrichment for travel students including fares and ticketing, travel certificates and travel destinations. A range of overseas, national and local visits enrich the student experience, but in some cases too little assessment is attached to these visits. Hospitality and catering students have fewer enrichment opportunities.

97. Students receive good personal support from teachers. All students have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. In hospitality and catering, there is a lack of learning support staff in lessons to help students who have been identified as needing additional support. In travel lessons, learning support tutors are not always used effectively.

Leadership and management

98. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. In travel, curriculum teams do not meet formally to review the quality of provision. The hospitality and catering and self-assessment reports do not cover teaching and learning adequately or review performance against targets. Teachers do not have a good understanding of the college's target setting process. There are often inaccuracies between locally held and centrally data on students' pass rates. In 2002/03, the pass rate on a short additional course was recorded against the national diploma in travel and tourism in error resulting in higher pass rates being shown than was actually the case. This was not identified by the department. There is no quality system in place for dealing with external verifier reports.

Sport

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

Strengths

- consistently high pass rates on sport and exercise national diploma
- high retention and pass rates on GCE A-level physical education
- high standard of students' practical skills
- varied and effective learning activities
- high-quality indoor sports facilities.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on community sports leader award
- poor punctuality at lessons
- learning needs of students not always addressed
- poor target setting with students.

Scope of provision

99. The college offers a good range of sport provision at levels 2 and 3. This includes first and national diplomas in sport and exercise, AS-level and GCE A-level physical education and a personal trainer award. National diploma students also follow a community sports leaders' award. Between 2000/01 and 2002/03, many courses recruited less than 15 students. In 2003/04, student numbers increased substantially. At the time of the inspection, 118 students were enrolled on sport courses. Most students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

100. Pass rates on the national diploma sport and exercise are consistently high. In 2001/02 and 2002/03, all students who completed the course achieved the qualification. However, the retention rate has been below the national average since 2001. In 2002/03, the retention and pass rate in GCE A-level physical education was above the national average. In the same year, the retention and pass rate in AS-level physical education was in line with the national average. The pass rates on the first diploma sport and exercise and the community sports leaders' award (CSLA) are low and well below the national averages. Overall, students' pass rates in key skills are poor. Students display good practical skills and many are good athletes. A significant number of students have achieved county and international status for their age group.

Quality of education and training

101. Most teaching is good or better. Lessons are well organised. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Students enjoy the well thought out practical activities. Students' learning is checked regularly. Question and answer sessions are well managed. Nearly all students are enthusiastic about their work. Most lessons are set at a level that encourages and challenges students. Students understand what they are being taught and apply new learning in practical situations. In a lesson on coaching for fitness instructors, students effectively applied their knowledge about lactic acid and fatigue in performance. Personal trainer students use a very good college devised manual which assists them in their learning. In an IT key skills lesson, the teacher set an interesting task at three different levels and students worked at the level that most suited their ability. However, most lessons fail to cater for the needs of individual students. Few teachers provide good opportunities which encourage less able students to demonstrate their skills or apply their learning. Students' punctuality at many lessons is poor. Late arrivals are not always challenged appropriately. Social chatter during practical activities often disrupts learning.

102. Teachers work consistently to syllabuses, and assessment schemes provided by awarding bodies. All students receive helpful course handbooks. Assessment practices are sound. Assessment schedules are planned to avoid clashes of completion dates. Teachers provide helpful and constructive comments on students' marked work. Punctuation and spelling issues are raised, good work is applauded and areas of concern highlighted for action. Overall, students' assignments are well presented and are often word processed. Prompt action is taken to address issues raised by external verifiers.

103. Most accommodation is good. Classrooms are well furnished, decorated and equipped. Students use a well-equipped sports centre and there is an excellent fitness centre. Some classrooms are too small for the number of students in the group. These cramped conditions restrict opportunities for practical activity. There is a good range of learning materials in the learning resource centre. Student access to ICT is satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and have relevant commercial experience which students value. All full-time and part-time teachers have recently been involved in staff development. Most training is linked to improving teaching and learning.

104. Student progression is good. In 2002/03, some 23% progressed to another course at the college, 27% to university, and 46% to related employment. All sport and exercise students complete a work employment unit as part of their course and employers provide a formal report on their performance. Collaboration with local employers, schools, the University of Bath and the Bath Rugby Academy is good.

105. Information and guidance for prospective students are good. The induction programme is comprehensive. The learning needs of students are assessed and tutors are notified of outcomes. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the support that is available. In lessons, teachers do not use learning support staff effectively. All students have regular meetings with their personal tutor. During tutorials, general improvement targets are

agreed, but these are not specific enough to help students improve. Information and guidance on careers and HE are generally good.

Leadership and management

106. Management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. A lack of formal team meetings hampers communication and there are some inconsistencies in the way students are managed. Implementation of the college's teaching observation and appraisal scheme is carried out thoroughly. All course teams complete a self-assessment report and an associated development plan to address identified weaknesses. The views of students, parents and employers are not gathered formally. Teachers are aware of policies to promote equality, diversity and race equality and some cover these issues in their teaching.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on full-time courses
- effective links with employers
- thorough monitoring of students' progress
- comprehensive and constructive feedback on students' work
- good curriculum leadership.

Weaknesses

- poor accommodation and equipment
- poor teaching of key skills
- weak tutorial provision.

Scope of provision

107. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty, and holistic therapies. Full-time courses include NVQ levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty and holistic therapies. Part-time courses cover a range of holistic therapy courses and NVQ levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing and beauty therapy. There are a total of 275 students, of whom 119 are aged 16 to 18 and 156 aged 19 or over. Currently, some 173 students are part time. The college offers taster courses to prospective students. There are 24 school pupils aged 14 to 16 following courses in the curriculum area.

Achievement and standards

108. Retention and pass rates are high on full-time courses. Students on NVQ level 2 courses are particularly successful. In 2002/03, the retention and pass rates on both NVQ level 2 hairdressing and beauty therapy were significantly above the national averages. Across the curriculum area, many courses show an improving trend in retention and pass rates. With the exception of Indian head massage, the pass rates on most short courses are at or above the national averages.

109. Lessons are well planned to build on students' prior knowledge and achievements. In practical lessons, students are enthusiastic and work confidently. Overall, the standard of students' practical skills is satisfactory. In hairdressing, students have good knowledge of the impact of colouring products on hair. In aromatherapy, students develop a good

understanding of the lymphatic system and circulatory pathways. Students' portfolios are well organised and presented and contain work of a good standard. Many students progress to the next level of study and nearly all hairdressing and beauty therapy students gain related employment. The achievement of the key skills of communication, number and IT is poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	2	No. of starts	30	22	17
		% retention	90	73	71
		% pass rate	74	100	75
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	2	No. of starts	47	44	55
		% retention	40	80	95
		% pass rate	84	83	96
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	2	No. of starts	19	21	18
		% retention	89	76	94
		% pass rate	71	69	100
International beauty therapy diploma	3	No. of starts	19	17	19
		% retention	95	94	100
		% pass rate	100	63	89
Diploma in aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	17	41	26
		% retention	100	93	80
		% pass rate	94	58	91
Indian head massage diploma	3	No. of starts	35	40	42
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	74	83	64

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

Quality of education and training

110. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Lessons are well planned to take account of the different abilities of students. Teachers ensure that students work hard and they have high expectations of students. In most lessons, teachers are well organised, use a variety of learning styles and provide students with individual support and guidance to help them acquire good skills. A well-developed and interesting range of learning materials is used effectively to help students. In practical lessons, teachers demonstrate and explain techniques clearly. In hairdressing, two lessons on cutting and colouring were particularly effective. Teachers gave excellent explanations of what was expected and supported individual students as they worked. Commercial timelines were used for completion of the tasks. The students were focused and achieved good results. Teachers have a good rapport with students and draw effectively on students' own ideas and experiences. Questioning techniques are effective in engaging all students and in checking their learning.

111. Enrichment opportunities include visits to the 'Clothes Show' and beauty and hairdressing trade events in London. Some effort has been made to improve the teaching of key skills, but there has been little attempt to make it an integral part of the curriculum. There is insufficient use of ILT and students seldom use ICT to complete their coursework.

112. The assignment schedule is well planned. Assessment and internal verification procedures are rigorous. Homework is set regularly. In hairdressing, teachers monitor and review students' progress particularly well. Students receive comprehensive feedback on their written work and on their progress in practical lessons. Students understand what they have to do to improve, and they are praised for effort and achievement. In most practical lessons, there are not enough clients for the number of students in the group. This shortage of clients restricts the opportunities for students to build their skills and delays assessments.

113. Support for students is good and they value the guidance subject teachers give them. There is a good level of additional support for students who need it. However, over the last year, the wider tutorial activities such as drug awareness, contraceptive advice and citizenship have not been provided to students due to the absence of a tutor in the curriculum area. Parents are well informed of students' attendance and progress. The college's annual hairdressing and beauty competition is well supported by parents and employers. Links with employers are productive. Many employers provide good work experience for full-time students.

114. Teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date knowledge of current industry practice. Most have recent experience of work in salons. Many teachers take advantage of staff development opportunities to update their occupational knowledge. Hairdressing and beauty salons are in need of refurbishment. Too much of the equipment is old and in poor condition. Access to the hairdressing and beauty salons for people with mobility difficulties is hampered as the lift is frequently out of order. There is a narrow range and a small number of books for beauty and holistic therapy.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management are good. Course teams meet regularly and communication between full-time and part-time teachers is good. Resources are well managed. There is clear direction from the programme area leader on target setting for improvement. Course reviews and action plans focus appropriately on teaching and learning. Standards across the area are kept under constant review.

Visual arts

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses
- excellent standard of students' drawing
- thoroughly planned and imaginative teaching on foundation diploma art design
- effective use of spacious studios
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor punctuality in a minority of lessons
- insufficient specialist equipment in some areas.

Scope of provision

116. The college offers an extensive range of courses in visual arts. The provision includes AS-level and GCE A-level art, textiles and photography, GNVQ intermediate art and design, AVCE art and design, national diplomas in design, fashion and clothing, design crafts, graphic design, fine art and a foundation diploma art and design. However, there are no courses at level 1. Open College Network (OCN) courses on creative textiles, stained glass, portraiture, life painting, jewellery and children's book illustration can be studied part time and are offered as additional subjects to full-time students. Most courses are based in the Gainsborough and Herschel buildings and professional courses in museum management take place in the Hotbath Gallery. In creative arts, there are around 450 full-time students, of whom most are aged 16 to 18. Nearly 850 adults are enrolled on mainly part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

117. Retention and pass rates on GNVQ intermediate art and design and the national diplomas in design and graphic design are excellent and well above national averages. The pass rates are high on most other courses and the retention rates are good. A high proportion of students progress to HE. Students' drawing is of a very high standard. There is extensive use of a wide range of media. The life studies of art foundation and OCN life painting students are exceptional. Students are unafraid of working on large scale and their work is energetic and expressive. In one assignment based on food items, one student made fabric which included cocoa and mustard and another produced a chilli pepper patchwork waistcoat. Sketchbooks are used well on national diploma crafts and art foundation diploma. They are personal and reflective and organised well to record research and development and are

predominately worked from primary sources. A high standard of work is displayed in studios which inspires and motivates students well.

118. In the absence of a level 1 course, students with modest prior achievements are enrolled on intermediate courses. These students receive additional learning support which helps them to succeed. In a few lessons, student punctuality is poor. Student attendance is routinely monitored and absences are followed-up promptly.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
OCN short courses in art and design	1	No. of starts	860	903	1,089
		% retention	95	98	84
		% pass rate	48	54	70
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	19	24	21
		% retention	79	83	90
		% pass rate	87	95	89
GCE A-level photography (1 year)	3	No. of starts	90	126	64
		% retention	89	86	66
		% pass rate	68	70	92
AS-level art/fine art	3	No. of starts	52	105	110
		% retention	81	79	75
		% pass rate	93	78	99
GCE A-level art/fine art (1 year)	3	No. of starts	85	47	66
		% retention	81	91	83
		% pass rate	72	86	100

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
National diploma graphic design	3	No. of starts	16	21	20
		% retention	94	67	93
		% pass rate	87	93	100
National diploma design	3	No. of starts	52	25	28
		% retention	40	84	96
		% pass rate	95	100	95
Foundation diploma art design	3	No. of starts	63	61	65
		% retention	87	92	92
		% pass rate	100	95	100

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

Quality of education and training

119. Much of the teaching is very good. Lessons are imaginative and thoroughly planned. In an OCN graphic design lesson, students were introduced to industry buzz words which encouraged wider thinking and high level debate about moral content and ethics relating to graphic design. Carefully planned lessons include a variety of activities and good contextual references which engage students and maintain their interest. The pace of lessons is demanding and topics challenging. Art foundation students are encouraged to work independently and take risks with their work. In a team project, students used film and installation to communicate their impressions of modernism and post modernism. Teachers acted as consultants and encouraged students to experiment with new approaches. Question and answer sessions are too often insufficiently probing and students' responses are superficial. In a small number of mixed level OCN lessons, the needs of advanced level students are not fully met.

120. Considerable effort has been made to integrate key skills with project work. On the national diploma in fashion course, students researched oriental packaging and labelling as part of a design assignment to meet many of the criteria required for the key skills of communication, IT and number.

121. There is a very good international dimension to the curriculum. Students benefit from partnerships with colleges in Hungary and Slovakia to promote an understanding of social and cultural traditions. An exchange programme with Bulgaria was recognised with a National Beacon Award in 2002. Students participate in educational visits to Barcelona,

Amsterdam and Paris. Collaboration with community groups is good. Work with a mental health partnership led to a students' exhibition in the Hotbath Gallery.

122. Teachers are well qualified and many are practising artists and designers which benefits students. Studios are spacious and have good natural light for painting and drawing. Students have plenty of space to work on large-scale pieces. In a life drawing class, students studied foreshortening as the model posed on steps high above in the roof space. Access to all parts of the Gainsborough building is poor for wheelchair users and those with mobility difficulties. The basement area provides an unpleasant learning environment. There has been recent investment in specialist IT equipment, but budget constraints, listed building restrictions and uncertainty over the future location of the department are inhibiting the development of the curriculum related to new technologies. Accommodation and specialist equipment are insufficient for textiles and this limits students' experiences.

123. The monitoring of students' progress is good. Students are assessed regularly. Verbal feedback to full-time students is thorough. In graphic design and life painting, written feedback is excellent. However, some written feedback to students on other courses is overgenerous and does not explain what they must do to improve.

124. Students value the excellent tutorial support. Tutorial records are well maintained. There is a good level of support for students both in and out of the classroom. Appropriate additional support is available for students with a specific learning difficulties or disability. Students speak highly of the support they receive.

Leadership and management

125. Curriculum leadership and management are effective. Clear strategic direction is set by the centre manager. There are regular staff meetings. Teaching teams are strong and good course leadership ensures the effective implementation of college policies. Course reviews are thorough and contribute to the self-assessment report. Targets for improvements are set and carefully monitored.

Performing arts, media and music

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most AS-level and GCE A-level courses
- high standard of students' work in performing arts and music
- innovative teaching of practical skills in performing arts
- constructive feedback to help students improve
- strong pastoral support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on many national diploma courses
- inadequate accommodation.

Scope of provision

126. Performing arts, media and music are included in the centre for creative arts, which is the college's largest area of provision. Currently, about 1,300 students are enrolled in the curriculum area. Most of the 450 full-time students are aged 16 to 18 and most of the 850 adults are part-time students. There is a wide range of provision at level 3 which includes national diplomas in media, music technology, performing arts and music practice. AS levels and GCE A levels are offered in film, media, dance, drama and theatre, and music. At level 2, courses are available in performing arts, music and media techniques. There is a narrow range of provision at level 1. A wide range of part-time courses is offered in areas such as film studies, sound software, and acting.

Achievement and standards

127. Pass rates are consistently high on AS-level and GCE A-level media. Over the period 2000/01 to 2002/03, there was a 100% pass rate for GCE A-level media. In 2002/03, the pass rate was 100% on national diploma performing arts. However, the retention rates have declined on most national diploma courses between 2001/02 and 2002/03. Pass rates are low on the certificate in music technology.

128. Most students display confidence in their approach to practical work. Overall, the standard of practical work in performing arts is high. In dance and acting, students' practical work is strong and often experimental. The standard of music performance and recording work is good. There is fluent and confident guitar playing and some excellent recordings by music technology students. On most courses, students' personal and learning skills are

developed effectively. The work of national diploma media students is generally satisfactory, but it is seldom imaginative. Students with modest prior attainment on level 2 courses achieve well and many progress to the next level of study. There are good levels of progression to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Certificate in music technology	2	No. of starts	19	*	18
		% retention	79	*	61
		% pass rate	33	*	54
National diploma music technology	3	No. of starts	22	22	20
		% retention	59	82	65
		% pass rate	100	89	85
National diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	30	29	39
		% retention	47	66	59
		% pass rate	100	95	100
National diploma media	3	No. of starts	45	33	32
		% retention	58	67	59
		% pass rate	100	64	79
GCE A-level media	3	No. of starts	35	28	26
		% retention	60	96	96
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

* less than 15 starters

Quality of education and training

129. Lessons are well planned. Teaching is innovative on the first diploma and national diploma performing arts. In one dynamic first diploma lesson, students were taught to devise performance pieces through drawing storyboards and mapping storylines. Ambitious

learning targets challenge students appropriately. Students respond with enthusiasm and enjoy their studies. In a music in context lesson, a variety of played examples and well-planned activities stimulated students to engage in an analytical debate about music. There are good links with professional theatres in Bath which are used for students' shows. Performing arts students enjoy a wide range of visits to theatres in Bath, Bristol and London. Enrichment opportunities for music and media students are more limited.

130. Teachers are well qualified and some are experienced practitioners. Courses are well resourced with good IT and technical equipment. There is a television studio with good film and sound editing equipment and ample practice and recording suites for music. The range of learning materials and book stock is good. Accommodation in the Gainsborough building is inadequate. Most of the building is not accessible to wheelchair users or people with mobility difficulties. Some rooms are too small for the number of students in the group. There are no changing rooms or showers for dance and drama students.

131. Assessment practices are good. There is some imaginative design of assessments between areas. For example, dance and music technology students collaborate on assignments to be assessed. Constructive feedback is given to students on both practical and written work. In music, supportive feedback is given to students on their live performances which helps improve their instrumental skills. Performing arts students benefit from regular performance reviews and are encouraged to assess their own performances. Written feedback is clear and includes good guidance on how students can improve. The assessment of key skills is not sufficiently related to the curriculum area. Internal verification is well managed.

132. Support for students is good. All students have a personal tutor and easy access to two pastoral tutors. The additional learning needs of students are identified early and a satisfactory level of support is provided for students with a learning difficulty or disability. Progression rates from level 2 to level 3 courses are high. Students are encouraged to apply to HE. Links with Bath Spa University and London drama schools are good.

Leadership and management

133. Leadership and management are good. There are regular meetings of teaching teams which are attended by part-time staff. Appropriate emphasis is given to students causing concern. Student attendance is carefully monitored and action taken to combat absences. Self-assessment reviews lead to action plans to address identified weaknesses. However, not enough attention is given to setting demanding targets for retention and pass rates. Students' pass rates are not analysed by gender or ethnicity. Action has been taken to help redress the student gender imbalance; for example, the use of male role models in performing arts and outreach work to local boys' schools.

Humanities

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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses
- good progression to HE on access to HE courses
- high standard of students' analytical and communication skills
- well-designed learning materials
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on one-year GCE A level
- too many GCE A-level students perform below expectations
- many lessons do not maintain students' interest
- weak academic target setting and review for students aged 16 to 18
- insufficiently rigorous quality assurance.

Scope of provision

134. The college offers a broad range of humanities subjects at AS-level and GCE A-level including psychology, sociology, history, geography, philosophy, and religious studies. GCSE provision is offered in social studies. An access to HE is offered as a one-year or two-year course to meet the differing needs of students. At the time of the inspection, there were around 240 students enrolled on humanities subjects, of whom 140 were adults.

Achievement and standards

135. Retention rates on most courses are high. Pass rates are more mixed. Between 2000/01 and 2001/02, the pass rates on most AS-level and GCE A-level subjects improved. In 2002/03, in GCE A-level psychology and AS-level history and geography, the pass rates remained high. However, in GCE A-level philosophy and sociology, the pass rates were low. Overall, in one-year GCE A-levels, the pass rates are low. In examinations, many GCE A-level students perform below that expected from their prior achievement at GCSE. On GCE A level courses, there is significant variation between subjects in the proportion of students who achieve high grades. Each year since 2001, on GCSE social studies, the proportion of students gaining high grades of A* to C has been consistently below the national average.

Retention and pass rates on the access to HE course are high and most students are successful in their application to university.

136. Students have good analytical and communication skills. They are able to summarise and analyse complex texts, produce fluent and accurate written work, and are articulate in class discussion. Access to HE students write effectively, showing engagement, enthusiasm and perception. Few students make use of IT in presenting their work. In some lessons, attendance and punctuality are poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	52	56	38
		% retention	79	73	66
		% pass rate	44	71	88
AS-level geography	3	No. of starts	15	15	17
		% retention	87	80	88
		% pass rate	69	83	93
GCE A-level psychology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	41	44	48
		% retention	88	77	69
		% pass rate	53	71	67
GCE A-level sociology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	67	*	28
		% retention	88	*	82
		% pass rate	63	*	43
GCE A-level philosophy (1 year)	3	No. of starts	32	35	**
		% retention	88	83	**
		% pass rate	61	76	**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	39	39	43
		% retention	92	85	79
		% pass rate	75	85	88

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

* data not available

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

137. Most teaching is good or better. Relationships between teachers and students are good and based on mutual respect. Learning is helped by well-designed and relevant materials which help build students' knowledge. Teachers have good subject expertise, and apply this effectively to help students plan and structure their assignments. In a GCE A-level sociology lesson, students prepared for an examination question on secularisation by generating ideas and mounting a display of these as a planning tool. Students are given helpful handouts on key ideas from theorists, and more general guidance on approaches and structure. Most students' written work is of a high standard.

138. In an access to HE lesson, students researched figures from 20th century Russian history and gave lively and professional presentations accompanied by handouts and illustrations. The quality of the questions and discussion that followed was very high. Many lessons fail to maintain the interest of all students, they lack variety of teaching and learning methods and activities and quieter students are not given sufficient encouragement to participate. Some teaching is focused on unimaginative approaches and assignments and fails to inspire students. Teachers seldom use ILT in their lessons.

139. Staff are well qualified. Humanities students have a good working environment. Most teaching rooms are comfortable and pleasant areas, with displays of relevant subject materials or students' work. The college's learning centre provides a good study environment. Library resources are generally good. Students have good access to computers outside of classrooms.

140. Assessment practice is good, particularly on access to HE and GCE A-level geography and philosophy courses. Students' work is carefully and accurately graded, with a numerical mark and a grade indicator. Some teachers provide good guidance on action to be taken to help students to improve. On some courses, feedback is insufficiently detailed and does not always praise students for what they have achieved. Spelling and grammatical errors are often not corrected on written work.

141. Student enrichment is generally good. There are good links with universities. An interesting range of speakers from local and regional organisations give presentations. Students are involved in producing a regular magazine. All full-time students aged 16 to 18 are encouraged to work towards the level 3 communication key skill. Students gather key skills portfolio work from the subjects they are studying, but many are unaware of the key skills test.

142. Much of the support for students is good. Induction is effective. Good arrangements are in place to provide literacy, numeracy, study skills or other support to students who need it. A good subject handbook for access to HE students provides a list of past access to HE students who can be contacted for advice. However, most subject handbooks only contain syllabus information. Students aged 16 to 18 have regular group tutorials. Tutorial support for access to HE students is strong. Academic target setting for students aged 16 to 18 is weak. Subject feedback is often unspecific and students are not always involved in agreeing targets for improvement. Some GCE A-level students do not have individual tutorials to review their progress.

Leadership and management

143. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management responsibility is divided between three curriculum areas. Staff have shared values, pride in what they do, and a commitment to supporting their students and meeting their individual needs. Quality assurance procedures are insufficiently rigorous. Subject level self-assessment identifies strengths and weaknesses realistically, but in many cases weaknesses are not fully addressed in action plans. Not enough attention is given to the analysis of students' pass rates. Communication between subject staff is good, but there are few written records of meetings. There is wide variation in the quality of schemes of work, student handbooks, assessment practice and individual student reviews.

English and modern foreign languages

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

Strengths

- high pass rates in GCE A level English
- lively and effective teaching in GCE A-level English literature
- high standard of students' oral skills in GCE A-level English
- good learning materials
- good range of modern foreign language courses to meet local needs.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in GCSE English language
- narrow range of learning activities in English
- insufficient use of the target language in modern foreign languages
- insufficiently rigorous assessment in modern foreign languages.

Scope of provision

144. The college offers a broad range of courses in English and modern foreign languages. English provision includes AS-level and GCE A-level English language and literature, English language, and English literature and GCSE English language. The language programme includes French, Italian, Spanish, German and Japanese. Modern foreign languages are offered from entry level to level 6. Most courses in foreign languages lead to OCN qualifications. The range and level of courses in foreign languages effectively meets the needs of the local community. Courses are offered full time and part time during the day and in the evening. There are 550 students studying modern foreign languages and 200 enrolled on English courses. Some 15 pupils from local schools are enrolled on AS-level foreign language courses.

Achievement and standards

145. Pass rates in AS-level and GCE A-level English literature, and English language and literature are at or above the national averages. A significant proportion of students achieve high grades in GCE A-level English. In 2002/03, the pass rate for GCSE English language fell to well below the national average. In English provision, there is wide variability in retention rates. In 2002/03, the retention rate in GCE A-level English language was well above the national average, but it was below in AS-level English literature. Between 2001/02

and 2002/03, the retention rate in GCSE English language was slightly below the national average. In foreign languages, the majority of students who complete their course achieve some accreditation.

146. Overall, the standard of students' work is satisfactory. The majority of students organise their learning effectively and submit their work on time. Written work is well presented. Students on AS-level and GCE A-level English courses understand and apply techniques of linguistic and literary analysis successfully. The most able students express their views confidently and fluently in speech and writing. AS-level English language students are able to accurately analyse linguistic features and use their knowledge of grammar and syntax well to explain the function of specific parts of speech. A significant minority of GCSE English language students do not produce work at the standard required for the qualification. Students on advanced level foreign language courses produce work of a high standard. They understand complex structures and idioms and use up-to-date vocabulary.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE A-level English language and literature (1-year course)	3	No. of starts	*	28	38
		% retention	*	93	71
		% pass rate	*	85	74
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	*	30	15
		% retention	*	97	87
		% pass rate	*	86	85
GCSE English language	3	No. of starts	94	72	85
		% retention	72	74	72
		% pass rate	44	53	26

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

* qualification not comparable

Quality of education and training

147. In English, most of the teaching is good or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a high level of linguistic competence. They use this to help their students

develop the essential skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In an English language lesson, students successfully analysed an editorial from a national newspaper. Teachers encourage students to express themselves clearly in speech and writing. In an English literature lesson, students were articulate and enthusiastic when discussing the themes and issues raised in *'Oh What a Lovely War'* and they drew interesting and poignant comparisons with the *'Blackadder'* television series and World War I poetry. Students successfully develop their writing skills. Many produce personal writing and commentaries of a good standard, often through careful redrafting and careful editing. Where teaching and learning are less successful, there is often too narrow a range of activities for students to fully develop their speaking and writing skills. The learning styles of students are not considered fully and the needs of all students are not met. This also inhibits the development of independent learning and students become too reliant on the teacher.

148. In foreign languages, most teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are interesting and enjoyable and students make good progress. In one lesson, a group of intermediate students successfully manipulated complex structures and discussed immigration. In another lesson, students of different abilities worked confidently in groups to construct language, using past tenses. In French, most students are able to explain grammar rules. Students demonstrate good oral and listening skills. They extract gist and detail from a range of different sources and become confident and competent at expressing themselves. Good teaching and learning practice is not sufficiently shared. The extent to which teachers use the target language varies greatly. In too many lessons, English is spoken and oral work is poorly organised.

149. English and foreign language teachers are well qualified. They update their knowledge regularly through appropriate training and links with other countries. Students' learning is enhanced through the use of high-quality handouts and work sheets. Specialist resources including video and audio materials are good. The library stock is up to date and adequately supports advanced level work. Students use the learning centre effectively for Internet research and word processing of coursework.

150. In English, assessment procedures and practices are good. Students' work is marked regularly and thoroughly. Written and oral feedback is good and helps students to improve the standard of their work. In foreign languages, assessment is insufficiently rigorous. Students are not given guidance regularly on how to improve their work. Questioning lacks sufficient depth to assess and extend students' learning. Homework is not set and marked for all students.

151. Individual support and guidance for students in English and foreign languages are good. All full-time students have a personal tutor who monitors their progress. Communication between teachers and students is good. When necessary, this is maintained through e-mail to give students advice and extra work.

Leadership and management

152. Leadership and management are satisfactory in English and modern foreign languages. Staff meet regularly to review teaching and learning and to monitor progress

towards departmental targets. However, the data on students' pass rates are not rigorously analysed. Many teachers are not aware of course targets for improvement. The outcomes from lesson observations are used to inform staff development. Equal opportunity is actively promoted through the texts studied by students and in the materials displayed.

Literacy and numeracy

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

Strengths

- good skills development in literacy and numeracy lessons
- much stimulating teaching
- well-planned lessons to meet the differing needs of students
- innovative range of literacy and numeracy courses.

Weaknesses

- poor take up of literacy and numeracy support
- inappropriate classrooms for literacy and numeracy
- insufficient use of ICT to support learning
- insufficient liaison between the learning support team and teachers.

Scope of provision

153. The college offers part-time courses for adults in literacy and numeracy from entry level to level 2. Students can work towards OCN qualifications in literacy and numeracy or key skills qualifications. Students who are not ready for external qualifications can achieve a college certificate. Currently, 135 students are on literacy or numeracy courses. Some 30 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have literacy and numeracy lessons. Additional support in literacy and numeracy is provided in the classroom, individually or to small groups of students. At the time of the inspection, 95 students were receiving support, although a higher number of students have been identified as needing it.

Achievement and standards

154. Students' pass rates are good, taking into account their prior achievements and the targets set in their learning plans. Skills development is good. Students in literacy and numeracy lessons develop a wide range of skills, including working with others and working on their own. In addition, students develop additional practical skills, such as IT, or food preparation. In lessons, students participate well and grow in confidence. In one lesson, students analysed the novel '*Of Mice and Men*' by John Steinbeck, identifying reasons for events in the novel and expressing their opinions about the ending. In another lesson, two students worked well together to successfully write instructions for making beans on toast. In an additional support lesson, a dyslexic student achieved 100% accuracy on a reading task. For the small number of students who take external qualifications, the pass rates are above

the national averages. Attendance and punctuality on literacy and numeracy courses are good.

Quality of education and training

155. Most teaching is good or better. The most effective lessons are well planned to meet individual student need. The differing needs of students are identified and activities and learning materials are designed to support learning. The best lessons are stimulating, involve the students and extend their knowledge. In one lesson, the teacher introduced the use of metaphors in poetry. The lesson started with a recap of similes, then progressed to converting similes to simple metaphors and writing metaphors as a group. Students then wrote lines of poetry using metaphors. Students developed their skills and understanding in clear stages. They worked with enthusiasm and suggested increasingly sophisticated examples. However, in a less effective lesson, the whole group undertook the same activity, with one student finishing the work more quickly. There was no extension activity and the student had to wait for the others to finish before continuing.

156. Target setting for students is underdeveloped. Many short-term goals are insufficiently broken down to assist students in measuring the small steps of progress they make. The least useful targets are too general or contain words and phrases that are not easy for students to understand. Too few assessment schedules are sent to support tutors to assist their planning. In the best lessons, both subject and support staff are clear about the way in which they will jointly meet individual students' needs. Where learning support tutors are well informed of course requirements, they use this information to develop students' literacy or numeracy skills in the context of the subject. In lessons, there is insufficient use of ICT to support learning.

157. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Good handouts and worksheets are used to support learning. Most materials are up to date and relevant. Staff qualifications are satisfactory and specialist staff have attended recent training to update them on the new core curriculum for literacy and numeracy and diagnostic assessment tools. Some classrooms used for literacy and numeracy lessons are inappropriate. One room is too small and cramped, limiting the teaching methods that can be used. In one lesson, two groups were sharing a large room and the noise distracted students and hindered their learning.

158. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Initial assessment of full-time students determines their additional support needs. However, the take up of additional support by students identified as needing it is poor. At the time of the inspection, around 50% of the students identified as requiring support were taking advantage of the support available to them. Adult students wishing to attend literacy and numeracy programmes benefit from a short introductory course to enable them to identify the right course for them. The outcomes from the initial assessment of part-time students are used to plan their individual learning. Students' progress is carefully monitored and formally reviewed once a term. Students value the personal support they receive from their teachers. Progression guidance for adults on literacy and numeracy courses is not well developed.

159. The range of literacy and numeracy courses is innovative and includes literacy through art, numeracy through food preparation, and English and creative writing. Literacy and numeracy staff work with other agencies to provide courses for students who are deaf or those who have mental health issues. A small amount of literacy and numeracy provision is offered in community venues. The college is beginning to work more closely with the adult learning service to expand the provision.

Leadership and management

160. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Support for new staff is good and they benefit from the probationary system, lesson observations and mentoring. Feedback from students' focus groups is used to improve literacy and numeracy support. The annual staff survey on additional learning support has also resulted in changes to the service. There is insufficient liaison between the learning support team and teachers. The impact of learning support on students' progress is not routinely monitored. Self-assessment is underdeveloped. There is insufficient focus on teaching and learning. The locally held data on retention and pass rates differ from centrally held college data. Targets for improvement are not set at course level. Staff have a good awareness of equal opportunities and take this into account in their course and lesson planning.

Part D: College data
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16–18%	19+%
1	21	35
2	29	21
3	38	23
4/5	0	3
Other	12	18
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	293	183	3
Land-based provision	29	19	0
Construction	243	411	4
Engineering, technology and manufacture	96	258	2
Business administration, management and professional	172	655	5
Information and communication technology	370	405	5
Retailing, customer service and transportation	33	134	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	324	896	8
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	261	400	4
Health, social care and public services	212	1,771	12
Visual and performing arts and media	1,456	3,083	28
Humanities	342	329	4
English, languages and communication	437	1,343	11

Curriculum area	16–18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Foundation programmes	118	414	3
Unknown area of learning	637	966	10
Total	5,023	11,267	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16–18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	521	193	281	1,102	1,203	1,155
	Retention rate %	88	91	80	87	81	81
	National average %	76	75	76	73	69	70
	Pass rate %	38	65	64	53	67	77
	National average %	65	69	71	66	68	71
2	Starters excluding transfers	849	746	735	740	1,022	1,158
	Retention rate %	77	77	77	84	82	67
	National average %	72	70	72	70	68	68
	Pass rate %	64	65	77	57	63	70
	National average %	67	69	71	64	68	72
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,465	1,925	1,615	1,195	1,456	1,304
	Retention rate %	68	71	77	77	74.86	77
	National average %	67	71	77	69	68	70
	Pass rate %	74	74	78	60	65	72
	National average %	75	77	79	66	69	72
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	345	323	198
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	70	65	71
	National average %	66	73	71	67	67	67
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	59	47	56
	National average %	65	54	53	58	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 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.*
2. *College rates for 1999/2000 to 2001/02: College ISR.*

** too few students to provide a valid calculation*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	66	29	5	113
Level 2 (intermediate)	50	39	11	56
Level 1 (foundation)	71	29	0	14
Other sessions	72	22	6	18
Totals	62	31	7	201

