



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Gateshead College

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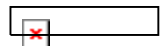
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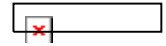
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Basic information about the college

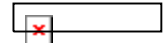


Name of college:	Gateshead College
Type of college:	General further education
Principal:	David Cheetham
Address of college:	Durham Road Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE9 5BN
Telephone number:	0191 490 2202
Fax number:	0191 490 2314
Chair of governors:	Barry Morgan
Unique reference number:	108458
Name of reporting inspector:	Peter Stacey
Dates of inspection:	12-16 January 2004

Part A: Summary



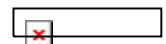
Information about the college



Gateshead College is a large general further education (FE) college. The college operates from a main site based at Durham Road and has over 100 community-based venues across Gateshead. The population of Gateshead is approximately 200,000. The borough has suffered from difficult social and economic conditions for many years and has areas of high population density that have experienced significant socio-economic difficulties. There are also some rural areas of relative affluence. Gateshead is ranked the 32nd most deprived district in England out of a total of 354 districts. Unemployment in the borough, at 4%, is above the national average of 3.4%. All age groups have lower economic activity rates than the national average, with people who are aged 16 to 19 or 50-plus having particularly low participation rates in employment. The traditional heavy manufacturing base of the area is currently being replaced by a service-based economy with strong business, financial and public sectors. In the Borough of Gateshead, there are ten secondary schools, of which eight have sixth forms, and there is a City Technology College. Within a 15-mile radius of the college there are seven other FE colleges and four universities. The percentage of students remaining in full-time post-16 education is 67%, compared with a national average of 72%. In 2001/02, 49% of pupils achieved five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) grades at A* to C, which is close to the national average.

The total number of students in 2002/03 on courses funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was 21,314, of whom 1,058 were full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 453 were full-time adult students. The remainder were part time. In 2002/03, 4% of students came from minority ethnic groups compared with 1.6% of people living in Gateshead, and 57% were female. Some 46% of students are recruited from areas with social and economic disadvantage. In 2002/03, the college offered provision in all of the areas of learning. The areas with highest numbers of enrolments are information and communications technology (ICT) and on foundation programmes. However, student numbers are small in land-based provision and in retailing and customer service. The college also provides work-based learning in business administration, construction, engineering, and ICT. A higher education (HE) programme is also offered. Motor vehicle engineering has Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status. The college works with local schools to share aspects of provision for students aged 16 to 19 and offers an alternative curriculum for students aged 14 to 16. Proportions of enrolments at levels 1, 2 and 3 in 2001/02 were 62%, 28% and 10%, respectively. The college's mission is: 'to enable people, communities and organisations to succeed through learning'.

How effective is the college?



The overall quality of provision at Gateshead College is good. The quality of provision is good in engineering, business administration, management and professional, ICT, hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual and performing arts, English and modern foreign languages, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In construction, sport and recreation, health, social care and public services, and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), the provision is satisfactory. Inspectors judged the quality of work-based learning in construction, engineering and business administration to be satisfactory. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

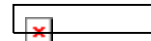
- clear vision for the college shared by governors, managers and staff
- extensive range of local partnerships to widen participation
- wide range of courses in most curriculum areas
- good curriculum management
- high pass and retention rates on many courses
- good teaching and learning, particularly on adult courses
- good support and guidance for students
- some good specialist resources.

What should be improved

- the reliability of self-assessment
- the management information system
- pass and retention rates on low performing courses
- the monitoring of students' progress.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	Satisfactory. Contributory grade for work-based learning: satisfactory. There are high retention rates on all courses and pass rates on part-time electrical installation courses are high. Progression by students from level 1 craft courses to modern apprenticeships is good. Teaching in theory lessons is often dull and uninspiring. Work-based learners have good on-the-job training opportunities, but progress reviews and quality assurance are poor.
Engineering	Good. Contributory grade for work-based learning: satisfactory. Pass and retention rates on many courses are high, and there is good progression through a wide range of courses. Enthusiastic, lively practical teaching is supported by some excellent specialist resources. Theory lessons are less inspiring. There are productive links with schools and industry. Some elements of apprentice assessment and review, and the internal verification of full-time courses, are not well established.
Business, administration, management and professional	Good. Contributory grade for work-based learning: satisfactory. Students have access to a wide range of courses and receive high-quality teaching that provides effective learning and attainment. Pass and retention rates for most courses are high. Resources to support learning are good and there are good links with external agencies.
Information and communications technology	Good. There is an appropriate range of provision that effectively widens participation. Retention rates and some pass rates are high. Much good teaching offers a variety of learning activities and there is good availability of industrial-standard software and hardware. There is insufficient use of assessment in monitoring students' progress and insufficient quality assurance on some courses.
Sport and recreation	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good, with excellent facilities for practical sport. There is very good development of individual students' sports performance through the sports academies and other effective partnerships. Pass rates on full-time courses and on the sports distance learning programme are low. There is an insufficient range of provision in sport.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Teaching and learning are good and students display good practical techniques and well-developed social skills. There is an extensive range of courses including bespoke courses to meet local community needs. Support for students is good and clear emphasis is placed upon social inclusion. Leadership of the curriculum area is good. There are some weaknesses in the planning of assessments in

	hairdressing and there is not enough suitable accommodation.
Health, social care and public services	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are satisfactory. There is effective partnership working and a good approach to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The teaching of adult classes is good but some teaching of students aged 16 to 18 is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient sharing of good practice across the curriculum and the self-assessment report did not identify some key weaknesses.
Visual and performing arts	Good. There is good teaching and a wide range of challenging learning activities to promote the acquisition of skills. Good accommodation and resources are used effectively. Assessments are well planned. The curriculum is well managed and there is good support for teaching staff.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. Pass rates are high on most language courses. Most teaching is well suited to the needs of individual students and a wide range of courses is available. Retention rates are low on some 30-week language courses and for GCSE English language. There is good curriculum management, with very good support for part-time staff.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Good. There is a wide range of courses to meet student and community needs. Retention rates on courses are high. There is good teaching and highly effective support is provided for students. In progress reviews, targets are not sufficiently specific to challenge students.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. There is a wide range of ESOL provision at the college that is responsive to local needs. Teaching across all areas is satisfactory, but ineffective use of individual learning plans and a narrow range of classroom resources adversely affect learning. Retention and pass rates are high. Effective use of partnership arrangements enables the college to identify and respond to students' literacy, numeracy and language needs.

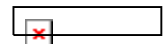
How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are good. A clear direction and high standards have been set by governors. There is an emphasis on working in partnership with a broad range of local organisations to widen participation in learning. Governors, managers and staff share a strong vision of the college being at the centre of its community and providing a diverse range of excellent learning opportunities. The quality assurance system covers all areas of the college's work and is effective in bringing about improvements. Self-assessment is not sufficiently thorough. There are very good arrangements for staff development. The college has taken excellent steps recently to support staff in improving teaching and learning. Curriculum leadership and management are strong in many areas. There are some limitations in the effectiveness of the current management information system. Promotion of equal opportunities is good. Financial management of the college is good and the college provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

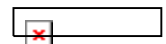
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. There are effective strategies for widening participation. The college has formed partnerships with a wide range of local organisations and has good community links. There are particularly good links with local schools which are used to promote participation and to encourage students to progress to FE. There is a wide range of programmes and courses in most curriculum areas that meets the needs of the local community. The college has significantly increased participation in education in the local community and recruits a large number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The college has made a satisfactory response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and amendments made to the equal opportunities policy meet the requirements of the Act. Progress in implementing the action plan has been good and there are effective procedures for admissions and for ensuring access to facilities and courses. The response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has been slow. A policy and action plan was approved in March 2003. Since then, good progress has been made in taking the first steps to implement the policy. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds in the college is greater than that in the local community. There is good support for students. The promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities is good. Most areas of the college have satisfactory access for students with restricted mobility, although there are parts of the college where access is limited.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students receive good guidance and support at the college. There is very effective guidance on to courses and good induction to the college. There is good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The diagnosis of, and provision for, individual learning needs is satisfactory. The achievement of students receiving additional support is similar to that of the college as a whole. Full-time students receive relevant and effective support on both personal and academic issues from tutors. All students have access to a wide range of effective personal, welfare and financial advice from specialist staff at the college. Careers education is responsive to the needs of students and provides very effective guidance on progression to employment and HE.

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

- good teaching

- well-organised courses

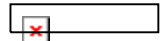
- approachable, friendly and supportive staff

- good resources
- the flexible approach to meet individual needs
- the good atmosphere.

What they feel could be improved

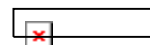
- car parking
- the number of child care places
- access to computers during lessons
- assessment opportunities
- staggered lunch breaks to avoid queues in the canteen
- equal access to resources at all college sites.

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



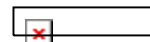
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & 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	70	20	10
19+ and WBL*	75	22	3
Learning 16-18	65	25	10
19+ and WBL*	74	21	5

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. Data on students' achievements drawn from the individualised student records (ISR) for 2001 and 2002 were provided by the LSC. Data provided by the college were used for 2003. Inspectors also used additional data held by the college to help them form their judgements, particularly with regard to the individual progress made by students in respect of their starting point. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses.

2. The college offers courses in all 14 curriculum areas defined by the LSC. These mainly provide a range of vocational qualifications with a significant provision for adult students. The college also offers a small number of academic qualifications for the general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), access to HE and GCSE. The college is successful in ensuring that students improve their personal and study skills in addition to gaining accredited qualifications.

3. The overall attendance rate of students at lessons was 79%, which is slightly above the national average for the sector. In these lessons, there was an average number of 9.5 students present. Student and staff are punctual and almost all lessons start promptly.

4. In 2001/02, retention rates for most courses were above national averages and in some instances significantly higher. Retention rates on level 3 courses, however, from being above the national average, have declined over the last three years. Pass rates are generally in line with national averages. The greatest overall improvement is at level 1. High levels of achievement are evident in many curriculum areas, with pass rates in engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual and performing arts, modern foreign languages and on foundation programmes particularly noteworthy.

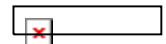
16 to 18 year olds

5. Retention and pass rates have shown some improvement over the three-year period to 2002. Retention rates on long level 1 courses, at 86% for 2001/02, are considerably above the national average. At levels 2 and 3, the retention rates are 66% and 55%, respectively, which for the latter is below the national average. In 2001/02, there were 2,067 student enrolments on long courses, with a pass rate of 84%. In the same year, 1,405 students enrolled on short courses, with a pass rate of 71%. Pass rates on level 1 and 3 courses, at 68% and 71%, respectively, are at the national average. Level 2 courses have a pass rate of 60%, which is below the national average. Students display considerable levels of determination and during their courses they become highly motivated to succeed. Students improve in self-esteem and develop the confidence to seek employment or engage in further study.

Adult learners

6. Retention rates for adults are high on most courses and well above national averages. Pass rates are also above national averages. The pass rate for the 7,363 students aged 19 and over on long courses for 2001/02 is 71%. For short courses, in the same year, 18,683 enrolments produced an 83% pass rate. These figures represent a consistent pattern over the last three years. The pass rates overall on courses at levels 1 and 2 for 2001/02 are high, at 78% and 76%, with level 3 pass rates being also above the national average, at 72%. The college is successful in enabling students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities to progress beyond entry level courses and into employment. Many adult students with few educational achievements progress to courses at a higher level.

Quality of education and training



7. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 216 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 72% of lessons, satisfactory in 21% and less than satisfactory in 7%. This is a profile of teaching that is above national averages. The best teaching is in visual and performing arts where 83% of teaching is good or better. No teaching is unsatisfactory in sport and recreation, hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual and performing arts, and English and modern foreign languages. Better teaching is more common in classes with adult students, and practical work is generally better taught than theory.

8. The most effective lessons have clearly identified learning objectives that take account of students' different needs and abilities. In these lessons, students participate fully and enthusiastically in an appropriate range of activities. Classroom and workshop management is good, and the work is well prepared and skilfully taught. Teachers use their vocational expertise effectively to help students learn and have a genuine concern for and interest in students' progress and general welfare. There is good classroom support provided by teachers and learner support assistants for students with lower levels of prior attainment or learning difficulties.

9. Where lessons are less effective, planning is weak or insufficient attention is given to the individual needs of students. In these lessons, teachers sometimes talk for long periods of time, so that students lose concentration, and the overuse of task sheets fails to stimulate students' learning.

10. The college employs 268 full-time equivalent teachers and 217 full-time equivalent support staff. They are well qualified and have appropriate expertise for the work they do. Teachers on national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses have relevant assessor and verifier awards. Most teaching staff have appropriate teaching qualifications and those who do not are currently working towards such accreditation. Support staff provide effective technical and administrative support for teachers and students. The college has achieved Investor in People status. There are good arrangements for the induction and mentoring of new staff. Part-time teachers are well supported. The college has put

in place well-resourced, innovative arrangements for staff training and development through the school of teaching and learning. Training and development needs are identified through an annual cycle of staff review and formal meetings between senior managers. There are good opportunities for training and development which focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment. Students benefit from the industrial and commercial experience of teachers: in particular in ICT and visual and performing arts. Teachers in engineering have recently taken part in activities to update their industrial experience.

11. The accommodation is generally satisfactory and provides a bright, welcoming, well-maintained environment for learning. Where the college has invested in refurbishment, the accommodation is good. Gateshead College offers courses at the main Durham Road site and at more than 100 community venues managed directly by the college or provided through partnership arrangements. Locations include local schools such as the well-resourced Rowlands Gill Junior School and readily accessible learning centres such as the Blaydon Learning Centre located alongside local shops. At Durham Road, the attractive Centre 4 Learners, Centre 4 Knowledge and Centre 4 Key Skills and the Information, Advice and Guidance Centre have been remodelled taking into account the views of staff and students. The commercial-standard studio theatre and Gateshead International Stadium offer high-quality accommodation for students in performing arts and sports. There are a few classrooms and workshops which are too small for the numbers of students. In the inadequately small workshops for motor vehicle and mechanical engineering lessons, time is lost in re-organising classes so that all students can complete the practical tasks which have been set. At Durham Road, there is only one hairdressing salon, which limits the training and assessment opportunities for students.

12. Specialist resources for teaching and learning are generally good. Resources for visual and performing arts, sports and auto-electronics are excellent. There are good resources for students in ESOL, although there is an over-reliance in the classroom on paper-based materials. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and students on motor vehicle body repair and refinishing courses benefit from good resources. A wide range of industrial-standard hardware and software is available for students on ICT and computing courses. In contrast, the plumbing workshops are less equipped and there are some outdated machine tools and training materials in engineering. Teachers and students in construction and engineering have insufficient access to networked ICT facilities in the workshops.

13. Students have good access to a wide range of learning resources and computer workstations. Access to high-quality ICT hardware and software is good for staff and students. Interactive whiteboards are available in many classrooms. A commercial virtual learning environment is increasingly used by students to access learning materials through the Internet from any on-line computer at the college or at home. The college has made good use of technology to improve its services. For example, the call centre efficiently handles a large volume of enquiries and enrolments reducing the need for personal attendance by students. On-line students' surveys and basic skills' screening provide immediate information for managers and teachers.

14. Access for students with restricted mobility and those who use wheelchairs is limited at the Durham Road site and at some community venues. The college has made changes where practicable and has published a useful guide to accessibility for students at Durham Road. There is well-publicised assistance for students and the college makes alternative provision where possible. Plans are in hand to improve the quality of the accommodation and the access to it for students and staff. The accommodation strategy aims over the next five years to relocate the main operations of the college to a new building adjacent to Gateshead Quays and to create dispersed vocational centres such as the CoVE for automotive technology.

15. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are well planned and carried out in most curriculum areas. On visual and performing arts, engineering and management programmes, there is thorough assessment and comprehensive feedback to students to help them make progress. In visual and performing arts, assessment fosters an ethos of reflective learning and self-evaluation. In the best practice, assignment briefs are clear and include a full explanation of what is required to achieve each grade. Teachers give helpful written and oral feedback to students who have the opportunity to discuss their grades. Students are fully informed of their progress and clear action

plans for further improvement are drawn up.

16. The awarding body and college requirements for verification of assessment on NVQ courses are fully met in most curriculum areas. In hairdressing, assessment of NVQ and key skills is not adequately planned. There are insufficient clients to meet the assessment needs of students on some hairdressing courses. On health, social care and public services programmes, there is some weak and inconsistent verification. Internal verification for some full-time courses in engineering is not well established. Assessment for students in work-based provision is not yet effective. For engineering and business students, visits by assessors to the workplace are infrequent. Assessment relies too heavily on the completion of written records rather than observations. Reviews of progress are not planned effectively. In construction, the students' individual learning plans do not provide clear targets against which to measure students' progress.

17. The needs of full-time students for additional learning support are assessed at the start of their courses. The majority of students identified as needing support are receiving it. The initial assessment is included in the students' individual learning plans. Action plans for improvement are agreed with subject teachers and personal tutors, who monitor students' progress and agree targets for improvement. In some areas, the monitoring of students' progress is not always carried out effectively and students are not clear about the progress they have made or how to improve their learning. Target setting for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not sufficiently specific to challenge students. On literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses, individual learning plans are not always used effectively. On some ICT courses, there is insufficient use of target setting and assessment in self-paced practical workshops to monitor students' progress and identify obstacles to learning. On many business courses, feedback to students is late and does not give students the information they need to help them improve their work.

18. The college has very good links with local schools, employers and training organisations. A learning adviser is responsible for liaison with schools, and staff from the college visit schools to talk about courses. School students also visit the college for presentations, interviews and to sample some of the opportunities available. There are very good working relationships with Connexions. There are very effective partnerships with employers, the local education authority (LEA) and many external agencies, who are very positive about the way the college works in partnership and is responsive to the local community. The college has formed good collaborative partnerships with schools, other FE colleges, private training providers and HE establishments. These partnerships have resulted in students being able to enter a broad range of courses and to progress between courses.

19. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in most curriculum areas. Curriculum planning takes account of national priorities and local needs, and the college offers provision across all areas of learning. There is good employer involvement in curriculum planning in vocational areas. Work-based learning is offered in four curriculum areas and the college has developed a pre-modern apprenticeship programme that offers NVQ qualifications at level 1 and progression to apprenticeships at the college and at local private training providers. There are good progression routes in many curriculum areas. The college has worked in partnership with three local schools to offer sixth form provision in a range of advanced level courses and sports academy programmes. There are insufficient entry level and level 1 vocational courses in sport and recreation, and there is a narrow range of provision in construction.

20. Strategies to widen participation in education and training are effective. Good use is made of partnerships with external organisations to widen participation. There are over 100 learning venues throughout the local community and progression is good from level 1 courses in the community to level 2 and 3 courses in the college, particularly in modern foreign languages and in hairdressing and beauty therapy. There is also a broad range of ICT courses that promote the widening of participation. Approximately 46% of students attending the college are from particularly deprived wards. Some 4% of students are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 1.6% in the local community. There is a wide range of ESOL courses available at the college.

21. There are approximately 180 students aged 14 to 16 years following vocational courses at the college, of whom around 40 are taking an NVQ or pre-modern-apprenticeship course as part of the

Increased Flexibility project. Students come from six local schools and from the behaviour support service Key Stage 4 alternative education provision. These students benefit from participation in a wide range of courses at the college.

22. The students are also able to take part in the large number of enrichment activities available at the college, including sport, drama, educational visits and a range of accredited short courses.

23. The college introduced a key skills strategy in 1998 and revised the strategy in 2000 and 2003. Key skills in communication, application of number and ICT are compulsory for all full-time students, and a minimum key skills level has been recommended for each level of the curriculum. The planning, teaching and assessment of key skills are the responsibility of course leaders, but they are not implemented consistently in some curriculum areas. Pass rates have been low and the college has waived the requirement for some students to have their key skills accredited, unless they form part of the qualification they are seeking, or if the students intend to progress to HE. The college has recognised the need for a more consistent approach to the teaching of key skills and appointed a key skills co-ordinator in September 2002 to co-ordinate and monitor the provision.

24. There are good initial advice and guidance arrangements for students. Good liaison with schools and Connexions results in detailed information about the college being made available to prospective applicants. A well-planned sequence of presentations and visits to the college helps to ensure that students are prepared for the transition to the college and are placed on appropriate courses. All full-time students and many part-time students are interviewed prior to enrolment. All full-time students receive a useful welcome pack before starting their courses. Induction arrangements are effective and ensure that students are able to settle in to college routines and are aware of the demands of their courses.

25. There is very good personal support for students. Students have access to a wide range of effective personal, welfare and financial advice from specialist staff at the college. Students are aware of the support available and feedback on the services provided is very positive. Much of the information available is produced in a range of languages. Retention rates for students receiving financial support are above those for the college as a whole. There are very effective links with external agencies such as social services and mental health organisations. Their advice is used in curriculum development and they also provide additional sources of advice and guidance for students. The college has recently established a mentoring programme in which experienced students act as personal mentors to new students.

26. There is good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students can refer themselves for support, or be referred by information, advice and guidance staff, external agencies, their previous school or their personal tutor. There are good links with local special schools. All students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have a support plan that is monitored regularly. There is very good support from learner support assistants within lessons. Of the 106 students receiving support in 2002/03, 96% completed their courses. There is a wide range of specialised ICT hardware and software for students to use. Relevant information is transcribed into an appropriate format for students with visual or hearing impairments.

27. The careers, education and guidance support provided by the college guidance staff and the external Connexions partnership is very effective. Specialist careers guidance and advice on courses is available from the lifelong learning adviser, supported by staff from Connexions. Students applying for both employment and HE courses are well supported and benefit from guidance from visiting external speakers. There are regular careers events. There is a well-resourced careers library and useful additional resources to help students applying to employment or HE.

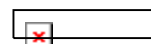
28. Full-time students receive relevant and effective support from tutors on both personal and academic issues. Tutors have a major responsibility to help students settle in to the college, make progress, receive individual support and move on to HE or employment. Tutorials are arranged on a group and on an individual basis, and all students have at least one individual tutorial a term. There is an outline programme for group tutorials that is used on a flexible basis by curriculum areas. Teachers of part-time students are encouraged to use relevant aspects of the tutorial programme. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality has improved over the last two years. Students with poor

attendance records are contacted by members of staff and some are referred to student services for additional support. This intervention has resulted in improved attendance for approximately 30% of these students in 2003/04. The average attendance at lessons during the inspection was around 80%. This is similar to the average for FE colleges and represents a small improvement since the last inspection by the Further Education Funding Council in 1999.

29. There are appropriate child protection policies and procedures in the college. There is a designated member of staff responsible for child protection issues. Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out for all new members of staff and retrospective checks have been undertaken for staff involved in advising or teaching students aged 14 to 16 or vulnerable adults. All teaching staff have been subjected to some form of police checking.

30. Support for students with literacy and numeracy needs has improved since the appointment of a basic skills co-ordinator and additional teaching staff in autumn 2003, and is now satisfactory. The initial diagnosis of learning needs of full-time students is satisfactory, although not all part-time students receive these tests. Screening tests for literacy and numeracy are used and further diagnostic assessment takes place if needs are identified. In addition, students can refer themselves, or be referred by college staff, in order to access learning support. Additional learning support is provided on a group and an individual basis, predominantly outside lessons. Some of the provision of group support fails to take into account the range of individual needs within the group. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the new support arrangements in terms of the impact on retention rates and achievement. There is satisfactory help for students who require language support.

Leadership and management



31. Leadership and management are good. Governors have set a very clear direction and high standards. There is a sharp focus on working in partnership with a broad range of local organisations to widen participation in learning. Governors, managers and staff share a clear vision of the college being at the centre of its community and providing a diverse range of excellent learning opportunities.

32. Good progress has been made towards the achievement of the college's main strategic goals. Coherent strategies to raise achievement and an emphasis on teaching and learning provide a central focus for leadership and guide the action of all staff. The number of students has been growing steadily in line with the college's targets. A well-conceived marketing strategy has contributed to this. The college has also been successful in steadily increasing the proportion of students who succeed with their studies. Progress with this has not been as good for students aged 16 to 18. The strategic plan is thoroughly reflected in annual development plans for all aspects of the college's work. Its implementation is carefully monitored by managers. Staff and partners are very fully consulted about key elements. For example, all staff have been involved in developing ambitious plans to relocate the main college campus in purpose-built accommodation. Communication within the college is good. A regular schedule of team, curriculum area and whole-staff meetings, such as the senior managers' road show, keep staff well informed about key strategies and developments.

33. The college has been very successful in developing strong strategic partnerships with local organisations. These include employers, schools, universities, the LEA, and a range of organisations involved in promoting learning, encouraging economic regeneration and tackling social exclusion. A public service academy has been developed with the local National Health Service (NHS) trusts and Gateshead Council. Strong links with employers have contributed to the successful development of a CoVE in automotive technology. A central Gateshead sixth form has been jointly established with three local schools.

34. The quality assurance system covers all areas of the college's work and has been effective in bringing about improvements. High standards are set, particularly for the success of students. Curriculum managers make good use of data about retention rates and achievement and national averages. They set challenging but realistic targets which contribute to realising the shared aspirations of becoming one of the highest performing colleges in England. This is not yet the case for work-based learning. A course evaluation and review process involves staff at all levels. Following consideration by middle and senior managers, governors are involved in validating the final self-assessment report. Clear plans are drawn up to address the weaknesses. Inspectors agree with many of the judgements in the self-assessment report but consider that it fails to identify or attach sufficient importance to many weaknesses found by inspectors. In five areas inspected, the grade awarded by Ofsted was lower than that of the college. Drawing on students' responses to evaluation questionnaires, their views are incorporated well into the self-assessment process. The college has recently enabled students to provide their views on-line. Complaints and harassment procedures ensure that the rights of all students are safeguarded. There is some ineffective use of quality assurance systems in work-based learning and on some NVQ courses where weaknesses in assessment and review have not been identified.

35. There are very good arrangements for staff development. New staff are provided with effective mentoring. The college encourages all staff to participate in professional development activities and provides good practical support to enable them to do so. A new professional development programme has recently been introduced. It incorporates annual individual interviews to review performance and identify support and development needs.

36. The college has taken excellent recent steps to help staff to improve teaching and learning. It regards this as a primary strategy to take the performance of the college to a higher level. A new school of teaching and learning was established in February 2003. It brings together a team of specialist learning mentors and coaches to provide individual support and to work with teaching teams. A comprehensive resource base of materials relating to improving teaching and learning is being developed. Many of these materials are available on the college's intranet. A high-quality internal programme of professional development relating to teaching and learning has been offered. It responds well to needs identified by staff and draws effectively upon relevant recent research. Events have been very well attended. The school of teaching and learning has also taken the leading role with the Gateshead LEA in developing a teaching and learning initiative for young people aged 14 to 19 in the area.

37. The quality of teaching and learning is high. However, many sections of the self-assessment report contain inadequate analyses of its main features. This prevents clear identification of the good practice to be shared and areas for improvement. For example, the college had not identified some key areas for improvement such as the greater than average proportion of unsatisfactory teaching for students aged 16 to 18 in some curriculum areas. In some of the highest performing areas, such as ICT and a range of community-based provision, regular observation of teaching and learning takes place and good use is made of the outcomes to drive improvement. Such regular internal observations are not yet established throughout the college as part of the quality assurance system. A recently introduced observation programme involves a team of trained observers and comprehensive standard documentation. It is well designed to link closely with support for improvement now available through the school of teaching and learning. It is unclear, however, whether the proposed cycle of observations will provide managers with sufficient timely information on the quality of teaching and learning in the areas for which they are responsible.

38. Curriculum leadership and management are strong in many areas. Most teams of teachers are well organised, highly motivated and committed to the college's strategic goals. Regular meetings focus sharply on the experience of students. Part-time staff are well supported and effectively included in developments. The learning needs of individuals, employers and the community are carefully assessed and are addressed well in planning provision. Operating plans are used well to implement changes and effect improvements. In some areas, insufficient use is made of data to monitor the performance of courses and of different groups of students.

39. There are some limitations in the effectiveness of the current management information system, which the college has recognised. There have been delays in incorporating information on students'

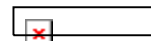
withdrawals and achievements into centrally held data. Course leaders may obtain reports on key performance data. Online access to the computerised management information system has recently become available to managers. However, difficulties with the software and restricted easy access to networked computers have limited its usefulness.

40. Financial management is good. It has been placed consistently in the highest category of financial health by the LSC for several years. A small operating surplus is generated each year to be allocated to supporting the strategic priorities. Internal budgets for business units are thoroughly re-assessed each year, based upon the established strategic priorities of the college. Budget holders are given considerable flexibility in how the allocation may be deployed. Expenditure is monitored rigorously and regularly by managers and governors. Principles of best value have been incorporated into the procurement of goods and services. Procedures to ensure the viability of courses are well established. The college is developing a comprehensive framework within which value for money evaluations may be made. In light of the high quality of teaching, good success rates, efficient use of resources and increasing numbers of students, the college currently provides good value for money.

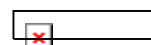
41. Promotion of equal opportunities is good. The college has a comprehensive policy on equal opportunities. It has been updated to incorporate the requirements of recent legislation including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Implementation of the policy and plans are monitored through an equality forum which includes governors, staff, students and external representatives. Equal opportunity champions are located in each of the college's teaching and support units. In many curriculum areas, equal opportunities are promoted well through support for individual learning needs, the inclusion of learning materials reflecting diverse cultures, and positive action to encourage students in non-traditional occupational gender roles. This has been weaker in work-based learning. The college has been very effective in improving access to learning opportunities through the development of an extensive network of community learning centres.

42. The college welcomes students with disabilities. It produces a very clear disability statement, which has been updated to incorporate the requirements of SENDA, and a guide for all students on disability etiquette. Improvements have been introduced to extend physical access to buildings and admission to the college. The college's response to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has been slow. The race equality policy was not approved by governors until March 2003. It is, however, a very thorough policy with a clear statement of the strategies which the college intends to adopt for its implementation. A wide range of analyses of the experience of students by ethnic group was speedily completed. An implementation plan has been drawn up and the contribution of staff throughout the college has been identified. Monitoring reports on ethnicity have been considered by the equality forum and governing body together with analyses of year-on-year trends.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Strengths

- high retention rates
- high pass rates on part-time electrical installation courses
- good progression from full-time level 1 courses to modern apprenticeships
- good on-the-job training opportunities for work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- dull and uninspiring teaching of theory
- poor reviews of students' progress
- insufficient range of provision
- underdeveloped quality assurance for work-based learning.

Scope of provision

43. The college offers a broad range of full-time construction courses at level 1. These include the crafts of bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating and plastering, as well as electrical installation and plumbing. The college works with a national training provider to offer craft and short adult courses, some of which are particularly designed for female students. There are part-time courses in electrical installation and plumbing. Short updating courses are offered in electrical installation and construction health and safety. There is growing provision for students aged 14 to 16. There are a total of 569 students on construction courses. Of these, 28% are full time and 73% are over 19 years of age. The college manages its own work-based learning programme on which there are 111 students. The college also provides sub-contracted training for a national provider in electrical installation and plumbing.

Achievement and standards

44. Retention rates are high on all courses and in many cases are significantly higher than national averages. Retention rates for the full-time construction craft courses at level 1 are excellent. All the 96 students who started in 2002 completed their course.

45. Pass rates on all part-time electrical installation courses are high and have been consistently

higher than national averages over the last two years.

46. The standard of students' work and progress at the college is generally satisfactory. There is insufficient data to make judgements about overall retention and pass rates for work-based learning as these programmes are relatively new to the college.

47. There is good progression from full-time level 1 craft courses to modern apprenticeships. Over 80% of students who started on full-time craft level 1 courses in 2002 progressed to modern apprenticeship programmes.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ decorative occupations (construction)	1	No. of starts	*	37	34
		% retention	*	35	100
		% pass rate	*	100	76
City and Guilds 6988 certificate in plumbing	1	No. of starts	*	*	16
		% retention	*	*	88
		% pass rate	*	*	75
City and Guilds 2360-01 electrical installation part 1 competencies	1	No. of starts	15	19	34
		% retention	73	53	65
		% pass rate	100	85	100
City and Guilds 2360-02 electrical installation part 2 competencies	2	No. of starts	15	19	**
		% retention	100	63	**
		% pass rate	47	80	**
City and Guilds 2380 16 th edition wiring regulations	2	No. of starts	42	97	83
		% retention	100	95	98
		% pass rate	67	91	88
National certificate in construction safety and health	3	No. of starts	42	25	15
		% retention	81	92	100
		% pass rate	57	57	73

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

* course did not run

** fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

48. Teaching of practical work is mainly good. Teachers use good demonstration techniques well, and their occupational skills and knowledge are appreciated by students.

49. Some teaching of theory is dull and uninspiring. In the less successful lessons, there is too much copying of notes that the teacher has put on the board or on overheads. There is insufficient checking of individual students' understanding. There is little use of visual aids and ICT to assist learning in the classroom. On-the-job training opportunities for work-based learners are good. The range of work is wide and appropriate to the requirements of the NVQ. Learners are placed with experienced and qualified supervisors who spend time demonstrating the skills needed for

competent performance. They give the student the opportunity to progressively develop their abilities and skills.

50. Teaching staff have appropriate occupational qualifications and experience. They have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. Assessors and verifiers are appropriately qualified.

51. Practical training workshops are generally satisfactory. Those for construction crafts are good, spacious and have well-designed practical training areas and a good supply of modern tools and equipment. Electrical installation workshops are satisfactory. The plumbing workshop is in need of more assessment areas and more benches and pipe vice are required. There are insufficient interactive whiteboards or data projectors. Learning and assessment packs for the crafts are of a high standard and are appropriate to the needs of students. The library resources for construction students are satisfactory.

52. Assessment and verification arrangements are satisfactory. There is good verbal feedback, but written feedback does not always help the students to improve their work. Assessors make insufficient visits to work-based learners in the workplace. Reviews for students and work-based learners are poor. Little use is made of measurable targets that have to be completed by the next review. There is inadequate recording that work-based students' understanding of equal opportunities has been checked or that the health and safety arrangements on site are satisfactory. Individual learning plans do not provide adequate targets against which to measure students' progress.

53. There is an insufficient range of provision overall. There are no entry level courses or full-time courses at levels 2 or 3. Part-time vocational courses for adults are only available in electrical installation and plumbing.

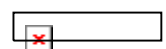
54. When students start their courses, any additional learning and support needs are identified during their induction programme and, where required, appropriate support is given. Teachers provide good advice to enable prospective students to make informed career and course choices.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. This is a significant growth area for the college and there are plans in place to increase the number and range of courses. To meet this growth, a new technology centre has been planned. Staff have been involved in identifying the teaching and learning facilities needed in this new building. Communication is good in course teams, within the department and with senior management. Staff meetings result in clear action points being taken forward to improve the quality of provision. Staff development is effective in helping to improve the skills and competence of staff.

56. End of course evaluations and reviews are used effectively for the self-assessment report and in planning future courses. The self-assessment report was insufficiently self-critical and failed to identify some of the weaknesses identified by inspectors. There is insufficient observation of teaching, reviews and other measures to ensure the quality of teaching and assessment for work-based learning.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on many courses
- good progression rates through a wide range of courses
- enthusiastic and lively practical teaching and training
- very good specialist auto-electrical, body repair and refinishing resources
- productive partnerships with schools and employers.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory theory teaching
- cramped and poorly equipped workshops and classrooms
- ineffective internal verification
- weak assessment and review processes in the workplace.

Scope of provision

57. The college provides a broad range of mechanical, motor vehicle and motor cycle service and repair, vehicle body repair and refinishing, welding and computer-aided design courses from levels 1 to 3. Most students are studying at levels 1 and 2. Bespoke short courses are offered to suit the needs of local industries, including air-conditioning and vehicle diagnostics. Adult students generally attend courses alongside younger students, but some motor vehicle, welding and computer-aided design courses are offered in the evening and these attract predominantly older students. All areas of the curriculum are offered for students aged 14 to 16 at 5 linked schools, with progression to level 1. There are 1,464 students, of whom 111 are full time. Some 60% of students are adults. There are 28 advanced and 10 foundation modern apprentices on work-based learning programmes.

58. The college has been awarded CoVE status for automotive technology and has achieved Thatcham Approved Centre status; the motor vehicle assurers' kite mark.

Achievement and standards

59. Pass rates on most courses have been consistently high for the last three years. Retention rates for many of these courses are also high. Full-time engineering students undertake additional qualifications, and the pass rates on most of these courses are generally satisfactory.

60. All engineering students work safely and many produce work of a high standard, particularly in practical lessons. Students operate engineering machinery and equipment safely and demonstrate good practical skills in welding and motor vehicle repair work.

61. Students work on vehicles with care and respect. Body repair and paint finishes are very good. Vehicle electronics students use specialist fault diagnostic rigs to investigate the operation of logic gates used on engine management systems. Welding students show good skills in setting up and operating gas-shielded welding equipment. Students on computer-aided design courses are confident in the use of two-dimensional drawing packages for manipulating drawings, inserting text, hatching and layering.

62. It is too early in the apprenticeship training to assess the retention rates and achievement of advanced modern apprenticeships. The on-programme retention rates over the last two years, since the start of apprenticeship training, are high. The training is now progressing well.

63. Apprentices are generally employed in high-quality workplaces which have excellent resources and work opportunities. They achieve a high standard of work on a wide range of light and heavy vehicles.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
General national vocational qualification (GNVQ) foundation engineering	1	No. of starts	44	33	44
		% retention	80	73	59
		% pass rate	68	58	85
Motor vehicle servicing and repair 6956 progression	1	No. of starts	*	*	18
		% retention	*	*	100
		% pass rate	*	*	67
NVQ performing manufacturing operations	2	No. of starts	270	467	245
		% retention	98	100	99
		% pass rate	85	85	92
First diploma in engineering	2	No. of starts	*	15	44
		% retention	*	73	68
		% pass rate	*	82	90
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	21	23	33
		% retention	57	65	52
		% pass rate	92	80	94

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

64. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are carefully planned and schemes of work are comprehensive. Most lessons build on previous work, which is usually recapped at the start of the

lesson. In the best lessons, teachers make frequent checks on learning through the use of questions directed at individual students. Teachers often draw on their own and their students' experiences to illustrate points. They emphasise the relevance to the workplace of the topics under discussion. Teachers set high standards and praise good work, which encourages the students to reflect upon and improve their performance. Particular attention is paid to health and safety. Students complete rigorous risk assessments of their working environment.

65. Some motor cycle repair teaching is outstanding. In an excellent practical lesson where many students had learning difficulties, the lesson plan included activities which took account of the differing preferred learning styles and abilities of the students. Students were given demanding work to complete and were given responsibility for their own development, with particularly effective guidance from the tutor. In a practical lesson in body panel refinishing, the teacher set high standards for paint finish. Students matched these expectations but were keen to show where improvements could still be made.

66. There is some unsatisfactory theory teaching. In these weaker lessons, students spend too much time copying notes and completing diagrams. Teachers fail to maintain their interest or to summarise what has been learned, and tend to direct questions to the whole class, rather than to individuals to ensure that all students understand the work.

67. Apprentices do not have detailed plans for on-the-job training. There is little discussion with employers on how work-based learning can be effectively linked to NVQ requirements.

68. Progress towards key skills is slow for some apprentices. There are examples of students in the final year still not having completed key skills elements of their framework. New recruits now start key skills early in their training.

69. There is suitable access to good computer resources in the learning centres but there is a lack of networked information technology (IT) in the classrooms and workshops. There are no dedicated laboratories for the teaching of engineering science. The library contains a wide range of books.

70. Teachers are well qualified, both professionally and vocationally. Many have recent industrial experience and benefit from a wide range of staff development and training opportunities. All new teachers are mentored and are working towards their teaching qualifications. An appropriate number of technicians and administrators support the teachers and students.

71. In the body repair centre, the walls are decorated with examples of the students' high-quality paintwork and clear guidance notes on the completion of practical tasks. Mechanical and motor vehicle workshops lack space. In some cases, there is insufficient access to workbenches, and vehicle and rigs have to be moved around during lessons, disrupting learning. Supporting machine tools such as drills, engine training rigs and grinders are very old and are not to the standard students would expect to encounter in modern workplaces.

72. Assessment practices are thorough and meet the requirements of the respective awarding bodies. Assignments are well marked and feedback to students is challenging but supportive. Students make good use of the library for research and private study. There is insufficient planning in work-based assessment and the range of evidence presented in portfolios is too small. Visits to some companies are infrequent, and assessment by observation is minimal for apprentices.

73. Initial assessment is thorough. Students complete basic skills and key skills assessments using IT. Results are analysed and any areas of concern are recorded in students' files. This information is available to assessors and staff responsible for progress reviews, and for implementing action plans with students.

74. Students make good use of progression opportunities. On engineering courses, an average of 50% of students progress to the next level of education. Regular discussions have taken place with local employers to determine the skill requirements of the area. Students may attend on block release, full time or day release, dependent upon their needs or work commitments.

75. Support and guidance for students are effective. An initial assessment of basic skills is carried out during the first two weeks of a course. When students are identified as needing additional support, this is provided, and their teachers are kept fully informed of their progress. Tutorial support is well planned and timetabled to ensure that teachers meet with students individually at least once each term. There is good pastoral support. Students receive an in depth interview to discuss their aims and aspirations. Previous achievement is taken into consideration and accredited, where applicable.

Leadership and management

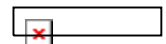
76. Leadership and management of engineering are good. Managers at curriculum level set clear directions for occupational areas and there is good teamworking. There are managers responsible for improving links with employers. This has led to effective partnerships being established with a diverse range of external organisations to promote engineering in the region. Employers and partners are supportive of the college.

77. The achievement of the CoVE status in motor vehicle required a dedicated leadership effort from the management team. Engineering staff meet formally on a monthly basis. Staff appraisal and performance development programmes are effective. Every effort is made by management to meet individual aspirations. There is a lack of contingency planning to cover for absent staff. One tutor had to prepare to cover for an absent staff member without access to a lesson plan. Quality assurance systems include internal and external lesson observations, which are analysed to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and attainment. There is close monitoring of performance data. The self-assessment process makes good use of departmental staff contributions. There is no systematic process for review and assessment planning. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths identified by managers in the self-assessment report. However, they considered that some weaknesses in the provision, particularly in the teaching of theory, had been understated.

78. There are effective strategies to widen participation. Initiatives with schools, other training providers and employers are developing. There is open access to training opportunities. Student handbooks promote images of young people from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Specific courses have been developed to attract women to engineering, including a decorative metal course. There are, however, no female modern apprentices and only a small percentage of college-based students are female.

79. Equal opportunities are covered adequately during induction, but insufficient attention is paid to this during progress reviews or tutorials.

Business, administration, management and professional



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

Contribution grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates

- good teaching and learning on most courses

- wide range of resources

- thorough assessment and feedback on management courses

- very good links with external agencies.

Weaknesses

- low attendance on some college courses

- slow progress by some students

- insufficient on-the-job observation and assessment for work-based learning

- inadequate quality assurance for some programmes.

Scope of provision

80. The college provides a wide range of full-time and part-time courses, from foundation level to advanced and higher levels. There are full-time courses in travel, business, business administration and secretarial skills, and a range of part-time courses in marketing, management, human resource management and accounting. The college provides a range of specialist short courses in secretarial skills, health and safety, business, leadership and management. There are 83 full-time and 885 part-time students. Of the full-time students, 81 are aged 16 to 18. Students may attend full time, on day release, or part time in the day or evening. Students are able to progress to higher levels. There are 102 learners on modern apprenticeships, of whom 90 are advanced modern apprentices and 12 are foundation modern apprentices. All these learners are employed: 3 with private companies and the remaining 99 with the local council. Most modern apprentices are aged 16 to 18, although 17 are adults. All learners attend college on day release to do training for NVQ, key skills and technical certificates. Most students commence training in August or September. Provision for work-based learning is based at Team Valley, two miles from the main college campus.

Achievement and standards

81. Pass and retention rates are high, and some are significantly higher than national averages. Pass rates on the advanced diploma in marketing are very high, but the pass rate for NVQ supervisory management is low. Students progress to higher level courses. Students' work is of a high standard. They work on complex management projects which assist organisational

development. Retention rates are high on college courses and satisfactory overall for work-based learning. There is a 78% retention rate on the advanced modern apprenticeship programme, but the retention rate is very low on the foundation modern apprenticeship; 8 out of 15 students left the programme with no qualification. Of the 90 advanced modern apprentices, only 5% have some unit achievement, with 2 students on programme for 17 months with no unit accreditation. Students entering the programme are usually exempt from key skills assessment.

82. There is low attendance on some courses and this was recognised in the self-assessment report. Attendance for lessons observed was 73%. Attendance is very good on work-based learning programmes. Poor attendance is followed up by telephone and letter. Students are not punctual to some lessons and teachers do not always question why they are late.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Word processing mixed skills	1	No. of starts	17	46	27
		% retention	88	98	93
		% pass rate	60	42	80
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	32	36	30
		% retention	84	89	90
		% pass rate	81	81	81
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	73	94	52
		% retention	71	87	72
		% pass rate	63	46	50
City and Guilds 7306 (now 7318)	3	No. of starts	68	72	57
		% retention	88	92	86
		% pass rate	68	85	88
Certificate in marketing	3	No. of starts	*	15	18
		% retention	*	87	94
		% pass rate	*	71	88
Advance vocational certificate of education (AVCE) business	3	No. of starts	28	16	*
		% retention	50	31	*
		% pass rate	79	100	*

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

83. There is good teaching and learning. Most staff are well qualified, with good occupational competence. Assessors in work-based learning do not have administration qualifications or recent and relevant occupational competence. Lessons are carefully planned and taught well. On college-based courses, teachers make effective use of CD-ROM, video and audio cassettes to enhance learning. There is a good mix of theory and practice and students develop new skills. Students are given realistic and challenging learning activities. On management programmes they learn about theories and principles which they are able to relate to their job. On travel courses, the use of travel reservation software enables students to learn industry-related skills.

84. Work-based learners attend off-the-job training for all elements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Lessons are inadequately planned; teachers talk too much and there is an over-reliance on handouts. Some lessons are uninspiring and lack occupational relevance. Few links are made between key skills, NVQ and technical certificate studies. One classroom is used to access other rooms and this creates constant interruptions. The classroom in Team Valley is satisfactorily equipped, but the resources are not used effectively.

85. College accommodation is satisfactory, consisting of a working office and well -equipped classrooms with a range of IT facilities. Some rooms have insufficient IT resources for the size of classes using them. Classrooms are bright and well ventilated, with good working areas. Wall displays are sometimes drab and often are not relevant to the subject being taught. Employed students work in well-equipped offices with modern facilities that inspire learning. They have job roles that clearly meet the NVQ requirements.

86. There is a wide range of resources to assist learning. Students have access to IT facilities, the Internet, reference books and textbooks, and some professional journals. Students use intranet system that can be accessed at college or at home. They can view course material and link to relevant websites. Tutors are accessible by telephone or e-mail. Work-based learners do not have access to the same level of support or one-to-one tutorials.

87. On management programmes, students produce satisfactory work and develop comprehensive portfolios using a very wide range of evidence, such as videos, cassettes, witness testimonies, reports, assignments and tutor observation records.

88. There is thorough assessment and feedback on management courses, but this is not the case across the whole curriculum area. Students undertaking management courses are regularly assessed and the feedback is comprehensive. On other courses, assessments are insufficiently planned, feedback is sometimes delayed and it is not informative enough to enable students to improve their performance. Targets set are not specific or measurable. Internal verification is not consistently effective and some portfolios have not been internally verified for many months.

89. Some students and learners are making slow progress toward achieving their qualification. In work-based learning, 30 learners who have been on their training programme for over 12 months have not yet completed a full NVQ unit. Some students are not sufficiently challenged or given short-term achievement targets and this slows their rate of progress.

90. There is insufficient planning for assessment of work-based learning. Assessment of learners carrying out their work is infrequent and not always recorded in sufficient detail. Many learners have very good evidence in their portfolios that clearly match the performance criteria for the qualification. However, for some students, there is too much reliance on statements and personal accounts, and little use of project or audiovisual evidence.

91. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time courses. Some courses have very low numbers of students. The college operates flexible start dates for part-time courses and allows flexibility in lesson start times for people at work or with young children. Recruitment, induction and initial assessment are satisfactory. In work-based learning, the employer's human resource department manages recruitment, selection and initial assessment. Inadequate information is provided to the assessment team. Students are provided with an induction manual and student handbook. Where initial assessment identifies literacy, numeracy and language support, this is effectively provided. Students with additional needs are given help during lessons with intensive individual support.

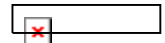
Leadership and management

92. Leadership and management of the area are generally good. There are very good links with external agencies, major employers, training providers within the CoVE and HE institutes. The college meets regularly with key partners who have worked with the college for a number of years. College teachers assist employers with their workforce development and business progression. Courses are designed to respond to employers' needs and college staff are prompt to provide

solutions. Collaborative working with universities and employers is enabling students to progress to HE and significantly improves their employment opportunities.

93. There are some inadequate quality assurance systems. Teaching observations do take place but it is unclear how management use these to improve individual teachers' performance. On some programmes, assessment and feedback is not sufficiently detailed and fail to help students to make progress. Work-based learning has good assessment documentation, but it is not always applied consistently. Students' feedback is used sometimes to make improvements to the courses. Equal opportunities are not always sufficiently emphasised to improve students' understanding.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on many full-year level 1 courses

- high pass rates on Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma, GNVQ foundation, and introduction to computer skills courses

- broad range of provision effectively widening participation

- good teaching

- good availability of industrial-standard software.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some level 2 courses

- insufficient planning and monitoring of progress on self-paced courses.

Scope of provision

94. The provision includes a wide range of courses available at many venues, which offers flexible attendance and progression opportunities. Full-time courses include AVCE ICT, GNVQ ICT at foundation and intermediate level and first and national diplomas for IT practitioners. There are 164 full-time students. Part-time courses available include those leading to the Cisco certified network associate (CCNA) qualification, Microsoft technical support, website design, programming, Internet technology, computer applications such as desktop publishing and presentation graphics, introduction to computer skills courses, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) courses and the European computer driving licence (ECDL). In the current academic year, there are 3,000 enrolments in this curriculum area, approximately 10% of which are students aged 16 to 18. Work-based learning in the use and support of IT is also offered, and there are 15 work-based learners. Most courses are at levels 1 or 2 and are taught in traditional lessons. A smaller number of courses are provided through self-paced open learning workshops, where teachers support students. There are good opportunities for progression up to level 3 at the main site for both full-time and part-time students.

Achievement and standards

95. Retention rates are high on many full-year level 1 courses where, in each of the last three years, rates have been well above national averages. There are very high pass rates on the BTEC national diploma, GNVQ foundation and introduction to computer skills courses. Overall, pass rates on shorter level 2 courses are significantly below national averages. For example, less than a quarter of ECDL students on franchised short courses achieve the qualification. In 2002/03, the overall pass rate for the GNVQ intermediate ICT course on the main college site was only 52%. Progression between courses is good.

96. Adult students in the community show particularly high levels of enthusiasm and interest in their subjects. Students on AVCE courses are able to evaluate critically the design of websites. They can use a variety of software well to design colourful and attractive documents. Full-time students are confident and successful at using the college IT system to access course materials. Although some make slow progress, part-time adult level 1 students can produce pie charts and graphs from spreadsheets. There is good attendance and most students are punctual to lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Introduction to computer skills (short)	1	No. of starts	*	1,707	344
		% retention	*	83	89
		% pass rate	*	87	98
CLAIT (short)	1	No. of starts	1,267	799	117
		% retention	79	78	82
		% pass rate	66	67	61
ECDL (short)	2	No. of starts	181	239	154
		% retention	81	74	92
		% pass rate	55	69	47
ECDL (one year)	2	No. of starts	87	201	137
		% retention	77	80	86
		% pass rate	73	85	96
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	66	72	72
		% retention	80	83	89
		% pass rate	36	48	64

GNVQ advanced ICT	3	No. of starts	94	68	57
		% retention	**	57	63
		% pass rate	**	72	91

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

* course did not run

** data unavailable

Quality of education and training

97. Teachers are careful to begin lessons with a clear overview of the lesson and what is to be achieved. Most lessons for young people are planned well to provide a variety of activities which keep all students engaged and hold their attention well. Discipline in lessons is good, and tutors use humour, sensitivity and praise effectively to build confidence in students. There are good student-teacher ratios in many lessons; Teachers in student-centred computer workshops are responsive and give learning support and one-to-one coaching to students in a way that is sensitive to the age and maturity of the students.

98. Teachers share pen pictures of students to help them meet students' individual needs effectively. However, in some lessons, students who complete tasks quickly have to wait for attention or further work. There is insufficient reinforcement of good working practices in community and learning centre workshops, such as the importance of good posture, and this places some older and shorter students at risk of injury. Some community venues fail to promote the appropriate use of ergonomic aids such as footrests and wrist-rests, and some tutors were unaware of some details of the current guidelines on health and safety.

99. A particularly wide range of industry-standard software is available. Many full-time students are able to study a range of extra qualifications. Hardware is of a standard commonly found in industry and there are sufficient workstations for independent study on the main site.

100. Community venues are generally clean, well lit and decorated, and well located, with easy access for people with restricted mobility. Most venues are appropriately equipped. In one venue, chairs are inappropriate, and in another the room was too cold for students to work without discomfort. There are good, clear workbooks for resource-based learning. Independent study is poorly facilitated in some centres, where students work from floppy disks only and may not use disks from home, limiting opportunities for independent study. There are sufficient staff with relevant technical and teaching skills and many have undergone recent, relevant staff development. ICT is taught in well-resourced rooms with data projectors being widely used for presentations and demonstrations. Students in a GNVQ foundation ICT lesson enjoyed completing interactive crosswords and wordsearches, on the blackboard virtual learning environment, to ensure terminology was understood prior to their examination.

101. Assessment briefs are clear and feedback to students is prompt and helpful. Assessments are managed well in computer workshops. Quiet areas are set up and assessments are carried out with appropriate rigour. Some assignment deadlines are poorly planned. There is insufficient planning of learning for part-time students in computer workshops. It fails to take sufficient account of students' personal goals. Teachers fail to provide students with an informed judgement on their rate of progress.

102. The broad programme allows many students to progress their education. Many full-time students are working towards additional qualifications that are highly regarded by potential employers. There is very good use of community venues, including specific provision for different categories of students, such as ESOL students and the Jewish Girls Academy. The timing of lessons and modes of teaching with taught, self-paced and flexible access courses are particularly convenient for shiftworkers and others with irregular work patterns. Some classes in the community are run with very small numbers, if necessary. Social inclusion is promoted successfully, with more

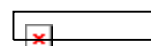
than 50% of student enrolments from groups traditionally under-represented in education.

103. Students receive effective advice and guidance at the start of their course, and there is good access to pastoral support and careers advice. There is good use of qualified classroom assistants to support students with additional learning needs. Full-time students who fall behind are supported effectively in frequent and regular catch-up sessions. Students who miss lessons make effective use of the virtual learning environment to access material from home. Initial assessment identifies full-time students' need for extra support well, and students at levels 1 and 2 receive this support in the classroom and in extra sessions. Effective systems promote good take-up of these opportunities. Initial assessment lacks rigour on short courses and assessment information is not used in-year to inform course development. The process for reviewing the progress of part-time students is currently not effective. There is insufficient use of intermediate targets on longer courses against which to monitor students' progress and identify obstacles to learning. Learning plans are not always updated to reflect progress made or obstacles encountered.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management of the area are good overall. Management initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been effective. The community programme has been particularly effective in widening participation and promoting social inclusion. Teams of teachers work effectively together to ensure that all students are able to achieve well on their programmes. Part-time staff are managed well. Managers monitor the performance of teaching staff well. Staff development and training are effective, and there are high levels of participation for both full-time and part-time staff. Feedback from students is used satisfactorily to improve performance. There is insufficient target setting for courses. Data are not always used effectively to monitor the performance of the curriculum area or different groups of students. There is insufficient use of students' previous achievement levels in evaluating their performance on courses. The self-assessment report lacks detail but inspectors agreed with most of the key strengths and weaknesses which were identified.

Sport and recreation



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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning

- the excellent facilities for practical sports

- very good development of individual students' sports performance through the sports academies

- effective partnerships

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on full-time course
- very low pass rates on distance learning course
- insufficient range of provision in sport.

Scope of provision

105. The college provides sports courses for 127 full-time students and 11 part-time adult students. There are 34 students on the first diploma in sport, 22 students on the national diploma in sport, performance and excellence, and 71 on the national diploma in sport and exercise science. The part-time adult students are all working towards stage one of the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (OCR) exercise and fitness award. There were 248 adult students on part-time recreational sports programmes in the first term of this academic year at eight community venues. Some students have the opportunity to follow advanced subsidiary level (AS-level) and GCE A2 programmes in physical education. Students have the opportunity to progress to a foundation degree programme. The college has established sports academies in the following disciplines: men's and women's football, rugby league, netball and athletics. Sport for life has been offered in partnership with Newcastle Falcons Rugby Union Football Club as a distance learning programme.

Achievement and standards

106. Students reach a high standard of sport performance, particularly through the sports academies. Some students have achieved representative honours at national level in sports such as boxing and women's football, and at regional level in sports such as netball and football. The men's football team reached the final of the British Colleges Sport National League competition and the women's football team reached the five-a-side and seven-a-side finals and won the National Corporate Games five-a-side competition. Students achieve a high standard of work in theory and practical sessions, and they successfully develop their personal and learning skills in a variety of disciplines.

107. There are low pass rates on full-time programmes. Pass rates on the first and national diplomas in sport are significantly below the national average. Pass rates on the distance learning sport for life programme are very low, with very few students completing since the start of the programme in 2002, despite significant enrolments.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Football Association junior team manager's award (level 1 coach)	1	No. of starts	*	**	34
		% retention	*	**	100
		% pass rate	*	**	100
Foundation studies in exercise	1	No. of starts	19	183	64
		% retention	95	74	98

		% pass rate	0	21	5
RSA introduction to exercise through music	2	No. of starts	19	42	31
		% retention	63	88	61
		% pass rate	75	24	68
First diploma in sport	2	No. of starts	*	*	31
		% retention	*	*	42
		% pass rate	*	*	62
National diploma in applied science (sport)	3	No. of starts	**	16	21
		% retention	**	63	81
		% pass rate	**	70	65
Instructors certificate in self-defence	3	No. of starts	15	23	*
		% retention	73	91	*
		% pass rate	91	33	*

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

* course did not run

** fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

108. Teaching and learning in most lessons are good or better. Schemes of work are good and most lessons are well planned. In the best lessons, teachers frequently involve students in a wide range of demanding learning activities. Learning materials are of high quality and there is effective use of ILT in lessons, which facilitates and promotes independent learning. Students work hard and demonstrate good acquisition of skills. Teachers use probing questions well to challenge students and to confirm that they understand the work, and there are effective links between theoretical and practical lessons. Students display confidence in their subject knowledge and this is reflected in some very good presentations by students in theory lessons.

109. There are excellent facilities for practical sport. The college works in partnership with Gateshead International Stadium, enabling students to use a range of high-quality facilities that includes a large sports hall, astroturf area, gymnasium, running track and a variety of pitches. Community venues are used to provide further high-class training facilities for the football academies. There are new temporary classrooms to accommodate theory sessions at the stadium, which are well resourced and equipped. However, some students have difficulty in getting hold of books and journals which they need for their studies. There is a good team of well-qualified and enthusiastic staff, with a range of expertise and qualifications in a variety of disciplines. The staff have a very good rapport with their students, demonstrating a good understanding of individual practical and academic needs. There are also highly qualified and experienced coaches working with the men's and women's football, netball, rugby league and athletics academies to develop individual and team performance.

110. There are effective partnerships which enhance students' experience providing access for students to Gateshead International Stadium, good coaches and work experience opportunities. There is effective communication, with managers, staff and partners involved in regular, structured meetings.

111. Initial assessment is satisfactory for all students, with clear identification of learning needs. Assignments have clear assessment criteria and are planned and given out at appropriate intervals. Students would appreciate the marking of assignments at an earlier stage to confirm that they are achieving an appropriate standard of work.

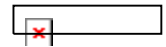
112. Students receive good material and financial support. Attendance is high and students are usually punctual. Learning support and tutorial support are satisfactory, with students receiving an adequate induction.

113. There is an insufficient range of provision in sport. There are no programmes at entry level or level 1. There are few part-time vocational opportunities for adults, with only one OCR stage 1 course in exercise and fitness taking place in the evening. There are no vocational routes available through NVQs or work-based learning.

Leadership and management

114. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with good day-to-day course management and a close working relationship between staff teams. Course content has been reviewed, and timetables amended, to reflect the demands of the programme and the needs of students. Successful steps have been taken to address issues of retention and achievement on full-time programmes. The self-assessment report is well structured and inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses which it identified of the area, although not all areas of provision were included and evaluated. There is lack of clarity regarding the curriculum leadership and management of the area of the learning. There are insufficient lower-level programmes and career routes for adults to enable students to consider a variety of progression routes. The introduction of sports academies for both males and females has had a positive effect on the recruitment of females into a traditionally male-dominated area. The college has ensured that students receive good teaching through significant investment in full-time and part-time teaching and coaching staff.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on NVQ level 1 hairdressing, NVQ level 2 beauty therapy and community learning holistic therapies courses

- good skills development

- good teaching and learning

- extensive range of courses to meet local needs

- good support for students

- good curriculum leadership.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing
- insufficient suitable accommodation
- insufficient assessment planning for NVQs and key skills in hairdressing.

Scope of provision

115. The department of hairdressing and beauty therapy offers a range of full-time and part-time courses from entry level to level 3. These are taught at the main site and in 12 community venues where a further 58 courses in beauty and holistic therapies are taught. The main courses offered are NVQ level 1 and 2 hairdressing and beauty therapy, a qualification at level 3 in holistic therapies, the national diploma in beauty therapy sciences, and courses at entry levels 1 to 3 taught in community venues. In addition, there is a hairdressing course designed specifically for the local Jewish community. To develop links with schools, there is also an NVQ hairdressing level 1 course offered to students aged 14 to 16. A further course is designed for young people who are following an alternative curriculum and who wish to follow a chosen vocational area of learning. A curriculum manager is responsible for the staff and work of the department. There are seven full-time and eighteen part-time academic staff who teach the curriculum, and two full-time support workers and a salon services supervisor manage the reception and salon technical services.

116. There are 70 full-time students and 150 part-time students attending the main college centre. In addition, there are 620 students on holistic and beauty therapy courses in the community. Most students are female.

Achievement and standards

117. There are high pass rates on the NVQ level 1 hairdressing and NVQ level 2 beauty therapy courses. The pass rate on the college-based holistic therapies course is 96%. Retention rates on the full-time first-year national diploma in beauty therapy and community-based holistic therapies courses are high. The pass rate for community learning students is also high, at 97%. There is a very substantial increase in the number of students starting courses in the community. Over the last three years, student numbers have increased from 29 in 2000/01 to 816 in 2002/03.

118. There are low pass rates on the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course. There has been a steady decline over three years from 100% in 2000/01 to 58% in 2002/03. Retention rates on this course have also shown a decline over three years. There is also a low retention rate for NVQ level 1 courses. The number of students starting the NVQ level 1 hairdressing course is down from 63 students in 2000/01 to 35 in 2002/03. The retention rate on this programme is also declining. However, the pass rate has increased substantially, from 44% to 100%.

119. Most students are able to demonstrate good professional, social and practical skills. NVQ level 1 students demonstrate particularly good long hair skills after only 12 weeks on the course. Students

make a good connection between theory and practice. All students carry out a thorough consultation process that is comprehensively recorded before commencing treatments. All students are able to ask very relevant questions about procedures and act independently on information given. They carry out practical tasks with secure theoretical knowledge and good communication skills. Hairdressing students propose realistic and feasible hairstyles to meet individual client's needs and hair types. The finish given to clients' hair is of a high professional standard. All students have high standards in health and safety; sterilisers are systematically used and spills are given prompt attention. Careful consideration is also given to the use and disposal of epilation probes. Competence tests for incompatibility and contraindications are carried out at regular intervals by both hairdressing and beauty therapy students. All treatments in both hairdressing and beauty therapy are carried out to timescales which compare favourably to industry standards. The students have good IT skills. They give good presentations to their fellow students in theory lessons. These activities are used well to promote ICT. Students are very good at using overhead transparencies and/or powerpoint presentations with interactive whiteboards.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2001 to 2002

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	63	50	35
		% retention	76	72	63
		% pass rate	65	44	100
OCN holistic therapies (community based)	1	No. of starts	29	139	816
		% retention	76	77	92
		% pass rate	91	85	97
NVQ hairdressing	2	No. of starts	27	40	20
		% retention	70	70	60
		% pass rate	100	70	58
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	*	34	19
		% retention	*	53	42
		% pass rate	*	100	100
Holistic therapies (college based)	3	No. of starts	46	31	33
		% retention	98	87	85
		% pass rate	100	100	96

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

120. Teaching is very good. Teachers have comprehensive schemes of work and clearly defined learning outcomes for lesson plans that are repeatedly achieved during lessons. Teachers begin lessons with revision of previous theory taught and then ensure that it is systematically applied to all practical activities. They quickly recognise when students need individual support. At the end of the lesson, teachers evaluate learning and identify areas for development. All tutors give careful consideration to their demonstrations and explanations. Students are given ample opportunities to ask questions and discuss particular aspects of interest both during and after demonstrations. Tutors carefully introduce and use relevant technical language to help familiarise students with words that may be used in external examinations and written assignments. Tutors give good encouragement to students to develop their independent learning skills. Challenging tasks are set in both theory and

practical lessons. Clear direction is given on work needed for the following lesson. Good oral and written feedback is given to students. The salons are of a high quality and are well decorated. However, there is an insufficient amount of suitable accommodation. Two classes are put together for practical lessons in an inappropriate space designed for one class. The size of the classes, along with the shortage of clients, makes it difficult for all students to have adequate practice and receive appropriate assessment. The shortage of space also restricts the number of students that can be accepted on courses. In beauty therapy, there are 18 students in a class with insufficient beds to work on. Some temporary cabins used for theory and tutorials are unsuitable. These are uninspiring and are cold in winter and too warm in summer. Some of the equipment is old and, although it is in a good state of repair, it does not reflect current industry expectations. However, a top-of-the-range ultra tone machine which would normally be found only in the most exclusive salons or health spas has been purchased recently. The practical lesson for Jewish students takes place at a basic salon based in their academy. The course offered to school children following an alternative curriculum takes place in an inadequately refurbished drama classroom where students and tutors are disturbed by noise coming from adjacent studios. It is an unsuitable room for teaching these particular children who already have low self-esteem, a bad experience of education and unacceptable behaviour.

121. There is insufficient assessment planning for NVQs and key skills in hairdressing. At the beginning of the week there are not enough clients for the students to work on. There is also a lack of clients for part-time evening barbering courses timetabled between 16.00 and 19.00 and for the hairdressing course taught at the Jewish academy. Practical hairdressing assessments are not well planned and there are no target dates set to measure students' progress. Students' key skills are not assessed during practical and theory lessons. Key skills are developed throughout the courses, but few students achieve a qualification.

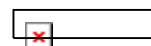
122. Support for students is good. Effective tutorials expand students' knowledge of issues such as drug abuse, drug rape and unemployment. Students are well motivated and are encouraged to research any area in society in which they are interested. The research is comprehensive and is discussed at a group tutorial. There is a comprehensive scheme of work devised for the tutorial system. However, some poor timetabling of tutorials for hairdressing students results in tutorials taking place at the end of the college day.

123. Good support is given to six visually-impaired holistic therapy students. These students are now gainfully employed either in their own business or at the local sports stadium, providing professional sports massage for a range of athletes. The college has an ample student support fund. Many hairdressing and beauty therapy students have been helped by college funds to buy the necessary hairdressing and beauty therapy kit.

Leadership and management

124. Leadership and management are good. Staff work well as a team and share good practice and new initiatives. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all staff. Communications are good and there are regular structured meetings with clear agenda items. The management encourages collaboration over the two subject areas. A good degree of autonomy for course leaders to make decisions for their own course and students is repeatedly encouraged. This management style has brought about changes in monitoring quality assurance within the two vocational areas. Procedures are now standardised and comprehensive and new documentation is now available on the intranet. ILT is well used as both a teaching and a learning aid. The self-assessment process was comprehensive and inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high retention rates and pass rates on the certificate in counselling and the diploma in pre-school practice

- good teaching for adults

- effective partnership work

- good promotion of equality and diversity.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some full-time courses at levels 2 and 3

- unsatisfactory teaching for students aged 16 to 18

- lack of rigour in self-assessment

- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

125. The college offers a range of full-time provision in health and social care, early years and uniformed public services and part-time provision in counselling, health, social care and public services. Students are able to work towards a range of NVQs, first and national diplomas, a number of professional qualifications accredited by the Council for Awards in Children's Health and Education (CACHE), Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE), ASET and the National Examination Board in Occupation Health and Safety (NEBOSH) and units accredited by the National Open College Network (NOCN). The department offers full-time courses during the day and part-time courses in the day and evening in health, social care, early years and counselling. Students enrol on a variety of part-time courses at several points in the year. The department provides training in community locations throughout the Gateshead area. Within the college, students are offered progression from entry to HE courses and to employment or professional training. There are 270 students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses and 1,454 adult students enrolled on college courses in

2003/04.

Achievement and standards

126. There are high retention and pass rates on the diploma in pre-school practice for the three years up to 2003, and high pass rates on the certificate in counselling, with retention rates at or above the national average. There are low pass rates on some level 2 and 3 full-time programmes. The pass rate for the uniformed public services national diploma declined to 67% in 2002/03. The pass rate for the CACHE diploma has been consistently below the national average from 2001 to 2003, at 55%, 75% and 67%. Student's work in most lessons is at an appropriate level. Students work effectively in groups and are supportive of each other. There is some reticence to join in whole-group discussions. Although students link experiences from work placement and their life experiences to classroom activity, some students require prompting to make these links effective. On full-time programmes, pass rates for basic and key skills in literacy and numeracy are low. However, full-time students complete assignments at an appropriate standard, and most of their work is word processed and contains useful illustrations, references and bibliographies. Students on NVQ courses have portfolio evidence which is relevant to the workplace and meets the requirements for the award.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Certificate in child care and education	2	No. of starts	*	21	30
		% retention	*	76	63
		% pass rate	*	88	79
National diploma in uniformed public services	3	No. of starts	19	19	19
		% retention	63	79	63
		% pass rate	83	87	67
CACHE diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	*	16	16
		% retention	*	75	75
		% pass rate	*	75	67
Certificate in counselling	3	No. of starts	50	32	22
		% retention	80	78	91
		% pass rate	95	92	95

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

127. The quality of teaching is generally good. For most lessons, there are detailed schemes of work and lesson plans which focus on meeting validating awarding body requirements. Where teaching is good or better, teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and have good classroom management. Teaching is good for adult students. During a diploma in pre-school practice lesson exploring working in partnership with parents, the teacher created a relaxed, supportive learning environment. All students used self-reflection effectively to explore family tensions. In an entry level lesson on the preparation for child care programme, students worked effectively in pairs to identify the advantages and disadvantages of breast and bottle feeding. The teacher used a pre-prepared game followed by lively discussion to consolidate and extend students' learning. The different needs of students are identified in lesson plans. Further effective support is available from a learning support assistant. There is, however, some unsatisfactory teaching of students aged 16 to 18. In the

less successful lessons, there is insufficient planning to meet individual needs. Teachers do not question individual students directly to make sure they are learning and there are insufficient classroom activities to help students develop their analytical and critical thinking. Key skills are not routinely a central part of vocational lessons. There is effective use of IT in lessons. Teachers and assessors are appropriately qualified. There are dedicated classrooms in which students' work is displayed.

128. On health and social care and early years programmes, assessment is fair and accurate. Written comments clearly indicate which criteria had been met and how students might improve their work. However, there are some weak and inconsistent verification practices. For uniformed public services courses, the action plan to respond to critical external verification comments has not had any effect on the accuracy with which teachers grade students' work.

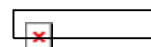
129. There is a range of full-time and part-time programmes within the college, which provides a suitable progression route from entry to level 4. There are useful links with Northumbria and Sunderland universities, with some places reserved for level 3 students.

130. There is an entitlement to tutorials and students appreciate the personal support they receive from teachers and central college services, including counselling and careers. Useful personal profiles for early years students provide an overview of their needs. Although individual learning plans are used, some lack detail and focus on long-term targets rather than short-term goals.

Leadership and management

131. Leadership and management are satisfactory. All courses are evaluated within the context of the college's review system. However, the self-assessment report overstates many of the strengths and fails to recognise significant weaknesses identified by inspectors. The work of learning mentors has had a positive impact on the development of schemes of work and lesson plans, but has not improved the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers appreciate and take advantage of opportunities for continuous professional development. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice across the curriculum area. There is good promotion of equality and diversity in lessons and through curriculum links with the Jewish Academy. Lessons focus on gender, culture, ethnicity and social deprivation. The programme manager makes an effective contribution to the local early years development partnership at strategic and sub-group level. This promotes access to courses at college and good links with employers.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on community-based practical crafts courses

- very good teaching and learning

- good accommodation and specialist resources

- effective assessment

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- declining retention rates on the diploma in popular music

- low pass rates on level 2 photography.

Scope of provision

132. The provision is located within the school of creative arts, science and health, with the community-based programme being managed by the school of community learning. The curriculum is managed and taught by 15 full-time and 33 part-time staff plus four curriculum support workers at the main college site. In 2002/03, there were 150 full-time students and over 3,000 part-time enrolments.

133. A range of full-time and part-time courses in visual and performing arts, popular music, music technology and media are run at the college's main site. These include full-time courses from level 1 to level 4 and a variety of part-time courses in the daytime and in the evening. Classes are provided through the learning partnership with a variety of external agencies for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there are specific groups such as those from the Jewish Academy. A variety of art and craft courses take place in the wider community and many are franchised to the LEA. GCE A-level art is provided on the main site and through partnership with one local secondary school.

Achievement and standards

134. Pass rates on community-based practical crafts courses are significantly above national averages. There are declining retention rates on the national diploma in popular music course which in 2003 was below the national average, though there is 100% retention in the current year. The level 2 photography course, following good performances in previous years, had a low pass rate of 36% in 2003.

135. Students are mainly successful in achieving their individual learning goals and the standards of work are satisfactory or better. Many students make significant progress. There is good acquisition and application of practical and technical skills in most lessons. Progression internally and to HE is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
City and Guilds of	2	No. of starts	29	21	22

London Institute photography		% retention	59	86	86
		% pass rate	94	72	36
Practical craft stage 1	2	No. of starts	279	247	242
		% retention	72	76	83
		% pass rate	94	87	93
National diploma in media	3	No. of starts	15	*	18
		% retention	53	*	67
		% pass rate	88	*	92

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

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Quality of education and training

136. Teaching is good or better in most lessons. Teaching is particularly good in level 2 performing arts and design lessons. Schemes of work and lesson plans are carried out well in teaching and assignments are exemplary in their clarity. Project briefs are vocationally based and challenge students. Tutors use one-to-one sessions which constructively enable students to progress and improve. There is very good development of reflective learning practices that include learning logs and journals, group critiques and ongoing individual action planning by students. Art students use realistic project briefs, some with external clients, to underpin the development of professional practice. Drama students can interpret the frank dialogue of playwrights such as Patrick Marber with insight and sophistication.

137. Staff are well qualified and many have appropriate industrial and vocational experience that helps students to develop their understanding of working practices. Accommodation and specialist resources are good. The open-plan visual arts area enables flexible and imaginative use. There is a wide range of visual learning materials. ICT equipment is up to date and students have immediate and open access to it. The use of intranet programmes, interactive whiteboards and data projectors enhances visual presentations. The editing facilities for media production are of industrial standard. The quality and availability of the varied musical instruments are good. Mirrored walls help the teaching of dance and the quality of the performing arts studios and college theatre encourages creative learning.

138. Assessment practices are effective and help students to improve their performance. All assignment briefs include a full explanation of assessment criteria and students know what is required to achieve a specific grade. Very good feedback is given to students, both in writing and orally in academic tutorials. Accurate and detailed information is given to students regarding their achievements and they have the opportunity and expectation to appeal against grades if they feel disadvantaged. Students' assessment of each other's work is fundamental to all programmes. The ethos of continuous self-improvement through reflective learning and evaluation is well established. Internal verification processes are robust and external verifiers endorse the integrity of assessment.

139. The range of vocational and academic courses offered allows students to choose a programme appropriate to their level of ability. The provision mainly meets the needs of students, though there is no provision for three-dimensional design or technical theatre. There are specific classes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provided through the learning partnership and, where appropriate, such students are integrated on to mainstream programmes.

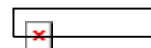
140. There is comprehensive and informative pre-entry information, advice and guidance for students. Most students feel that their experience of courses reflects the impression they were given prior to enrolment. Students appreciate the support and guidance they receive from their tutors on both course-related and personal issues. There is some concern about possible assignment

overload, but students are able to negotiate satisfactorily with appropriate staff.

Leadership and management

141. Leadership and management are good. There is good support for all staff. A highly effective mentoring system supports new and existing staff, ensuring a consistent approach to implementing quality assurance procedures. Internal communication is good, and staff have extensive opportunities to formally discuss and minute actions and decisions taken. Staff are encouraged to share good practice and new working methods that benefit students. Staff are valued and consulted and their ideas are often implemented; for example, a new short course for artists in residence is currently being developed. The identification of professional development needs through staff appraisal is effective. Imaginative timetabling determines the best use of resources to benefit students. Teaching observations are regarded as a positive experience leading to improved student experience. Course reviews and student evaluation informs the self-assessment process. There are effective partnerships to widen participation including Partners in Learning, collaborative sixth form provision and a large programme of arts, crafts and music franchised to the LEA. There is positive promotion of equality of opportunity throughout the area of learning, with assignment briefs recognising a wide range of cultural and ethnic influences.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most language courses

- very good teaching and learning

- wide range of modern language courses

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates and declining pass rates for GCSE English language

- low retention rates on some 30-week language courses.

Scope of provision

142. The college offers part-time courses in English and modern foreign languages as day or evening courses. There is a GCE A-level English language course and AS-level and GCSE courses in English language and literature. The college's access to HE programme includes an option in English language. There is also an introductory bridging English course. All courses are held at the main college site, except one GCSE English language course which is at a community venue.

143. The provision in modern foreign languages includes AS-level and GCE A-level French, German, Italian and Spanish and GCSE French, German, Italian, Spanish and Turkish. A community learning programme currently offers 31 courses in French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese and Spanish at 7 venues in the community. These are mainly at levels 1 and 2. Spanish is offered at level 1 on the travel and tourism course. British sign language courses at levels 1 and 2 are held at the main site.

144. There are 1,242 students on courses. On English courses there are 153 students and on modern foreign languages, 1,089. All are part-time and predominantly aged over 19.

Achievement and standards

145. There are high pass rates on most language courses and many students on language courses have achieved their personal learning goals by increasing fluency and gaining confidence in speaking. One student with no previous knowledge of German had achieved the GCE A-level in four years, with the aim of being seconded to Germany to police the World Cup in 2006. In English lessons, students develop good social and group-working skills. However, there are declining pass rates and low retention rates on GCSE English language courses and low retention rates on 30-week language courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NOCN languages	1	No. of starts	245	239	229
		% retention	82	61	64
		% pass rate	88	86	86
ASET short courses	1	No. of starts	16	154	459
		% retention	50	58	77
		% pass rate	100	90	93
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	128	90	94
		% retention	67	67	64
		% pass rate	91	84	75
GCSE Spanish	2	No. of starts	59	76	81
		% retention	76	87	74
		% pass rate	60	79	80
NOCN languages	2	No. of starts	100	87	58
		% retention	81	49	58
		% pass rate	62	74	72

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

Quality of education and training

146. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors teach well-planned lessons in a lively, enthusiastic manner with good attention to individual students. They create a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere by means of humour. One tutor plays soft music to aid concentration during writing activities. Students participate well in lessons and often use the language they are learning as the normal means of communication. In the best lessons, tutors make very good use of the language being taught and use material appropriate to the level of the class. One language lesson, where the class was of mixed ability, was very successful because the teacher set very good activities including independent exercises in the language laboratory. In poorer lessons, there is overuse of English.

147. Tutors have good subject knowledge and nearly all have appropriate teaching qualifications and experience. Those that do not are working towards achieving them. Many foreign language tutors are native speakers of the language they teach and all are competent linguists. Staff have access to good teaching resources such as textbooks and photocopying. Accommodation is satisfactory on the main site, although there is no base room for English or modern foreign languages. The rooms are bright, warm and spacious, with good specialist equipment. There is a language laboratory which is used by most classes to good effect. Accommodation at community venues is mostly of the same standard, although at one venue the room was too small for a group of over twenty adults and another had poor acoustics and lighting. Display in these rooms is often dedicated to a language other than that which is being taught. Away from the main site, equipment such as cassette players is not always satisfactory and at one centre there is currently no access to ILT.

148. Assessment is satisfactory. Initial assessment is given considerable importance and all students have individual learning plans with learning goals and needs analysis included. For English language courses, there are diagnostic tests including a written test prior to enrolment. Most foreign language courses are at beginners' level and assessment is carried out in a variety of informal ways. There is good monitoring of spoken and written work in class and homework is set regularly and returned promptly with supportive comments. Tutors do not always record these details other than on the forms required for examination assessment. Students are usually aware of the progress they are making, although there are no formal feedback sessions.

149. Provision is good in modern languages. Eight languages are taught at three levels, mostly at levels 1 and 2, at seven community venues in addition to the main college site. Courses run during the day and evening at the main site but there is only one daytime course at a community venue. Schemes of work are regularly reviewed to meet the needs and interests of the students whilst covering areas required by examination boards. A preparatory bridging English course has been introduced this year to help students reach the standard required for GCSE.

150. Students are very enthusiastic about the good support they receive from tutors. If students are absent most tutors will telephone them and send worksheets and details of work missed by post or give copies to another student to pass on. Several students comment that without this personal contact they would have given up the course as they felt they had missed too much work. If a class is cancelled, students are contacted by the college, wherever possible.

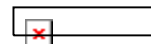
Leadership and management

151. Leadership and management are good. There is effective communication by means of telephone, e-mail and frequent formal meetings that are minuted and have recorded action points. These provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of good practice. There is very good support for part-time staff who feel very much part of a team. They form the majority of staff. Each tutor has a moderator who acts as mentor. They meet very regularly to discuss progress and to air any problems.

152. There is good practice in lesson observation. There are two trained observers in modern foreign languages but all observations are carried out by suitably qualified observers. Priority is given to new staff in scheduling observations. Screening is at two levels, with tutors who are deemed

unsatisfactory at an observation receiving closer attention. All part-time tutors have been observed this year. There is good use of data to monitor retention rates and achievement and to set targets. All tutors make a contribution to the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in it. Continuing professional development is available which is specific to the area and part-time tutors are paid to attend. Equality of opportunity is promoted through careful course design and well-managed classroom activity.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- high retention rates

- wide range of courses to meet students' needs

- good partnership working

- highly effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- inadequate target setting

- narrow range of learning resources.

Scope of provision

153. There is a wide range of provision for students. There are seven full-time and two part-time courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Courses start at pre-entry and are designed to allow progression through entry level to vocational areas at level 1 or to employment. Some 96 students are enrolled on full-time courses and 240 are enrolled as part -time students.

154. Courses take place on the two main college sites with customised programmes offered in day centres for students with mental health difficulties. Courses include units that can lead to external qualifications in skills for working life, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Students can choose from a range of vocational options across catering, art and design, performing arts, motor vehicle and sports and

recreation. Students taking the garden crafts option are working towards level 1 NVQ units in manufacture.

155. Students come to college through collaboration with local special schools and other agencies, including a partnership arrangement with Social Services and the Mental Health Trust, or through self-referral.

Achievement and standards

156. Retention rates are high and are consistently above national averages. In 2002/03, these ranged from 87% to 100%. Attendance on current course is good; average attendance for the area is 89%. Students develop good personal and social skills. They are well motivated and enthusiastic and their work is generally of a high standard. In practical sessions, students work safely, demonstrating the acquisition of a range of skills appropriate to the vocational area. Students gain in self-esteem and confidently speak about their work and related topics. For example, in a crafts lesson where students were making bookmarks, they were discussing their favourite books. They were able to justify their reasons for choice and then recommend them to others in the class. However, targets are not sufficiently challenging. Profiles of individual needs are not used to set tasks which take account of the different needs of students and there is little evidence of extension of tasks for more able students.

Quality of education and training

157. There is good teaching in most lessons. Teaching is generally well planned and it is linked to the core curriculum where appropriate. In the better lessons, learning objectives are shared with and understood by students. Good questioning techniques are used in some lessons to engage students and to check their understanding. Working relationships between staff and students are very good and students are constantly encouraged and helped. However, a narrow range of resources is used in lessons. There is little evidence, for example, of the use of television or video, and the computer resources are inappropriate.

158. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of students. Teaching and support staff are well qualified and undertake professional development. Specialist equipment is available for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

159. Target setting is generally inadequate to meet the individual needs of students across the various programmes. There is no clear link between initial assessment and the development of individual learning plans. Short-term goals are not specific and are often the same across a whole group. Records of reviews are very general and do not inform students or staff about progress in a way that is meaningful and measurable. Students are often unclear what they have learned and what they need to do to improve between review sessions.

160. There is a wide range of courses available to meet student and community needs. Additional levels and new courses allow opportunities to progress to foundation programmes in art and design, performing arts, health and social care, sport and leisure or into employment. Customised programmes have been developed in response to requests from the Mental Health Trust and Social Services. Partners contribute to curriculum planning and the area is responsive to requests for customised courses and projects.

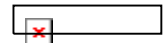
161. There is highly effective support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. This includes both personal and academic support in class. There are productive working relationships between teaching and learning support staff. Students are kept on track and learning objectives are constantly emphasised. Students value the progression guidance given to them before enrolment and during their courses. Good sheltered work placements are available to students. Students also enjoy the visits and residentials that are organised.

Leadership and management

162. Leadership and management are good. There is clear direction in relation to the changes required to meet the new National Curriculum and local initiatives. Course teams meet regularly and the views of staff are sought about student issues. The staff team has been involved in planning for the new accommodation and for how the students can be better integrated with mainstream college courses.

163. There is good partnership working. Staff from the area represent the college on a number of steering groups such as the basic skills sub-group of the Lifelong Learning Partnership and the employment sub-group of the local authority and contribute to planning for the wider community. Equality of opportunity is promoted across the programmes, although there is little integration with mainstream college courses. Students are taught in separate groups in specialist rooms. The self-assessment report for this area identified most of the issues highlighted during the inspection, although some issues were overlooked.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates

- wide range of ESOL courses in college centres

- effective use of partnership arrangements.

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans

- narrow range of learning resources used in the classroom.

Scope of provision

164. The college provides literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. In addition, courses are provided for students aged 14 to 16. In the current year, there are 754 students on ESOL, literacy and numeracy courses. There is a wide range of ESOL provision from entry level to level 2, the majority of which takes place during the daytime on the main college sites. There is a range of non-accredited courses and a small number of students are following courses which lead to external awards. Full-time ESOL courses begin twice each year, with students completing in January or in June. In addition, there are ESOL courses specifically for students

aiming to enter HE and for doctors and other health professionals. Most literacy and numeracy courses are accredited and level 1 and level 2 students follow courses which lead to achievement of national certificates in literacy and numeracy. ESOL courses take place in the main college centre and in a number of community venues. The college has partnership arrangements in place with local primary schools, the local health trust and the local council, and literacy and numeracy courses are provided for parents and for employees. The college provides literacy and numeracy courses for employees and unemployed people through sub-contracting arrangements with two training providers. Literacy, language and numeracy support is provided to students on full-time college courses.

Achievement and standards

165. Overall, retention and pass rates are high. On ESOL courses, pass rates and retention rates are above the national average. Students on some courses do not achieve at the expected level because they follow courses which are not matched specifically to their needs. Some ESOL students who are not successful at the end of the course are re-enrolled on to the same course. In some lessons, learning goals which are identified in individual learning plans are of a general nature and there is not always a link with the diagnostic assessment undertaken. On most courses, students improve their self-esteem and confidence while developing new knowledge and skills.

Quality of education and training

166. Much of the teaching is effective in meeting the individual needs of students. In the best lessons, teacher use effective strategies to successfully introduce and practise new skills. For example, in one ESOL lesson, the teacher used a recent newspaper article as a basis for encouraging the students to use language learned previously when presenting their opinions, while at the same time introducing new phrases and vocabulary. Most teaching is well planned, with clear objectives at the appropriate level for the class. Most students are highly motivated and understand the value of the new skills they are learning. Students learn new skills and knowledge through activities which are relevant to their backgrounds and aspirations. In many literacy and numeracy lessons, the individual needs of students are effectively identified and met. There is, however, little response in some lessons to individual needs. Students in these lessons are taught as a whole class and all members of the class follow the same activities. In the poorer lessons, there is a narrow range of learning activities and students are not clear about why they do particular activities.

167. A wide range of relevant resources is available in the Centre 4 Knowledge, the Centre 4 Key Skills and the language centre. These include textbooks, readers, worksheets, audio-visual resources and interactive ICT resources. All ESOL students have one lesson each week in the language centre and another in an ICT suite. Accommodation at the main college sites and in community venues is generally attractive and well-maintained. In some lessons, there is an over-reliance on paper-based resources that do not meet the needs of the students, and teachers make insufficient use of other resources, including ICT. Staff are appropriately qualified and undertake relevant staff development such as core curriculum training.

168. There are comprehensive initial and diagnostic assessment arrangements for students on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses. Targets are set for students which are based on the results of diagnostic assessment and these are recorded in students' individual learning plans. However, individual learning plans are not always effectively used on some courses. Targets are not always expressed in terms of individual needs and are not used well by teachers when planning lessons. In many lessons, learning outcomes are expressed for the whole class and do not take account of individual learning targets. There is insufficient monitoring and recording of students' achievement against targets identified in lesson plans and individual learning plans. A range of relevant external awards are used to accredit students' learning. Students on level 1 literacy and numeracy courses undertake study which leads to national certificates. In the best better lessons, skills learned by students are practised within appropriate and relevant contexts. For example, in an ESOL lesson, students who are health professionals used newspaper articles and exercises which were relevant to their jobs. In a literacy lesson, unemployed students used new writing skills to prepare job applications. There are some opportunities for students to progress to a range of further courses. For example, a bridging course provides the link between literacy and numeracy courses and GCSE

courses.

169. Most ESOL courses take place at the main college centres. There are few community-based literacy and numeracy students, although other providers offer some courses to help ensure that demands in the area are met. In the current year, 73 students are enrolled on community-based literacy and numeracy courses at the college. There is little evening provision with only workshops in literacy and numeracy based at the main college centre.

170. Full-time students are screened in order to identify those who need additional support in literacy and numeracy. Part-time students with additional literacy and numeracy needs are screened, if requested. There is effective personal support for students. Teachers on most courses take account of personal circumstances and support needs when planning and teaching. Attendance in some ESOL lessons is poor. Induction materials for students on ESOL courses do not take account of students' level of language skill. Arrangements for identifying and responding to the needs of students with significant dyslexia tendencies are still being developed.

Leadership and management

171. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear strategy in place for meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups. This has been developed in consultation with local partners. The college takes a leading role in developing a local strategy to meet national targets relating to literacy and numeracy, and is at the heart of the 'capacity building across the Tyne' initiative. Very effective partnership arrangements are in place, with a range of organisations including local employers, the local authority and community organisations. This enables the college to identify the literacy, numeracy and language needs of the local community. Implementation of the strategy has resulted in the college expanding its ESOL provision to meet the language needs of local asylum seekers and refugees. Communication across all the teams who teach literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses is good. The number of students who successfully progress on to other courses in the college and into employment is not fully monitored and the destination analysis is incomplete. The self-assessment for literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision did not identify some of the areas which inspectors identified as in need of improvement.

Part D: College data

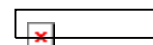
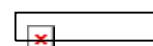


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2002/03

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	39	52
2	21	21
3	14	7
4/5	1	2
Other	26	17
Total*	100	100



Source: ILR

* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

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

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)*
Science and mathematics	203	814	3
Land-based provision	0	289	1
Construction	187	555	2
Engineering, technology and manufacture	623	1,775	6
Business administration, management and professional	350	2,076	7
Information and communications technology	885	7,932	24
Retailing, customer service and transportation	56	417	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	222	1,996	6
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	241	1,506	5
Health, social care and public services	362	1,960	6
Visual and performing arts and media	287	5,147	15
Humanities	78	1,095	3
English, languages and communication	139	1,793	5
Foundation programmes	1,038	3,410	12
Unknown AOL	91	1,792	5
Total	4,762	32,557	100

Source: ILR

* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level	Retention and pass	Completion year				

Courses)		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	2,448	606	939	2,493	2,458	3,409
	Retention rate (%)	92	86	86	84	77	79
	National average (%)	74	75	75	70	73	74
	Pass rate (%)	65	56	65	68	80	68
	National average (%)	64	64	66	65	68	69
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,040	812	759	1,281	2,001	2,504
	Retention rate (%)	80	69	66	81	0	77
	National average (%)	69	70	70	70	70	69
	Pass rate (%)	57	56	59	56	74	76
	National average (%)	66	67	68	65	65	69
3	Starters excluding transfers	611	382	368	1,316	1,126	1,270
	Retention rate (%)	64	65	55	80	81	75
	National average (%)	62	67	75	67	67	70
	Pass rate (%)	69	71	71	64	66	65
	National average (%)	69	70	73	63	65	69
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	19	*	*	342	298	180
	Retention rate (%)	79	*	*	73	73	74
	National average (%)	61	*	*	66	65	70
	Pass rate (%)	7	*	*	43	50	26
	National average (%)	**	*	*	50	49	49

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 1999 to 2002: College ISR.

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

** data unavailable

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

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Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	76	19	5	78
Level 2 (intermediate)	64	28	8	64
Level 1 (foundation)	66	21	13	38
Other sessions	85	12	3	34
Totals	72	21	7	214

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