



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Bolton Sixth Form College

CONTENTS

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Mathematics](#)

[Science](#)

[Information and communications technology and computing](#)

[Visual and performing arts](#)

[Humanities](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

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

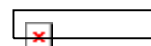
[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

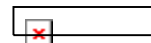
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Name of college:	Bolton Sixth Form College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Roy Whittle OBE
Address of college:	Smithills Dean Road Bolton BL1 6JT
Telephone number:	01204 846 215
Fax number:	01204 858 589
Chair of governors:	Leilia Price
Unique reference number:	131867
Name of reporting inspector:	Sandra Tweedie HMI
Dates of inspection:	19-23 January 2004

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

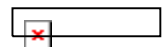


Bolton Sixth Form College was formed in 1998 and has two campuses, one in the north and one in the south of the borough. Bolton Metropolitan Borough is one of the largest in England, with a population of 261,000. Approximately 72% of students are from wards in Bolton that have been designated as areas of deprivation. The college recruits students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Approximately 60% of the students are from minority ethnic groups, whereas the proportion in Bolton is 11%. Significant proportions of students have modest attainment when they enrol on advanced level courses at the college. There is a strong commitment to raising achievement. There is a thorough analysis of the progress that students make using external and internal value added assessments. The Bolton Learning Partnership has identified as an objective of high priority, the need to raise participation into further education (FE) of young white males in the south of the borough. The college has contributed to an education action zone project and to a local learning and skills council (LSC) funded initiative in 2002/03 to help meet this objective.

The college offers 37 subjects at advance subsidiary level (AS level) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), 7 courses at advanced certificate of vocational education (AVCE), 2 national diploma courses, 6 general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate courses and a foundation course in information and communications technology (ICT). In 2002/03, the college recorded 5,577 enrolments. The largest proportion of enrolments was in science and mathematics, ICT and humanities subjects. Four fifths of students aged 16 to 18 are studying at level 3. Approximately 70 adults study part time, mainly on ICT courses. For 2003/04, indications are that college enrolments are slightly lower for both age groups than in 2002/03.

The college in its mission statement offers high-quality provision for students aged 16 who wish to pursue a full-time course of study within the context of a sixth form college.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of education to be good in ICT and computing, business studies, economics and accountancy, social sciences, and in English and communications. In mathematics, science, visual and performing arts and humanities, it was satisfactory. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

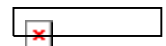
- clear ethos determined by governors and senior managers
- outstanding promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities and cultural diversity
- good progress by students with low attainment at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE)
- overall retention and pass rates at or above the national average
- good student attendance and punctuality
- effective quality assurance procedures
- much good departmental and course management.

What should be improved

- the effectiveness of teaching and learning for students of different ability
- the provision for additional learning support
- collaboration with industry for vocational courses
- library resources for several areas of learning
- systematic assessment by governors of their own performance
- access to resources for those with restricted mobility in a few areas.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

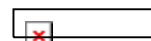


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Pass rates are good at GCE A level and strategies to raise pass rates are effective on AS-level courses. Assessment is thorough, with detailed feedback to students on how to improve further. Teachers share good practice. Provision at levels 1 and 2 is inappropriate for some students who have low pass rates at GCSE. There is insufficient participation and interaction with students in lessons.
Science	Satisfactory. Pass rates are satisfactory at GCE A level, but are low in the three main science areas at AS level. Course management is effective, with a high level of subject support given to students. There

	is a narrow range of teaching strategies used in some lessons with slow progress made by the more able students.
Business, economics and accounting	Good. Most pass rates are high, with successful progression from one level to another within the area and to higher education (HE) courses. Teaching is generally good. All managers and teachers share a common purpose, putting students and pass rates first. Equality of opportunity is given a high priority. There is insufficient development of students' abilities to learn independently.
Information and communications technology and computing	Good. Teaching is effective in developing the core concepts of the subject. Pass rates are high at GCE A level. A large proportion of AVCE students achieve high grades. Leadership and management of the department are good. There are insufficient links with industry. In some lessons, there is not enough differentiation in the teaching and learning methods used.
Visual and performing arts	Satisfactory. Standards of students' work on GNVQ intermediate art and design courses are high. Pass rates are low on GCE A-level performing arts and theatre studies courses. Pass rates are outstanding in music. The teaching is also very good in this area. Cultural diversity is recognised and celebrated. The enrichment programme is extensive. Students make slow progress at GCE A level with insufficient differentiation in assignments. There is a lack of rigour in monitoring course quality assurance.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, teachers do not plan sufficiently for the differing needs of students. Pass rates at GCE A level are good. Students' progress is monitored carefully. There are good academic and pastoral support. Feedback to students on the quality of their work is sometimes poor. AS-level results in 2003 were low. However, managers have addressed this weakness effectively.
Social sciences	Good. Students make good progress and achieve satisfactory results, especially at AS level in religious studies and psychology. Teaching is well structured with good support materials, but more able students are not sufficiently challenged. Students do not make sufficient use of computers or the Internet. Departmental management is good.
English and communications	Good. Pass rates in English and communication studies at level 3 are high. Students make very good progress. The department is well managed with much collaborative teamwork. Teaching and learning are well planned. Students' interest is maintained, although there is not enough extension work for the most able. Resources used in class are very good, but library resources are inadequate.

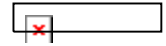
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. Clear direction is provided by senior managers and governors. Corporate objectives and values are understood by staff and determine all college activities. The management structure is effective. Most departmental and course management is good. Meetings are well documented and strategies for improvement are implemented. Communication within the college is effective. Quality assurance systems are comprehensive. The self-assessment process is rigorous, effective and involves staff fully. Value added data are used well in setting targets and the monitoring of students' progress. Achievement of value added targets

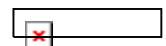
college's performance, but they do not systematically review their own effectiveness as part of the annual self-assessment process. A comprehensive range of management reports is available to staff, although there has been insufficient training in their application. The deployment of staff is rigorously monitored. College budgets are carefully controlled and financial management is good. The college provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



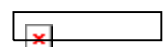
The college's approach to inclusion is outstanding. The college recognises and celebrates the diverse cultures and beliefs of its students. The curriculum is planned carefully to meet the needs of students on both college campuses. The college focuses on ensuring that students achieve their potential. Approximately 72% of students are from areas designated as disadvantaged. Promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity and cultural diversity are outstanding. The achievement of targets is regularly monitored, with action taken where it is needed. At the time of inspection, over 60% of the students were from minority ethnic groups compared with 11% in the community. Measures have been taken to increase the number of white students. The college has an appropriate race equality policy in addition to an equal opportunities policy and a disability statement. It fulfils its obligations under the Race Relations Amendment Act and Special Educational Needs Disabilities Act 2001 (SENDA). A few specialist teaching facilities are not accessible to students with restricted mobility. Governors and senior managers receive comprehensive reports and take action when appropriate.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The college provides satisfactory guidance and support for students. Pre-enrolment guidance is effective and impartial. There are well-established enrolment procedures and induction is thorough. Initial diagnostic assessment identifies the literacy and numeracy needs and preferred learning styles of students. This information is not systematically communicated to teachers to inform teaching strategies. Where students do receive additional learning support, either in individual or small groups, much of the teaching is good. Some aspects of support for students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia are unsatisfactory. Staff are insufficiently well qualified to deliver this support. The impact of receiving learning support on students' progress is not evaluated. The college has a well-structured and documented system for tutorials. The quality of both pastoral and subject support is variable. There is some good practice in target setting and monitoring of students' progress, but also less effective tutorials with vague targets for improvement. Good assistance is provided for students progressing to HE; the advice and guidance available for entry to employment (E2E) are less well structured. The college offers a range of good welfare services. Procedures for monitoring students' attendance and punctuality are rigorous.

Students' views of the college



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

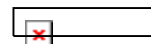
What students like about the college

- good pre-entry guidance and induction
- the cultural diversity
- very supportive and approachable staff
- friendly atmosphere
- wide range of courses
- food in the canteen caters for different cultures
- good enrichment
- subject specific workshops.

What they feel could be improved

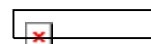
- access to computers at the campus in the south of the borough
- arrangements to cover for staff absence
- student social area especially at the campus in the south of the borough
- careers advice for those seeking employment.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



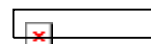
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	68	28	4
19+ and WBL*	0	0	0
Learning 16-18	61	35	4
19+ and WBL*	0	0	0

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

*work-based learning and too few students to provide a valid calculation

Achievement and standards



1. The college offers a range of courses both academic and vocational, mainly at levels 2 and 3 with a small provision at foundation level. Almost all students are aged 16 to 18 and on full-time courses. At level 3, the college provides GCE advanced courses and AVCE and, at level 2, GNVQ intermediate and GCSE courses. Approximately 72% of students are from wards designated as disadvantaged. The attainment of those entering college indicates that 52% of students on advanced level courses have GCSE scores of 5.2 or less.

16 to 18 year olds

2. Retention rates at level 3, for students aged 16 to 18 have improved to just above the national average in 2002/03. In 2003, for AS-level/GCE A-level courses, the overall pass rates are comparable with the national average, at 82%. Students in the 2003 cohort had lower attainment at GCSE than in 2001/02. In 2002/03, the GCE A-level pass rate was 92%, showing a 16 percentage point improvement since 2000/01.

3. There are approximately 150 students taking AVCE courses. These students are particularly successful. Overall pass rates are consistently high. Retention rates are also above the national average. In 2003, pass rates reached 97%, significantly above the national average. In particular, all students passed in four of the seven AVCE courses. In ICT, 70% of students achieved high grades.

4. Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate courses were well above the national average in 2001 and in 2002 at 86% and 93%, respectively, but dropped to the national average in 2003. Progression is good for GNVQ students, with 70% progressing to courses at level 3 in 2003. There is a small provision at foundation level. In 2001 and 2002, pass rates were very good. In 2003, the pass rates were at the national average.

5. The college makes a detailed analysis of student and subject performance, based on target grades at GCSE. Using a combination of subject data derived from performance in sixth form colleges and college data, individual targets are set for students. Their examination outcome is measured against this. According to college value added measures, the percentage of GCE A-level subjects passed at target grade or above remained at 80% in 2003, as in 2002.

6. In over half of the GCE A-level subjects taken students make very good progress when their results are compared to predictions based upon their GCSE scores. Students of some subjects, such as art and design, physical education, physics and geography do not perform well when using this measure. However, students of 12 other subjects made significant improvements and now perform well.

7. Students on AS-level courses are making good progress in English literature, English language, language and literature, general studies, geology, psychology, religious education, economics, communication, music and French. Students of art and design, biology, chemistry, computing, geography, German, history, performing arts, sports studies do less well. Senior managers also make a detailed analysis of the outcomes of similar subjects taught at each campus. Some pass rates at AS level in 2003 were low. The college has taken steps to improve pass rates for the significant number of students who have the minimum entry qualifications by reducing the number of subjects taken to three in the Spring term. Following this action in 2003, the overall pass rate increased by 5 percentage points. There was a notable improvement in mathematics. Overall A* to C pass rates at GCSE fluctuate, falling to 42% in 2003 which is comparable with the national average.

8. Key skills pass rates are satisfactory. A model of delivery is well established for key skills provision. Almost all subjects provide the opportunity for students to complete their key skill portfolio in numeracy or communication at level 3. However, there is considerable disparity in commitment to this entitlement. In 2000/01, pass rates were exceptionally high for level 3 and level 2 application of number at 100% and 98%, respectively. A pass rate of 99% at level 2 in (IT) was also very good. Fewer students were entered for key skills in subsequent years and pass rates were low, at around 35% in 2003. Students' social and interpersonal skills are well developed. Many students are articulate and self-confident. Most students in English and communications, history, politics and law are developing good evaluative and analytical skills, but these skills are less developed for some social sciences students. Standards of work in GCE A-level economics are high and also for AVCE business. GNVQ intermediate art and design students achieve good standards in drawing and are able to discuss their work with confidence. Standards in music are very high; students benefit from performances at national events and competitions. In mathematics, student files are well organised and the standard of work is good, with much attention to presentation and explanation of methods. ICT and science standards are satisfactory. Key skills development of numeracy is given a high priority in AVCE business. In science and ICT, key skills portfolio development is also good. In most other subjects it is less effective. Key skills development of numeracy is given a high priority in AVCE business. In science and ICT, key skills portfolio development is also good. In most other

subjects, it is less effective.

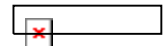
9. Attendance during the inspection was 87% overall. Five curriculum areas had attendance of 87% or over. It was highest in English and communications, at 91%, and lowest in social sciences, at 84%. Student punctuality to lessons is good.

Adult learners

10. The small number of adult students are enrolled mainly on evening class programmes, most of which are in ICT, GCSE mathematics and English. Retention rates are well above national averages. According to college figures for 2002/03, overall pass rates at levels 2 and 3 are at the national average, as in 2001/02. On ICT courses, most of which are at level 2, pass rates improved in 2002 to above the national average. Approximately 33% of GCSE mathematics students achieved A* to C grades. On the GCSE English language course, pass rates were close to the national average and 57% of students achieved A* to C grades.

11. Students' social and interpersonal skills are well developed. Many students are articulate and self-confident. Most students in English and communications, history, politics and law are developing good evaluative and analytical skills, but these skills are less developed for some social sciences students. Standards of work in GCE A-level economics are high and also for AVCE business. GNVQ intermediate art and design students achieve good standards in drawing and are able to discuss their work with confidence. Standards in music are very high, students benefit from performances at national events and competitions. In mathematics, student files are well organised and the standard of work is good, with much attention to presentation and explanation of methods. ICT and science standards are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training



12. Much of the teaching is satisfactory or good. In 68% of lessons observed, teaching was good or better. It was satisfactory in 28% and less than satisfactory in the remaining 4%. At level 3, teaching is better than at level 2 where a greater proportion was satisfactory, or less than satisfactory. Much of the teaching was good or very good at level 3 in English and communications. In ICT, most of the teaching at level 3 was good. The lowest proportion of good and better teaching was in humanities and science. In four curriculum areas, mathematics; business studies, economics and accounting; social sciences, and English and communications, none of the teaching was less than satisfactory.

13. Lessons are well prepared and most students make satisfactory progress. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subjects, their rapport with students is good and they are successful in fostering respect for others' cultural backgrounds. Many teachers provide extra subject support which is valued highly by students. In English, teachers use a range of appropriate techniques, including group work that often provides a useful starting point. In politics, the review of current news gave an excellent motivational start to each lesson and students gained considerably from the experience. In ICT and computing, teaching of the key concepts is good. In business, economics and accounting, teachers and students use contemporary business examples to illustrate concepts. In music, teaching is dynamic with skilful open questioning which captures interest and enhances individual progress. In a significant number of lessons observed the more able students are not challenged sufficiently to extend their thinking beyond a general level and the less able students are not progressing sufficiently.

14. Teachers provide good worksheets, which help many students prepare for examinations. In a few lessons there is an over-reliance on these, leading to all students working to the pace of the slowest. In art and design, and English and communications, there is insufficient emphasis on library research and reading of extension texts. The skills needed to become independent learners are not always developed sufficiently in social studies and business. There is good use of information and

learning technology (ILT) in lessons in physics and electronics, ICT and some mathematics, but it is not used sufficiently in a number of other areas, for example, humanities and English and communications. In social sciences, students make insufficient use of ILT in their assignments.

15. The college employs 78 teachers of whom 98% are employed full time. The remainder is employed on fractional full-time contracts. Most teachers are well qualified in their subjects and many have recent relevant industrial experience, almost all have teaching qualifications. Staff who are working in literacy and numeracy support, do not have appropriate qualifications in basic skills.

16. The college is situated on two pleasant campuses, adjacent to secondary schools. The northern campus has benefited from the construction of an attractive entrance, a drop-in IT study centre and significant refurbishment of the original buildings. Rooms have been re-organised into subject groupings with adjacent student study spaces. Most teaching rooms at this campus are appropriately furnished and equipped, and are sufficiently spacious for the group size. ICT rooms are well equipped. Teaching areas in some science subjects and art are not accessible to students with restricted mobility; plans are well advanced to give full access in 2004. Students benefit from sharing the good music resources at the adjacent 11 to 16 arts academy school. At the southern campus most rooms are appropriately resourced, but some classrooms and science laboratories are small and in need of refurbishment. One of the larger ICT rooms used for vocational courses is insufficiently equipped with resources such as data projector facilities. There are good resources for practical science work and good technician support is available on both campuses.

17. The library at southern campus has sufficient private study areas and is accessible for those with restricted mobility. At the northern campus, the library is small for the number of students and has inadequate access. Each library includes a small number of networked computers for student use, supported by up-to-date software. In English and communications and art and design, the book stock and availability of arts-related periodicals is inadequate. The IT facility at the northern campus is well used by students. The IT centre at the southern campus is small and when booked for teaching purposes restricts availability for students' individual learning. The college has a reliable and robust college network infrastructure, with good technical support. Cafeteria facilities and social spaces for students are insufficient at both campuses. Sports facilities on offer do not meet the needs of the whole student population.

18. The college has a clear policy for the assessment of students' work. In most cases, the policy is applied rigorously and homework is frequently set, marked and returned within agreed deadlines. Many teachers make constructive comments on students' work. A good example is in mathematics where the feedback is both verbal and written, with full solutions and helpful annotations. In psychology, teachers share good practice using well-designed feedback sheets, but this practice is not followed for all subjects in the department. In performing arts, students are given little advice on how to improve their work. Many subjects make good use of regular testing in order to direct students to extra support lessons.

19. The college internal verification procedure contributes to accurate and reliable assessment. This is particularly so in English where moderators have commented favourably upon the strong internal verification process, however, in visual and performing arts, internal verification is not sufficiently rigorous. There are well-documented procedures for target setting, monitoring and reviewing student progress through individual learning plans. This is carried out more effectively in some areas than others. Where it is good, for example in humanities, business, science and ICT, target setting is used well and students appreciate having clear goals, which are monitored regularly. In addition to this, there is regular communication between teacher, tutor and student and the individual learning plan is used effectively to set clear action plans to achieve targets. Parents are kept informed of students' progress through reports twice a year, parents' evenings and additional personal contact from tutors or support staff.

20. The college offers a wide range of courses from foundation level to level 3 which meet effectively the needs of most students. Some 39 subjects are offered at GCSE, AS level and GCE A level, with GNVQ and AVCE courses in subjects such as art and design, business studies, and leisure and recreation. The college responds effectively to local needs, for example, a national diploma in early years has been added to the college curriculum offer in 2003. Most vocational provision is at the

southern campus. Timetabling arrangements are suitably flexible and allow many students to combine units of different programmes or to attend courses on both campuses. Progression between levels within the college is generally good, particularly between the GNVQ intermediate and AVCE courses. In some areas, there is an inappropriate match of course to students' needs. Currently, few college students are adults, a small range of weekly evening classes is offered at the northern campus. The college adopts an approach which is socially and culturally inclusive. An academic fellowship scheme for able students has recently been introduced as has separate tutorial provision for Muslim girls.

21. The college provision is reviewed regularly and reflects the corporate objectives well. There are effective links with secondary schools and a good knowledge of courses available at other educational establishments in the local community. School pupils are invited to regular college open days. College staff visit local schools to participate in careers events. In ICT and business, the industry links are inadequate and students on vocational programmes are not given the opportunity to gain relevant commercial or industrial experience.

22. Enrichment opportunities successfully extend the curriculum for many students who benefit from a diverse range of activities. These include participation in sport, theatre performances, first-aid or team building activities and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Links with a local secondary school in music and textiles are particularly effective. Students play in the brass band or orchestra travelling widely to perform in national events. The samba band and music group for people aged over 50 involve many college students, school pupils and the local community. In humanities, an extensive range of visits includes visits to the law courts, prisons and to political conferences. Some mathematics students enter the 'United Kingdom Mathematics Challenge' or have attended lectures at Manchester University.

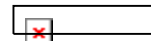
23. The college provides satisfactory guidance and support for its students. Pre-entry guidance is detailed and well presented. Prospective students receive clear information and helpful guidance at enrolment. Induction arrangements are well managed and help students to settle quickly into college. There are effective procedures to assess students' learning support needs and their preferred learning styles. Students with significant additional learning needs are directed to learning support classes. Much of the teaching in learning support is good and uses a range of teaching methods to challenge students. However, the initial diagnostic information is not used well to inform teaching strategies, and there is insufficient attention paid to recording skills development. Students are not encouraged to discuss the outcome of their work sufficiently. Links between curriculum and learning support staff are weak. There is little evaluation made of students' progress for those receiving learning support. Students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia do receive additional learning support, but current arrangements are unsatisfactory. Staff do not have qualifications in basic skills and have not received training in the core curriculum and national standards for skills for life. Training in dyslexia support is underway for one member of staff.

24. There is a well-documented and structured system for pastoral and academic support. All students have pastoral tutorials twice a week which are designed to meet group and individual needs. The quality of group tutorials varies, with the most effective being well managed. Tutorial content covers a range of college information, for example, work on key skills, equal opportunities and guidance for HE applications. Many students value the individual tutorials where they can discuss progress against targets and receive guidance on how to improve performance. However, some tutors do not adopt a sufficiently rigorous approach when reviewing individual learning plans and targets tend to be vague and unhelpful. Many students also benefit from academic support. Where this is good, it is well organised and focused. For example, science teachers offer revision classes at key times and these are well attended. Humanities, mathematics, English and business often use the academic tutorial time for students who need extra support. There is insufficient support for GCSE students in social sciences and mathematics. Arrangements to evaluate academic support are not systematic and there is wide variation in quality.

25. The counselling service is well used. A fund to support students with financial difficulties is available. The college has satisfactory arrangements to safeguard the welfare of its students. Those students who are planning to go to FE or HE receive helpful guidance and support, but the procedures for those seeking employment are less well developed. There are satisfactory links with

the Connexions service.

Leadership and management



26. Leadership and management are good. Governors and managers have determined a clear mission and direction, supported by corporate objectives. These are well understood by staff and influence all college activities. The corporate objectives for 2003/04 recognise the challenging environment in which the college operates. They include the intention to maintain a balance of provision and to raise participation and the achievement of students in the south of the borough. Strategies realistically address the future development of the college in the context of being one of seven providers of full-time education for students aged 16 to 18 in the area and being located on two campuses, several miles apart. The strategic plan and operational statement are regularly monitored by senior managers and governors. Recruitment and funding targets were met in 2001/02 and in 2002/03; there is a marginal underachievement of the recruitment target for the current year. Corporate objectives are supported by a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which are effectively communicated to staff.

27. Senior management is effective. Most curriculum management is good. For example, in well-managed areas, such as business, mathematics, English and communications, humanities, social sciences and ICT, there are recorded strategies for improvement, the setting and monitoring of challenging targets and the effective implementation of quality systems. Meetings are well documented. Students' attendance is rigorously monitored with weekly reports available to course managers. Concerns about attendance are promptly identified and appropriate steps taken to address ongoing issues.

28. Communication is generally good. Staff and students appreciate the effective systems for the dissemination of information and the opportunities for consultation on key issues. There is a well-established schedule of meetings and activities. Briefing seminars are held each week on both campuses. These are led by the heads of centre with regular contributions by the principal and other senior managers. The principal provides detailed written briefings for staff on important issues. Informative bulletins are circulated to staff and students on a weekly basis. The college intranet and e-mail systems are well used, particularly in communication between the two campuses. Many staff contribute effectively to cross-college groups, for example, in monitoring equal opportunities and quality assurance. A comprehensive set of management reports is provided for managers and other staff through the college intranet. These are generally regarded as accurate, timely and accessible. Insufficient training has been provided to enable all relevant staff to make full use of the data. Some of the management information is not presented in a format appropriate to the needs of the staff.

29. Quality assurance procedures are systematic and effective in most curriculum and support areas and they are well documented. Procedures focus on improvements in student performance and the fulfilment of each student's potential. The quality of college provision is monitored by a committee formed by staff from across the college. Three members of the governing body are members of the group. Staff contribute fully to the self-assessment process. A self-assessment report, based upon detailed supporting information, is produced each term by all departments and support teams. The process includes a detailed analysis of performance and the development of appropriate action plans. Curriculum grades awarded by inspectors in six of the curriculum areas agreed with the college 2002/03 self-assessment report, in two curriculum areas, lower grades were awarded. Teaching staff are observed annually, usually by their line managers. The college recognises that the grading of lessons by internal observers is overgenerous. A professional mentoring system supports new staff and those with unsatisfactory observation grades effectively. The annual staff appraisal system successfully facilitates a review of staff performance, the establishment of targets and the identification of professional development needs. Staff development activities are prioritised and linked to strategic objectives. Recent staff development has provided training and updating in areas such as promoting equality of opportunity, meeting the requirements of SENDA, inclusive

learning and ICT. Professional development activities do not focus sufficiently on teaching and learning methods.

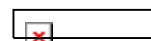
30. The college internal value added system identifies predicted grades for students. Targets are used effectively in most subjects to monitor student progress and to motivate students to succeed. Over 80% of students either met or exceeded their target grades in 2003. Focus groups of students, with representatives from all courses, meet in the autumn term and review and grade college provision. Students complete surveys at regular intervals throughout their courses and these are reviewed systematically and result in detailed reports. Actions resulting from student and parent surveys include improvements in the condition of some rooms and the enhanced use of ILT.

31. The promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity and cultural diversity are outstanding. An equal opportunities policy was revised in December 2003. It is supported by comprehensive procedures based upon explicit values accepted by governors, managers and staff. The core values of equality, inclusiveness and diversity are presented to staff at induction and at professional training events, and to students through tutorials and the curriculum delivery. For example, the celebration of cultural diversity and mutual respect is highly evident in arts and business studies, economics and accounting lessons and assignments. The equal opportunities committee, consisting of staff, students and a governor, meets regularly to promote and monitor activities across the college. Recent initiatives include the publishing of a well-acclaimed booklet celebrating diversity, and a guide for parents. Performance indicators facilitate monitoring by ethnicity, gender and disability in such areas as pass and retention rates and progression. Detailed reports are considered by senior managers and governors, and result in action plans incorporating demanding targets. The college has an effective disability statement and race equality policy. It complies with its statutory requirements under the Race Relations Amendment Act. In the current academic year, 64% of full-time equivalent students are from minority ethnic groups compared with 11% in Bolton. The college has been successful in increasing the number of white students. The percentage of staff from minority ethnic groups has recently increased and is now 6%. Plans have been agreed with the local LSC to meet the college's obligations under SENDA for access for those with restricted mobility. The college complaints procedures are well publicised and lead to prompt action where a complaint is justified.

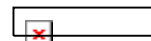
32. Governors are committed to the achievement of the college's strategic objectives and subscribe fully to college values which influence their decisions. They consider reports on college performance including regular reviews of its financial position, student success and accommodation needs. Although a standards committee has not been established, in governors' meetings, detailed information is considered regularly on enrolments, retention and pass rates, and progression. Action is agreed if it is considered that further improvement is required. Governors review their own performance against agreed criteria, but there is no formal self-assessment of the board's effectiveness. There is insufficient contribution by governors to the college self-assessment report. Governors have taken steps to ensure that membership represents the ethnic and gender profile of the student body, but there is still under representation by females.

33. The financial position of the college is strong. There are clear systems for the delegation of budgets with regular financial reports. Resources are used effectively to support students and enhance the quality of college provision. Overall, the college provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Mathematics



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

Strengths

- good pass rates at GCE A level

- effective strategies in raising pass rates at AS level

- thorough assessment procedures

- good staff teamwork which supports learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates at GCSE

- insufficient participation by students in lessons

- provision at levels 1 and 2 inappropriate for some students.

Scope of provision

34. The college provides mathematics courses at levels 2 and 3. At advanced level, which has approximately 140 students, AS-level and GCE A-level courses are offered in mathematics and further mathematics, with different combinations of modules being available. The largest part of the provision, approximately 330 students, is in GCSE mathematics. The majority of college students who have not already achieved a grade C at GCSE retake the course. Approximately 30 students study mathematics at foundation level. However, there is a lack of appropriate provision at levels 1 and 2 as an alternative to GCSE. A significant number of students are unsuccessful on the retake GCSE course, and leave the college with no mathematics qualification. There is a small evening class GCSE provision for adults.

Achievement and standards

35. Pass rates are good at GCE A level and students achieve better than would be expected from their GCSE results. The AS-level pass rate has improved over the past three years, significantly so in 2003. Pass rates at GCSE level are below the national average overall, although there is a significant difference between the two campuses. In 2003, the GCSE pass rate at grades A* to C

was low, particularly for vocational students at the southern campus, while it was 52% at the northern campus. Retention rates in GCSE mathematics are above the national average.

36. Students' files are well organised and the standard of work is good, with much attention to presentation and explanation of methods. Progression to HE is good. In 2003, large numbers of students taking GCE A-level mathematics progressed to a degree course with a mathematical component.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics one year (A* to C)	2	No. of starts	375	360	333
		% retention	87	88	86
		% pass rate	35	40	34
AS-level mathematics and AS-level statistics	3	No. of starts	116	124	116
		% retention	91	93	82
		% pass rate	45	52	71
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	92*	32	47
		% retention	77	100	96
		% pass rate	77	91	93

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

* GCE A level was a different course in 2001

Quality of education and training

37. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have good working relationships with their students and this promotes a positive learning environment. Lessons are well planned, with clear aims that are shared with students. In the less effective lessons, there is insufficient participation by students. Questions are closed and teachers miss opportunities to explore students' ideas and to check the learning of all students. The more able students are not challenged. In the best lessons, teachers encourage students to contribute their ideas and think for themselves. In a good GCSE lesson on cumulative frequency graphs, the teacher questioned the students skilfully to elicit the ideas from them. A productive discussion about the use of inequality signs enabled the students to grasp the subtleties involved in this notation. In GCSE classes, some fun activities are used to enhance and reinforce learning. In a good AS-level lesson on the solution of minimum connector problems, the teacher used presentation software effectively whilst the students filled in blanks on handouts. This enabled the students to focus on the concepts of Kruskal's and Prim's algorithms and to participate in the development of the techniques. In a lesson on the binomial expansion, the use of a computer package was effective in visually demonstrating convergence of the expansion. In all lessons, teachers give good one-to-one help. Students are encouraged to use computers for homework and coursework, developing their key skills in the use of IT.

38. Resources are satisfactory. There are pleasant and spacious rooms for mathematics on both sites. All mathematics rooms display posters about famous mathematicians of both genders and from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, as a celebration of cultural diversity. No student work is displayed. A portable data projector is effectively used in some lessons to enhance teaching and learning, but generally there is insufficient use of ILT as a teaching and learning aid in the classroom. However, there are learning materials on the college intranet for use by teachers and these are gradually being made accessible to students as an additional learning resource. Graphical calculators are used regularly in lessons. Good-sized mathematics staffrooms on both sites are adjacent to the teaching rooms so that staff are easily accessible to students. All staff are appropriately qualified.

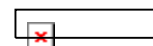
39. Assessment procedures are thorough. There is a common policy for the setting and marking of homework and testing. Students are given minimum target grades based on their GCSE results and these are compared with homework grades so that students know the level they are working at. Students receive helpful feedback which tells them what they need to do to improve. Poor progress results in students being referred for extra timetabled support.

40. There is good additional support for advanced level students. At AS level, this is identified by an algebraic diagnostic test and also during the course. Students who make insufficient progress are referred for subject support. Students can also self-refer for these sessions. They have been particularly effective in supporting GCE A-level students preparing for re-sit examinations. There is no timetabled support for GCSE students. These students are referred for additional learning support when necessary, but staffing constraints means students do not always receive it. Students value highly the support they receive.

Leadership and management

41. The department is well managed. There is good teamwork amongst staff to support learning. They share resources, liaise about students referred for academic support and discuss good practice. Self-assessment identifies weaknesses and there are clear action points to raise achievement. For example, changes to schemes of work, tracking of academic support, approaches to teaching and learning and effective use of the November re-sits in AS-level mathematics. There is an extensive lesson observation system, although grades awarded are high. Some identified weaknesses were still apparent in the observations carried out during inspection.

Science



Overall provision in this area is satisfactory (grade 3)

Strengths

- high pass rates in AVCE science and GCE A-level electronics

- well-planned and effective support for students

- high retention rates in GCE A-level chemistry and biology

- effective course management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level biology, chemistry and physics

- lack of differentiation in teaching

- poor access to some laboratories for students with restricted mobility.

Scope of provision

42. The college offers a wide range of AS-level and GCE A-level courses in biology, human biology, chemistry, physics and electronics. It also provides courses leading to AVCE double award in science, GNVQ intermediate and both the single and double award GCSE. Some of these courses are available on both campuses. There are approximately 421 students studying on science programmes and the majority of these are on AS-level and GCE A-level programmes. The number of students on vocational science programmes is small.

Achievement and standards

43. Retention rates are high on GCE A-level chemistry and biology courses. Pass rates on GCE A-level electronics and AVCE science are high. In electronics, pass rates show continuous improvement and were 100% in 2002/03. There has been a 100% pass rate in AVCE in two of the past three years and well above the national average in the other year. On GCE A-level biology, chemistry, human biology and physics course, pass rates are satisfactory. Many students begin their science courses with low GCSE grades. Pass rates in AS-level biology, chemistry and physics have been low for the last three years. The proportion of students gaining higher grades is low on both AS-level and GCE A-level programmes, although pass rates at both levels is better on the southern campus. Measures have been taken to improve lower pass rates.

44. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Practical work is carried out carefully and with due regard to safety. Students' calculation and analytical skills are adequate for the courses they undertake. They are able to join in discussions using appropriate technical language and sometimes explain their ideas in detail. The standard of written work is satisfactory and sometimes very good. Attendance is good and students are punctual. The importance of key skills is emphasised on science programmes and many science students complete a portfolio for a key skill of their choice using evidence provided in science lessons. There are good enrichment opportunities to encourage team working. Some 15 science students from both campuses are carrying out scientific projects as part of the Liverpool University enrichment programme. Many students, some with low GCSE attainment, progress to science-based courses in HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	86	51	52
		% retention	83	96	100
		% pass rate	70	92	92
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	55	25	42
		% retention	75	100	98
		% pass rate	63	92	85
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	120	108	118
		% retention	92	93	81

		% pass rate	67	63	63
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	87	86	83
		% retention	91	94	94
		% pass rate	48	60	55
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	39	33	34
		% retention	90	94	85
		% pass rate	69	48	62
AS-level electronics	3	No. of starts	26	21	25
		% retention	92	90	76
		% pass rate	88	79	74

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

Quality of education and training

45. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, but teachers use a limited range of teaching and learning approaches in lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they test students regularly and place great emphasis on revision skills and examination techniques. In the best lessons, students contribute their ideas and are challenged to move their thinking forward. For example, in an AS-level electronics lesson, the teacher used a data projector and circuit building software to introduce inverting operational amplifiers. Students gave well-argued contributions on positive and negative feedback. They were then challenged to design circuits with specific gain and construct and test the circuits. In weaker lessons, students are not actively engaged and sometimes spend extended periods copying from the board. In some lessons, teaching fails to provide activities which challenge the more able students and their progress is then held back. Practical work is well integrated with theory in some lessons, but in others it is less successful. Some new approaches, such as the use of ILT in physics and electronics, have been developed. However, there is little use of ILT to enhance learning in other science subjects.

46. Staff are well qualified and several have recent and relevant industrial experience. They receive regular staff development and there is good emphasis on IT skills development. Technical support and resources for practical science lessons are good. Wall displays are stimulating. Some science laboratories are small and in need of refurbishment. On each campus, laboratories for some science subjects are on higher floors, preventing access by students with restricted mobility. A wide range of academic and vocational science courses is offered to meet local need.

47. Support for students in science is effective and well managed. Discussions about the progress of students take place in course team meetings and students identified with particular needs are often referred to timetabled subject support. There is good attendance at the subject workshops and students speak favourably of this provision. Regular assessment is carried out and students are made aware of their progress and targets for improvement. Assessment is at the correct level and work is marked thoroughly and with helpful comments for improvement.

Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new head of department has recently been appointed and a three-year department development plan implemented. Although it is too early to comment upon the overall effectiveness, there are indications that some good practice, in particular subject support for students, is successful. Low pass rates have persisted in AS-level science subjects for the past three years, managers have taken action to raise achievement and they monitor progress closely. Internal lesson observation has been insufficiently rigorous. However, weaknesses in teaching and learning are beginning to be rectified. Self-assessment is thorough and detailed. Plans are well advanced for laboratories on the northern campus to meet the requirements

of the SENDA by September 2004. Some teaching groups are small. This is not efficient use of resources, but is in accord with the college aim of inclusiveness.

Business, economics and accounting

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

Strengths

- high student pass rates

- good curriculum planning linked to assessment

- highly effective monitoring of students' progress

- strong application of equality of opportunity

- effective management at department and course level.

Weaknesses

- some unimaginative teaching

- insufficient development of students as independent learners

- limited access to suitable IT resources.

Scope of provision

49. The business department offers AS level and GCE A level in accounting, business studies and economics. It also runs GNVQ intermediate in business, the AVCE in business and the national certificate in e-business. All courses are available at the northern campus apart from e-business which is only available at the south of the borough. Some courses, including AS-level and GCE A-level business studies, AS-level and GCE A-level economics and GNVQ intermediate are also available at the southern campus. Out of the 496 students studying these subjects, the majority are based at the northern campus. All students are full time and are predominantly aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates are generally strong across the department, though retention rates in AS-level and GCE A-level business fell below national averages in 2003. Pass rates on most programmes are high. The majority of students achieve grades which are higher than predicted by their entry level qualifications, indicating that they make good progress. Pass rates on vocational programmes have been consistently good for the last three years. AS-level and GCE A-level economics pass rates are high and above national averages.

51. The standard of student work produced by GCE A-level economics students is high. In one lesson, students confidently applied economic concepts to real world issues. Students discussed the reasons for the change of ownership of a daily newspaper and the impact on stakeholders. Some AVCE students produce assignments of a high standard, demonstrating good analysis. However, some students worked at a more basic level showing little evidence of wider research. In one AVCE lesson, business students showed limited understanding of interviewing skills, even though they had previously studied this.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate business studies	2	No. of starts	56	67	55
		% retention	84	79	87
		% pass rate	85	94	85
AVCE business studies	3	No. of starts	67	67	52
		% retention	73	72	85
		% pass rate	92	81	93
AS-level accounting	3	No. of starts	32	50	72
		% retention	91	90	85
		% pass rate	55	64	69
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	120	143	145
		% retention	93	93	83
		% pass rate	94	85	83
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	79	87	91
		% retention	73	99	88
		% pass rate	91	88	96
GCE A-level economics	3	No. of starts	13	18	28
		% retention	69	94	96
		% pass rate	78	100	96

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

Quality of education and training

52. The standard of teaching overall is good. Much teaching involves the use of well-targeted and probing questions. In many lessons, both teachers and students used contemporary business examples to illustrate concepts and consolidate learning. In one GNVQ intermediate class, students worked enthusiastically on a customer service assignment, demonstrating good team-working skills. AS-level and GCE A-level students receive very good coaching from staff, especially in developing their examination techniques. In one lesson, students took on the role of subject examiner and were required to mark an essay against the assessment criteria. This helped reinforce to students the need to show analytical and evaluative skills in answering examination questions. In a minority of

lessons, however, teaching was unimaginative, with an over-reliance on basic handouts, which did not sufficiently stimulate students. In these lessons, students of varying abilities worked at the pace of the slower students. Limited use is made of ILT in lessons, though many students make valuable use of the college intranet and other electronic based resources.

53. There are good opportunities for students to participate in a range of enrichment activities including visits and competitions. For example, a group of GCE A-level economics students were recently very successful in a national competition.

54. Teaching staff are well qualified and support students well. Staff receive regular training and development. IT training is a current priority. Classrooms and furnishings at both campuses are of a very good standard. Student work is displayed to good effect in classrooms. In one of the economics rooms, charts are displayed and updated monthly by students, showing the progress to date of certain key economic indicators. The new IT drop-in centre at the northern campus is used effectively by business students. There is limited access to computers on the southern campus.

55. The resources in the libraries on both campuses are adequate. Schemes of work are very detailed and well referenced to the syllabus and assessment criteria. Key skills of numeracy and communication are appropriately integrated into schemes of work and well developed in the lessons. A good example of this was seen in an AVCE unit on marketing which encouraged students to practice their numeracy skills.

56. The tracking of students' progress against targets is well advanced in the department. Homework is set regularly and marked promptly by most staff. Good examples were seen in GCE A-level economics where homework is set and marked every two weeks, sometimes with lesser tasks on a weekly basis. Timetabled subject support is strong and used to guide high achieving students as well as those identified as needing extra help.

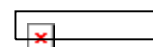
57. Recruitment on to the majority of courses in the department is buoyant and this includes significant numbers of students with low prior achievement. A high percentage of AVCE students have progressed from the GNVQ intermediate level course.

58. The department deals with issues of cultural diversity very well, developing mutual respect amongst the members of the college community. Cultural diversity is celebrated and is central to the work of the business department. Students in the department are supported well in their studies and speak very highly of all of their teachers.

Leadership and management

59. There is effective management at department and course level. Managers in the business department share a common purpose and put students and their achievements first. Rigorous quality assurance systems are in place and their application is monitored closely. Self-assessment is rigorous, with good action planning. The aims and values of the college are upheld within the department and equality of opportunity is emphasised strongly in all aspects of its work. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored closely, though the grading of internal teaching observations is high. Attendance and punctuality are good. Links with employers are limited and are in need of further development.

Information and communications technology and computing



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in GCE A-level computing, ICT and AVCE
- good achievement in AVCE high grade passes
- highly effective teaching of key concepts
- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rate in GNVQ intermediate in 2003
- insufficient links with industry
- little differentiation in teaching and learning methods.

Scope of provision

60. The college offers a wide range of courses for full-time students at advanced level which includes AS-level and GCE A-level computing, AS-level and GCE A-level ICT and AVCE IT. GNVQ intermediate and foundation courses are also provided. ICT courses are offered to adult part-time students. Enrolments to these courses have declined to 16 students in 2003/04 over a three-year period. Approximately 402 students are enrolled on full-time courses.

Achievement and standards

61. Retention rates on most courses are in line with national averages. The retention rate in AS-level computing declined in 2003, although the pass rate improved to the national average. Pass rates on all second-year advanced courses have risen to above the national average over the past three years. There are a significant number of enrolments on these courses. Many students have modest levels of prior attainment. A high proportion of AVCE students on the ICT course achieve high grades. Although previously good, the pass rate on the GNVQ ICT course fell significantly in 2003.

62. The standard of work in lessons is generally satisfactory. In one lesson, a group of AS-level students enthusiastically discussed and designed an effective set of criteria for coding and recording value judgements based on the 'Pop Idols' programme. In contrast, a group of GNVQ students demonstrated weak practical skills in developing a student preferences database. Students' attendance and punctuality are monitored closely and lateness is effectively challenged.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology and

computing, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	29	18	24
		% retention	97	83	83
		% pass rate	93	100	70
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	46	58	44
		% retention	93	91	89
		% pass rate	84	83	56
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	52	32	22
		% retention	67	91	95
		% pass rate	49	83	95
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	93	54	81
		% retention	78	98	94
		% pass rate	90	94	93
AS-level ICT	3	No. of starts	155	190	146
		% retention	92	88	88
		% pass rate	54	72	79
AVCE in ICT	3	No. of starts	20	39	44
		% retention	80	69	73
		% pass rate	75	89	88

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

Quality of education and training

63. Most teaching is good or satisfactory. Teaching is particularly effective in developing key concepts. Emphasis is placed on understanding the basic software and programming techniques and this enables students to develop advanced techniques later in the course. Teachers and students make extensive use of a range of well-prepared notes, presentations and exercises. In the most effective lessons, the teachers involve all students in a range of varied activities, there is good use of data projectors, effective questioning and practical exercises. Most students choose coursework topics from a range made available by teachers, though there were only a small number of innovative projects. In one good example, an advanced level computing student, implementing a garage maintenance logging system, demonstrated an exceptional level of design skills, and suggested an efficient method of allocating vehicle repairs to mechanics. In practical lessons, teachers use a range of prepared exercises which provide good exemplar material. In the less effective lessons, teachers do not check students' understanding. Some students are passive and do not make additional notes or annotate handouts with the examples provided by the teacher. Students in these lessons do not develop good written skills or use appropriate levels of specialist terminology. However, there are some good examples of the integration of key skills in assignments, for example, presentations and reports on health and safety issues in ICT are used as evidence for communication skills.

64. The college intranet is well developed as a learning resource. There are a number of very good examples including crosswords, wordsearches and mind maps. Course materials are available to students on the intranet and on CD-ROMs. Most staff are suitably qualified. Professional development activities concentrate on the requirements of assessment bodies with limited focus on the improvement of teaching and learning, especially developing teaching strategies for students of

different abilities.

65. The computer rooms on the northern campus are spacious and well equipped with data projectors, blinds and air conditioning. One room on the southern campus is less well resourced with facilities such as a data projector, and some have very little desk-top space for student files or workbooks. The library provides a small, but up-to-date book stock. The ICT systems are supported by a reliable network infrastructure. Students have access to a range of applications software and programming languages. Technical support for the college network is good.

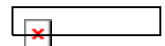
66. Teachers set and mark homework and assignments regularly. Students receive appropriate supportive comments which identify areas for improvement. Teachers provide additional help to students through timetabled subject support or informal discussion. Students are given clear targets and know what is expected of them. They are well supported throughout their course and value the advice they receive when making HE applications. There are high rates of progression from GCE A-level computing and AVCE courses to related courses in HE or the IT industry. Students receive good guidance and support in selecting appropriate courses and HE institutions.

67. Links with industry are inadequate. Students on vocational programmes are not provided with opportunities to gain commercial or industrial experience in the workplace. In lessons, very little use is made of the ICT experiences from students' part-time jobs. Teaching staff have had limited opportunities to develop and update their knowledge base through employer links, however, 'industrial updating' for staff is taking place in 2004.

Leadership and management

68. Leadership and management are good. There are clear lines of responsibility for course management. Teams meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss curriculum issues and student progress. Staff are involved effectively in the self-assessment process and the development of departmental plans. The departmental self-assessment reports contain detailed evidence to support judgements. A range of statistical measures are used to highlight areas of concern and action improvement. These include the analysis of pass and retention rates and value added data. The head of department has a clearly defined agenda for improvement.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- very good pass rates in music

- high standard of work in GNVQ intermediate art and design

- good enrichment programme

- o cultural diversity recognised and celebrated.

Weaknesses

- o low pass rates in performing arts and theatre studies
- o slow progress for some students in art and design and performing arts
- o insufficient differentiation in assignments
- o lack of rigour in some course quality assurance and monitoring.

Scope of provision

69. The provision includes AS level and GCE A level in fine art, graphic design, performing arts, theatre studies, and music and AS-level textiles. Vocational courses provided are AVCE art and design and at level 2, and a GNVQ intermediate in art and design. There are 181 full-time students aged 16 to 18. Numbers are small on many courses. Collaboration is strong with an adjacent secondary school that has recently acquired Arts College status. AS-level and GCE A-level music and textiles are taught in the school by full-time teachers employed by both establishments.

Achievement and standards

70. Achievement in music is high, students make very good progress. Pass rates are at or close to the national average for GNVQ intermediate art and design, AS-level fine art and graphics and for GCE A-level fine art. Many students have modest attainment at GCSE. Students in art and design, performing arts and theatre studies are not achieving their target grades. Pass rates in AS-level performing arts are below average and for AS-level and GCE A-level theatre studies are consistently low.

71. Students' social and interpersonal skills are well developed. In GNVQ intermediate art and design, students achieve good standards with observational drawings in sketchbooks, the use of perspective and application of colour theory. Personal research is encouraged and students are able to discuss their work with confidence. Textile students are inventive, exploring colour, texture and scale. One student had stitched complex patterns based on Indian saris on to a large wax resist self portrait and was considering the tactile contrasts before continuing. In GCE A-level fine art and graphics, students' critical and evaluative skills are underdeveloped. In music, students have good analytical and aural skills and are able to compose and perform music with confidence. All are members of the college orchestra or senior brass band which travel widely and win many awards.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
---------------	-------	------------------	------	------	------

AS-level art and design	3	No. of starts	49	37	44
		% retention	92	73	80
		% pass rate	82	81	83
AS-level graphic design	3	No. of starts	**	30	34
		% retention	**	83	88
		% pass rate	**	76	90
GCE A2 art and design	3	No. of starts	29	16	14
		% retention	83	94	86
		% pass rate	96	80	92
AS-level performing arts (general)	3	No. of starts	43*	40	30
		% retention	86*	88	77
		% pass rate	81*	80	74
GCE A-level performance studies	3	No. of starts	19	27	19
		% retention	58	93	89
		% pass rate	82	100	82

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

* **AS-level performance studies in 2001**

** **course not running**

Quality of education and training

72. Most teaching is satisfactory or good. Teaching and learning in music are very good. There is a fast pace in lessons and a variety of teaching strategies is used to teach theory and practice. Students are enthusiastic and well motivated. In one lesson, 'serialism' was introduced formally with musical extracts, and moved swiftly to highly interactive questioning which contextualised the topic. For example, bi-tonal was compared to bicycle and bi-plane, polytonal to polymath, and augmented octave was carefully explained. Students worked independently on composition and shared their work with the group. In GNVQ intermediate art and design and AS-level textiles, teaching is good and recognises the varied ability of students. Lessons are well planned and appropriate homework is set. The use of ICT is integrated effectively into AVCE art and design and graphics courses.

73. In much of art and design and performing arts work, there is too little differentiation between AS-level and GCE A2 assignments. Worksheets are often prescriptive leading to some work which lacks vitality and originality. Students make slow progress during long assignments. In performing arts, teaching is not well planned to focus on different abilities of students within a group. Aims and objectives are not always shared. Students are not given enough time to rehearse and refine an idea before moving on and the discussion of vocal and performance skills which needed improving is missed. Some group work is not sufficiently controlled and stronger group members dominate the activity.

74. Staff are well qualified and all have teaching qualifications. All courses are based at the northern campus. Access for those with restricted mobility is poor for art and design. Art studios are adequate with good daylight. Computers used for design artwork are located nearby. Performing arts lighting equipment is basic and no recording equipment is available. Facilities for dance are also less satisfactory as students use the gym. Acoustics are poor with no mirrors or barre available. Music resources have been enhanced recently and are very good. Two large computer suites are available with appropriate software, musical instruments and rehearsal rooms. Equipment and space for textiles are also good. Library book stock is poor with few specialist periodicals and videos. It is not used enough, and some students are over-reliant on Internet research.

75. There are clear policies for assessment. Marked work is generally promptly returned. The quality of feedback to students differs between subjects. Marking of work in performing arts shows little attention to detail, with few suggestions for improvement. There are detailed suggestions for improvement in music and textiles. There is no internal verification for performing arts, textiles or music.

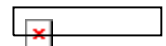
76. Students enjoy the ethnic and cultural mix of the college. Religious and cultural differences are respected and celebrated in assignment briefs and work in students' portfolios. Students value the good support from staff. Interview procedures are helpful and staff visit secondary schools to give advice. The induction period allows students to transfer across to other programmes if appropriate. Tutorials are effective in discussing target grades with students and in preparing personal statements for HE applications. Progression to art and design foundation courses is good.

77. Enrichment is good, with student visits to Manchester and London, theatre performances, to the Clothes Show and to national museums and galleries. The orchestra and band travels regularly to perform. Music students and staff have made excellent links with the community.

Leadership and management

78. Management is satisfactory, but some course quality assurance and monitoring lacks rigour. The involvement by staff in the initial course reviews and the self-assessment process is satisfactory, but there is insufficient involvement and action by them to make improvements identified in the development plan. Good practice is not shared sufficiently in teaching. Assessment procedures are applied inconsistently across subjects in the department. Communication is good in the department and between college and school staff. Staff development is valued. Staff are well informed by the weekly briefing by the principal and the regular staff and student bulletins.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in GCE A-level history and government and politics
- effective monitoring of student progress through target setting
- extensive and established enrichment programme
- good academic and pastoral support
- good departmental management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of teaching methods

- low pass rates in AS level in 2003

- lack of differentiation in teaching and learning

- insufficient sharing of good practice in assessment.

Scope of provision

79. The college offers a good range of courses at GCE A level and AS level in history, geography, law and government and politics. Recruitment is good for AS-level courses, currently with 188 students. There are 87 students taking GCE A-level courses. Law is the most popular subject with 151 students, history has 62, geography 32 and government and politics has 30. There is a GCSE law class which has 16 students.

Achievement and standards

80. Retention rates have been consistently satisfactory over the past three years and close to national averages. Pass rates in GCE A-level history and government and politics are very high in 2003, at 100%. Pass rates in GCE A-level geography are good at 94%, though this is slightly below the national average. Students make very good progress in history and government and politics considering value added measures and their GCSE attainment, but achievement of higher grades is low. AS-level pass rates in history, law, government and politics and geography are significantly below national averages at 65%, 69%, 63% and 52%, respectively, although the law results are gradually improving. Attendance is good and close to the college average. There is a rigorous system of following-up student absence within the department.

81. The standard of written work is good. In history, politics and law, students have good evaluative and analytical skills. These attributes were exemplified by detailed analysis of items of complex criminal law and by accurate and thorough work in history. Oral understanding and achievement are good for some students; politics students gave thoughtful and critical opinions when discussing a range of political affairs.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	69	73	110
		% retention	81	82	78
		% pass rate	39	60	69
AS-level geography	3	No. of starts	20	36	36

		% retention	95	92	86
		% pass rate	84	79	52
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	24	*	18
		% retention	74	*	94
		% pass rate	80	*	94
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	42	48	35
		% retention	86	90	89
		% pass rate	81	93	65
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	31	25	31
		% retention	81	100	90
		% pass rate	56	88	100

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

82. Most teaching is satisfactory and facilitates learning. In most lessons, teachers check the understanding achieved by students. Lessons have clear aims and objectives. In some lessons, learning and progress are significant and students are able to gain a good understanding of the subject matter. In history, students participated in lively discussions on civil rights issues in the United States of America. In politics, many issues enthused students and these included an analysis of prime ministerial power and the political stances of major newspapers. Students in history, politics and some law classes are confident with mature and pertinent observations that enhance learning. In one law lesson, students worked well to explore the circumstances of duress and used key murder cases to analyse the subject. In politics, students began each session with a newspaper review and students contributed enthusiastically to a range of issues including the Alder Hay 'spare body parts' scandal and the Prime Minister's television performance in a debate on tuition fees. The review of current news gave an excellent motivational beginning to each lesson and students gained considerably from the experience. Students spoke highly of these lessons and indicated that this engendered a wider interest in current affairs and political issues.

83. Some teaching does not provide enough opportunities for students to learn actively rather than passively. The teacher over burdened students in the weaker lessons with exam preparation and a heavy dependence on exposition. In several lessons, an over-reliance on worksheets and 'question and answer' approaches sometimes focused on the more vociferous students, thus leaving some students entirely passive throughout the lesson. There were occasions where the teacher provided most of the ideas and information, whilst students contributed little. Lesson content does not include differentiated work that stretches and challenges the most able and no account is taken of different learning preferences.

84. There is effective monitoring of students' progress through target setting. Students are aware of their target grades, they understand the review process and the methods to achieve or exceed their target. Written work is set regularly and there is a quick return of marked work. There is insufficient sharing of good practice in assessment; some work is returned with informative cover sheets providing good guidance on how to improve the work whilst other subjects provide a brief comment, little guidance and no opportunity to resubmit.

85. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory. The IT work areas provide an effective working environment for students. The use of IT within the curriculum, however, is insufficiently developed and there are no interactive whiteboards in the classrooms.

86. The extensive enrichment programme is well established. This includes a beneficial range of

experiences, such as the annual London visits for politics and history students, visits to the courts and a prison for law students, and a residential field trip and visits to the weather centre for geography students.

87. Good academic and pastoral support are very positive features. Students who underachieve are identified and assigned to subject-support tutorials depending on staffing availability. Students value these sessions. Information and support for HE applications are good, though access to non-HE careers advice is less in evidence.

Leadership and management

88. Management of the humanities area is effective and there is good leadership. The humanities department is large and there is some over-reliance on informal subject meetings. Subject teachers work as a team and contribute to self-assessment, which is a developing process. Strategies have been implemented by the head of department to address the differing reasons for low pass rates in AS-level subjects in 2003. The review and appraisal scheme for staff is effective and staff speak well of the process. The internal observation system is well documented, but the allocation of teaching grades is high; some of the issues identified in teaching were apparent at the time of inspection.

Social sciences

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

Strengths

- high pass rates in AS-level religious studies and psychology

- much good teaching

- high retention rates in most subjects

- effective departmental management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient challenge for more able pupils

- little use of ILT by students to enhance learning.

Scope of provision

89. AS-level and GCE A-level courses are offered in psychology, sociology and religious studies. At

the time of the inspection, there were 274 students taking psychology, 96 taking sociology and 78 taking religious studies. In addition, there are GCSE courses on the southern campus, with 16 students taking psychology and 23 taking sociology. All students are studying full time.

Achievement and standards

90. Students achieve pass rates that are around the national average despite entering college with lower than average points scores at GCSE. AS-level results are particularly good in religious studies and also in psychology, where there are large numbers. Higher grade passes are above the national average in religious studies. There was a decline in the sociology results in 2002/03. The college has carefully investigated the reasons for this. Despite this, the value added figures are good for all three subjects and very good for psychology and religious studies.

91. Students are generally punctual and attendance is good. They are articulate and self-confident, concentrate well on their work and are good at handing in written coursework and college assignments on time. However, the development of the research and analysis skills students will need in HE and employment is underdeveloped. Students, both in lessons and for independent learning, are making insufficient use of ILT. Retention rates for all subjects are slightly above national averages.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE sociology A* to C	2	No. of starts	18	*	17
		% retention	89	*	82
		% pass rate	56	*	50
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	140	110	172
		% retention	86	83	84
		% pass rate	83	92	88
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	96	68	67
		% retention	67	94	94
		% pass rate	84	98	97
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	36	25	25
		% retention	81	100	96
		% pass rate	79	92	83
AS-level religious studies	3	No. of starts	33	34	31
		% retention	85	91	87
		% pass rate	89	97	93

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

*** fewer than 15 students enrolled**

Quality of education and training

92. There is much good teaching. Lessons have clear objectives and teachers share these with students. In the better lessons, teachers regularly check that these have been achieved. Schemes of work are well planned and carefully structured with good workbooks and support materials. The use of workbooks may help students with more limited academic ability, to achieve an examination pass. However, the approach does not challenge and stimulate the more able students sufficiently.

Teachers do not adopt strategies to stimulate wider reading and the use of the Internet to access data. In an AS-level psychology lesson, the workbook cover listed relevant texts that were in the library and also gave a number of appropriate websites. It was made clear to students that it was expected that some of these would be used in preparing their written work. In a GCSE psychology lesson, the teacher had enlivened the text with appropriate illustrations and included some tasks for students to tackle in pairs that were particularly appropriate to them. Both these changes helped them to understand more effectively how people influence one another in society. In a religious studies lesson on the qualities of Allah, the teacher reacted flexibly and modified the planned lesson part way through to build on the interest created. In religious studies lessons students are more regularly challenged and inspired. These students produce better quality and more extensive written work. Homework is regularly set and marked but it is always at a level the whole class can tackle adequately from information provided in workbooks. The more able are not encouraged sufficiently to extend their subject knowledge by using a wider range of resources.

93. Social science courses are adequately resourced with workbooks and textbooks. Furniture is sufficiently flexible to be easily rearranged to facilitate group work as well as more formal presentations. However, some classrooms are quite small and awkwardly shaped and are insufficiently flexible for larger groups. This inhibits the teacher from making more imaginative use of the accommodation. Students' work is well displayed, especially on the southern campus. Every classroom has a modern computer, although it is seldom used. Students have good access to computing facilities. All classrooms have well-used overhead projectors and screens.

94. All teachers keep well-managed records which show that work is set regularly. The record books also contain target grades so that teachers can compare achievement with potential. Marking is effective and students receive further feedback on how they are progressing. The department is introducing the use of cover sheets to ensure that all students receive high-quality feedback on all pieces of written work. These are currently used in psychology where staff are developing good practice. In other subjects, marking is more variable.

95. Advanced level students receive adequate subject support. They have an induction programme which effectively prepares them for college life. Regular academic tutorials take place and their target grades are monitored. Action is taken if anyone starts to fall behind. Teaching hours for GCSE courses have been increased in 2003/04. GCSE students, however, do not receive enough support to meet the wide range of individual learning needs.

Leadership and management

96. The social science department is well managed. The head of department gives a very clear lead to the team who work well together to address concerns and to raise standards. The head of department has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the area of learning and has effective strategies to deal with them. The induction of new staff is well managed, with a generous amount of sensitively identified mentor support. Regular team meetings take place and these are recorded appropriately. The psychology course team is particularly good at sharing ideas and resources. Equal opportunities and social inclusion are well integrated into schemes of work and classroom practice. However, there remains the need to integrate these strengths with the need to develop a culture in which more able students are more effectively challenged. Departmental administration works well and staff and students feel that communications are good. The department is good at helping to contribute to a sense of identity across both campuses and there is an impressive consistency in the way policies are implemented and resources shared.

English and communications

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

Strengths

- good pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level English courses and communications studies courses

- good development of critical skills at GCE A level

- much good teaching

- effective departmental and course management

- high-quality resources which enhance learning.

Weaknesses

- limited use of extension work for most-able students

- inadequate library resources.

Scope of provision

97. The English department offers GCSE English as a one-year course and AS-level and GCE A-level courses in communication studies, English language, English language and literature, and English literature. Recruitment to all these courses fluctuates from year to year. GCSE English constitutes the largest cohort. At the time of the inspection, there were 486 English enrolments, of which 287 were GCSE English enrolments. There were 75 communications studies enrolments.

Achievement and standards

98. Retention rates on many AS-level and GCE A-level courses are below the national average. GCSE retention rates have been consistently high and at, or above, the national averages. In 2003, the pass rates on most English AS-level and GCE A-level courses met or exceeded national averages. Communication studies pass rates have been high for the last two years. Value added figures in all communications studies and English level 3 courses in 2003 are good and indicate that students are achieving grades at a higher level than would be predicted on the basis of their GCSE grades on entry. Students taking GCSE English achieved well below national average figures in 2003; pass rates were at the national average in 2001 and 2002.

99. In GCE A-level lessons, students are confident of their ability to describe linguistic and literary features, or communications theories and concepts. They develop good evaluative and analytical skills in both oral and written work. In AS-level and GCE A-level lessons, students work well in groups, and help each other to develop ideas. In all lessons observed, students were quick to settle to work, sustained concentration in group work and showed enjoyment in what they were doing. Students develop high level critical skills in the second year. In GCSE English, students generally display good attitudes to work. Communication studies coursework shows a high level of planning and primary research. Marked work in English language, and English language and literature shows

a good grasp of themes and the linguistic theories that underpin the subject.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English A* to C	2	No. of starts	285	283	305
		% retention	76	87	87
		% pass rate	47	54	33
AS-level communication studies	3	No. of starts	59	61	50
		% retention	86	85	74
		% pass rate	96	92	95
GCE A-level communication studies	3	No. of starts	28*	43	30
		% retention	86	91	90
		% pass rate	91	97	100
AS-level English language	3	No. of starts	25	19	31
		% retention	88	89	77
		% pass rate	86	76	96
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	82	66	57
		% retention	90	85	89
		% pass rate	93	88	98
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	82*	60	34
		% retention	78	95	88
		% pass rate	91	98	93
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	22	14	24
		% retention	91	86	79
		% pass rate	65	75	95

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

* different course qualification in 2001

Quality of education and training

100. Teaching is good or better in most lessons. The best lessons are well planned, and include activities that encourage students to become fully engaged with the task through group work. All AS-level and GCE A-level teachers demonstrate a thorough knowledge of their subjects. They provide a supportive classroom environment in which students feel comfortable and secure. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not check learning thoroughly, or fail to intervene quickly enough when students are not making progress. In most lessons, a variety of teaching techniques are used. In all lessons, the most usual plan was a session in which a point or skill was taught, followed by practical application by the students, often in groups. Students make good progress in most lessons.

101. Planning for GCSE English lessons has been revised in response to disappointing results in 2003. As a result, the programme concentrates on the skills required and integrates written and oral skills. GCSE students revised some of the points they had learned on the techniques of persuasion during oral work. They built up their skills by studying two different examples of 'appeals' literature from the Salvation Army. Initially they identified from the text the important features and later began to produce a leaflet of their own. This work was then related effectively into a piece of personal

writing on the subject of homelessness. Lesson planning does not always take account of the needs of academically able students. Extension activities or different tasks are not provided often enough. Opportunities to develop key skills are present throughout the course, but are not identified clearly for students in lessons.

102. Staff produce high-quality resources which enhance students' learning. In one lesson, the teacher had produced colourful, clear handouts which split learning into small sections, easing the understanding of Grice's and Lakoff's theories of conversation. Staff are also imaginative in their use of resources. In one communication studies lesson, the teacher brought in a number of different items; fast food outlet packaging, items of Goths' accessories, college marketing materials and items of football regalia. In groups, students worked with interest to consider one set of items for each of the categories of non-verbal communication, language register, location and ideology. By pooling their ideas later, students had gained four different contexts for each category which they would be able to use in the examination. Students also appreciate the resource packs created in English for individual texts and areas of learning.

103. Library resources are inadequate. There are few books on English language, particularly. The library is too small. The use of ICT to enhance students' learning is underused and in the early stages of development. Students are not encouraged sufficiently to become independent learners.

Leadership and management

104. The management of the department and of courses is good. Morale among the staff is good. There is a sense of teamwork and of enjoyment and enthusiasm for the work. Teachers in each subject area have made changes to address areas of weakness. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and expertise is deployed effectively. Some teachers of GCSE English require further support. The systems for quality assurance require development, particularly in close monitoring of teaching to enable good progress for able students, and monitoring students' GCSE English performance during the year. The self-assessment reviews are accurate and action plans drawn up to address weaknesses are realistic.

Part D: College data

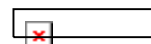
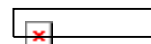


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	1	1
2	34	51
3	65	48
4/5	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	100	100



Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	987	24	18
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	33	1	1
Business administration, management and professional	552	9	10
Information and communication technology	960	47	18
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	13	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	77	1	1
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public services	32	0	1
Visual and performing arts and media	200	2	4
Humanities	787	11	14
English, languages and communication	621	38	12
Foundation programmes	0	0	0
Unknown area of learning*	1,146	36	21
Total	5,395	182	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003

* tutorial enrolments

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	46	30	40	32	30	27

	Retention rate %	83	93	80	75	93	41
	National average %	84	86	84	66	74	68
	Pass rate %	42	93	47	38	43	45
	National average %	73	70	63	56	51	46
2	Starters excluding transfers	928	935	925	32	44	52
	Retention rate %	83	84	87	84	95	81
	National average %	80	81	84	72	63	65
	Pass rate %	88	92	94	41	48	71
	National average %	73	79	83	60	68	61
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,148	3,427	2,659	41	35	31
	Retention rate %	58	73	88	68	71	97
	National average %	69	76	84	63	64	76
	Pass rate %	79	73	79	57	40	73
	National average %	77	77	78	54	65	62

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 2000 to 2002: College ISR.

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	71	27	2	93
Level 2 (intermediate)	52	36	12	25
Level 1 (foundation)	100	0	0	2
Other sessions	0	0	0	0
Totals	68	28	4	120

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

Office for
Standards
in Education

