



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Kingston Maurward College

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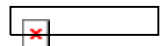
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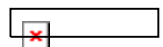
**Basic information about the college**



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Name of college:	Kingston Maurward College
Type of college:	Specialist land-based college
Principal:	David Henley
Address of college:	Kingston Maurward College Dorchester Dorset DT2 8PY
Telephone number:	01305 215000
Fax number:	01305 215001
Chair of governors:	Peter Elliot
Unique reference number:	130655
Name of reporting inspector:	Alastair Taylor
Dates of inspection:	19-23 January 2004

**Part A: Summary**



**Information about the college**

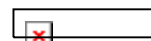


Kingston Maurward College was originally established in 1949 as the Dorset Farm Institute. It is set in 750 acres of farmland, parkland, gardens and conservation areas and located two miles from Dorchester. It is the only specialist land-based college in Dorset and offers a diversified curriculum of mainly vocational education and training in agriculture, animal care and veterinary nursing, countryside management, equine studies, horticulture, arboriculture, floristry, outdoor recreation and leisure, business, information technology (IT) and secretarial studies and teacher training. The college's mission is to provide inspiring and challenging education and training opportunities to equip all students with the knowledge and skills to succeed in life and work, particularly in subjects relating to modern land-based industries, conservation and the rural economy. The curriculum extends from foundation level through to higher education (HE) for full-time and part-time students and includes work-based learning. The majority of full-time students study at levels 2 and 3. The college works with local schools to provide vocational options and experience for pupils aged 14 to 16. As part of its commitment to the needs of the local community and widening participation, the college has established links with local agencies and other bodies such as the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and members of the Lifelong Learning Partnership.

The catchment area of the college encompasses all of Dorset and a significant proportion of students come from the Bournemouth and Poole area. North and West Dorset are predominantly rural with a low population and poor public transport links. The college provides a subsidised daily coach service from all the main towns in the county and residential accommodation is provided on the main campus for 50 students. The total population of the county, including Bournemouth and Poole, is around 685,000 of which 400,000 are economically active. The age profile of the region is older than the United Kingdom as a whole, with 37.1% of the population aged 45 and over. The census of 2001 showed that the percentage of minority ethnic people in Dorset was 1.9%. The economy in Dorset includes a high proportion of small businesses, particularly in rural areas. Unemployment is generally low in the county of Dorset, at 1.4%, but high in Weymouth and Portland, at 3.8%. Within the agricultural sector, there has been a decline in the number of people employed in farming and this has led to a decrease in those wanting to study agricultural programmes. Despite the appearance of a relatively prosperous economy, there are a number of wards in south Dorset that are in the top quartile of the most deprived in the United Kingdom.

During 2002/03, the college offered 25 full-time programmes and 664 part-time courses. Of 450 full-time students, 74% were aged under 19. Of 3,000 part-time students, 94% were adults. Of all students, 48% were female and 52% male and 1.6% of students described themselves as minority ethnic and 2.6% as having a disability. Some 88 students were enrolled on HE courses and of these 53% were studying full time. There were 178 students on work-based programmes, of whom 84 were modern apprentices, 52 were studying for national vocational qualifications (NVQ) at levels 1, 2 or 3 and 42 were on the Lifeskills programme.

### **How effective is the college?**



Inspectors judged that the provision of the college is outstanding in business, IT and secretarial studies and good in agriculture, animal care and veterinary nursing, equine studies, and horticulture, countryside and floristry. It is satisfactory in outdoor recreation and leisure, and in foundation studies, literacy, numeracy and basic skills. Provision for work-based learners in agriculture, horticulture, countryside and floristry, and in outdoor recreation and leisure is unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

#### **Key strengths**

- high retention rates

- high pass rates at levels 1 and 2
- progression of students into employment and higher level courses
- much good teaching
- specialist facilities and resources
- the range of courses
- support and guidance for students
- productive links with industry and the community
- provision of additional industry-specific qualifications
- high-quality work experience placements
- staff development to improve teaching
- overall leadership and management.

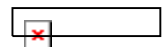
***What should be improved***

- achievement for work-based learners

- pass rates on short courses
  
- the quality of some classrooms and the learning resource centre
  
- assessment practices for NVQs
  
- monitoring of students' progress and target setting
  
- management of work-based learning
  
- collection and use of management information
  
- sharing of good practice.

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

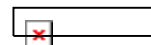


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Agriculture	<b>Good.</b> Work-based learning contributory grade: <b>unsatisfactory.</b> There are good pass rates on full-time programmes and progression into either further education (FE) or employment is good. There is effective practical teaching and students achieve additional industry-specific qualifications. Assessment practices are poor in work-based learning and reviews lack focus.
Equine studies	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high at level 3. Retention and pass rates are

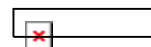
	high on the first and national diplomas. Lessons are well planned and teaching is effective. Resources are excellent and, in addition, full-time students participate in high-quality work experience. Full-time course provision is limited to courses at levels 2 and 3.
Horticulture, countryside and floristry	<b>Good.</b> Work-based learning contributory grade: <b>unsatisfactory</b> . Pass rates are good in floristry, and on most part-time courses. Teaching is effective and there is a high awareness of health and safety in practice. There are supportive and well-resourced work placements. There is a comprehensive and progressive range of programmes. Short-term target setting lacks rigour. In work-based learning, assessment is not thorough enough and achievement is poor.
Animal care and veterinary nursing	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on most full-time courses. Links with industry are used effectively to widen students' learning opportunities. The standard of students' work is high and there is good academic and pastoral support. Teaching methods lack variety.
Business, information technology and secretarial studies	<b>Outstanding.</b> Well-designed programmes promote inclusion and meet the needs of the community. Most courses have very high retention and pass rates. Teaching is well planned and very effective and assessment on most courses is rigorous. There is good continuous support for individual students.
Outdoor recreation and leisure	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Work-based learning contributory grade: <b>unsatisfactory</b> . There are high retention rates on full-time programmes. Practical teaching is good. Specialist resources are excellent, as are links with employers. Students are able to work towards a wide range of additional qualifications. There is poor accommodation for theory and indoor practical sessions. In work-based learning, there is poor achievement, poor planning and insufficiently rigorous assessment.
Foundation, literacy and numeracy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students with a wide variety of learning needs are developing good practical skills. Individual support is good, but there is insufficient development of personal and social skills. Achievement on certificated and non-accredited courses is good. There are insufficient opportunities for work experience on most programmes and few links with employers. Management of entry to employment (E2E) is unsatisfactory.

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



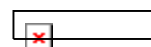
Leadership and management are good. Governors, managers and staff share a common understanding and a clear vision relating to the future direction of the college. Communications are good at all levels. The college has made significant progress since the previous inspection. The overall quality of teaching is good, with two thirds of lessons judged as good or better. Management is satisfactory or better in all of the curriculum areas. Further work is required, however, to improve the recording and analysis of student data. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Quality assurance improvements have had the support of senior managers and the effective team of curriculum managers have raised the quality of provision for students. Further work is necessary to improve the quality of work-based learning with particular reference to record keeping, the standards of assessment and the monitoring of students' progress. Given the significant increase in student numbers since the previous inspection, the development of a broader range of courses, the generally high retention and pass rates, the improvements in college management and the significant amount of good teaching, this college provides good value for money.

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



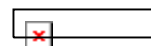
The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. It is responsive to the labour market and customer demands, and actively seeks ways in which it can serve the diverse needs of the local population. A number of successful initiatives have developed opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, such as those living in remote rural areas, adults returning to learning and students with learning difficulties. The needs of students requiring additional learning support are well diagnosed and students receive good support to help them improve their literacy and numeracy. There is a wide range of provision with clear progression routes to FE and HE, training and employment. The college provides subsidised transport for students. There is a growing network of community provision. Links with schools and other providers are good; 28 school pupils are following a course in land-based industries. The overall gender balance of students and staff broadly reflects that of the local population. The profile of equal opportunities in the college is improving. There are effective joint student and staff projects exploring bullying and harassment, and equality and diversity. These are given strong support by managers. It is difficult for people with disabilities to gain access to some parts of the college, including some teaching areas. The college is well advanced with its statutory duties under the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA) and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. Equality and diversity policy and practices embrace issues of race equality, and the college monitors the profile of its current staff and student population.

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



Guidance and support for students are good. Students' support needs are identified and addressed to the same standard irrespective of mode of attendance, age or level of study. Individual learning support needs are comprehensively diagnosed and treated. Students see learning support in a positive light and value the help it gives them. Students with specific learning difficulties are expertly supported without compromising their integration into the college. Pastoral care is good and some imaginative work is being done to help students develop their personal and social skills. The quality of individual tutorials varies and is not uniformly good. Some group tutorials lack structure and purpose, and careers education is not well established. Individual careers guidance and advice are very effective. Work-based learners are well supported by their employers and supervisors, but individual reviews are not sufficiently detailed.

## 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***

- approachable and knowledgeable staff

- high levels of individual support from staff
- specialist equipment and facilities
- the social atmosphere
- peaceful environment and location of the college
- access to computers and IT equipment
- work experience and good practical learning opportunities
- food and catering facilities
- good recreational facilities
- the way they are treated as adults by the college.

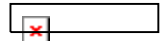
***What they feel could be improved***

- some rooms used for theory teaching
- some travel arrangements
- specialist facilities and equipment in some areas
- access to computer rooms for people with restricted mobility



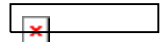
- the speed of service in the restaurant
- some aspects of course and timetable organisation.

### 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

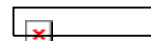


Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	65	33	2
19+ and WBL*	70	28	2
Learning 16-18	64	34	2
19+ and WBL*	70	30	0

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

\*work-based learning

### Achievement and standards



1. Data on retention and pass rates in the academic years ending 2000, 2001 and 2002 are drawn from the individualised student records provided through the LSC. For the academic year ending 2003, inspectors used additional data and information from the college to help them make judgements. The college has put considerable effort into improving its management information over the past year and has placed emphasis on the accuracy of data for the academic year ending in 2003.

2. Retention rates are good. For the last four years, overall retention rates have been consistently better than the national average for specialist land-based colleges. There is little difference in retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 and those for adults. With the exception of adult students at level 1, retention rates have improved in 2003. Pass rates on full-time courses, while generally better for adult students than for students aged 16 to 18, declined from 2000 to 2002. These have improved substantially in 2003, although for students aged 16 to 18 following level 3 courses they are below the national average. Short courses are a significant and growing aspect of the college's work and pass rates on these, although improving, are lower than the national average.

3. Student attendance at lessons is good when compared with the national average attendance for specialist land-based colleges inspected in 2000/01. In the 108 lessons observed during the inspection, attendance was 88% overall. It was well above the average in three areas; 92% in agriculture, 92% in equine studies and 90% in outdoor recreation and leisure. In business, IT and secretarial studies, attendance at 89% is significantly better than the national average for all colleges. In all areas, students and teachers are punctual for lessons.

4. Students demonstrate a high standard of practical work. The college estate is put to good use to develop a high level of competence. Routine duties and a high proportion of practical lessons are used in agriculture, animal care and equine studies to develop students' abilities to work with livestock, complex machinery and modern technology. In horticulture and countryside, students gain substantially from practical activities on and off the college site. Practical work experience is an important feature of the curriculum and this is put to very good use by the college as part of the course design. Although the overall achievement of frameworks for modern apprentices is poor, work-based learners and Jobcentre plus clients gain good work-related skills from their employers and work experience supervisors. In all areas, there is very good progression either into jobs, the next highest level of qualification or HE. The college monitors this information closely and in some areas the number moving into employment exceeds 85%. For Jobcentre Plus clients, over 50% progress into jobs. Many students are offered and pass additional qualifications relevant to industry, such as fork-lift truck handling, safe use of veterinary medicines, and basic health and safety. Where possible, these additional qualifications are accredited. These qualifications are helping students to gain employment.

5. The college's approach to key skills is to integrate them with the main curriculum. In 2003, pass rates have improved significantly. In communication, pass rates are better than national averages at levels 1 and 2 and students in agriculture, animal care, equine studies and horticulture do particularly well. The pass rate at level 1 in application of number is close to the national average and at level 2 it is higher than the national average with good performance by agriculture and animal care students. A similar pattern is found in IT. Success in external key skills tests at levels 1 and 2 is good for the period September to December 2003, with a 100% pass rate for application of number and 89% pass rate for IT.

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

6. At level 1, the overall retention rate of around 90% has been maintained despite the strong growth in student numbers from 44 in 2000 to 215 in 2003. On some foundation level courses, such as the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) countryside foundation course, retention rates are low and declining, although on the vocational foundation certificate the retention rate is very good. At level 2, the overall retention rate is well above the national average. This rate has been steady for four years, although it dipped slightly in 2001 when student attendance at college was influenced by

the effects of the foot and mouth epidemic. There has been a steady decline in recruitment of students aged 16 to 18 at level 2. At level 3, where recruitment has increased from 128 in 2000 to 219 in 2003, the overall retention rate has declined slightly, but remains above the national average. Retention rates are high on most short courses.

7. Pass rates at levels 1 and 2 for students aged 16 to 18 have been declining from above the national average in 2000 to below in 2002. These have significantly improved in 2003 and in particular at level 2. Pass rates at level 3 and on short courses were below national averages and declining for the three years from 2000 to 2002. The rate has improved significantly in 2003, but remains low when compared to the national average of previous years.

8. Most modern apprentices are aged 16 to 18 and, for these, pass rates are variable. In animal care, forestry and arboriculture pass rates are good. In agriculture they are satisfactory but declining. In sports and recreation and in amenity horticulture, pass rates are very low. Pass rates for NVQs are generally satisfactory, although the quality of evidence in students' assessment portfolios is often poor and the standards set in some work-based assessments are low. The achievement of additional qualifications and key skills is at a satisfactory level.

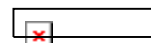
### **Adult learners**

9. For adult students at level 1, the overall retention rate of approximately 90% has been maintained for the four years from 2000 to 2003. At level 2, the overall rate of 86% for the same four years is significantly better than the national average of 70%. A similar pattern is found at level 3 where the overall rate of 88% is high. Recruitment at level 3 has declined from 313 on 2000 to 178 in 2003. On short courses where student numbers have grown significantly from 2,284 in 2000 to 4,509 in 2003, retention rates are approaching 100%.

10. Pass rates are better than national averages at levels 1 and 2. In 2003, these dipped at level 1, but improved at level 2. Both are better than the national average for previous years. At level 3, a declining pass rate has been reversed with a strong improvement in 2003. The majority of adult students are following short courses and for these the pass rate declined from 2000 to 2001. This decline was reversed in 2003 and now pass rates are much closer to the previous year's national average.

11. In all areas, and particularly in business, IT and secretarial studies, in horticulture, and in equine studies, the college has placed strong emphasis in recruiting adult students on to accredited courses such as the European computer driving licence (ECDL), computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), British Horse Society (BHS) and a wide variety of other non-accredited short courses. For these students, personal achievement and attainment are very good and lead to much repeat business as students progress to higher-level courses.

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



12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 108 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 67% of lessons, satisfactory in 31% and less than satisfactory in 2%. This profile is better than the average for specialist colleges inspected in 2001/02. The level of unsatisfactory teaching is very low. Teaching is most effective in business and IT and equine studies lessons, where 93% and 87%, respectively, of lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good or better. Teaching was least effective in animal care and agriculture where only 54% of lessons were good or better. Teaching and learning are a little better in lessons involving adult students. In over 75% of these lessons, teaching was good or better, compared with 62% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18. The quality of teaching at level 2, compared to level 3, is considerably better in animal care and veterinary nursing, agriculture and outdoor recreation and leisure.

13. Good teaching is based on careful, detailed planning with clear learning outcomes which are achieved in the majority of lessons. Additional tasks are often planned for more competent students to develop skills to a higher level. Most planning and teaching includes specific strategies for students needing learning support. Teachers show enthusiasm for their subjects and use a wide range of teaching methods confidently and effectively to take account of students' abilities and needs. Teachers use praise effectively and this boosts students' self-esteem. Much, well-managed use is made of students' experience and teachers encourage students to work on their own. Students are well motivated in lessons and participate well. The standard of work produced is generally high. Effective use is made of information and learning technology (ILT).

14. Teaching of key skills is good. Lessons are well attended and students make good progress. This has attracted mature students in business, IT and secretarial studies, and in horticulture to undertake key skills awards. Teachers use opportunities to integrate key skill work with vocational lessons and there is much encouragement to use IT to good effect in assessed work.

15. In some less effective lessons the teaching is dull, as teachers talk too much and rely on a narrow range of teaching methods. They often answer their own questions and do not check students' understanding or learning regularly. Some teaching is insufficiently demanding and teachers fail to involve students in analytical discussion or encourage them to assess their own work. Some excessively long lessons in particular are not well planned or managed. In most curriculum areas, teaching in practical lessons is significantly better than in theory lessons. Students are suitably briefed about the tasks they need to perform and very good attention is paid to health and safety.

16. Learning is generally good. The percentages of lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory for learning were 65%, 34% and 1%, respectively. Learning was also much better in lessons involving adults, with good or better learning in 77% of these.

17. A comprehensive accommodation strategy for the college estate exists including a property audit and justified proposals for development. An annual action plan to improve the access to resources for people with restricted mobility is reviewed annually and has resulted in a number of effective changes. The installation of a lift into Kingston Maurward house for upper floors has yet to be completed. Access to some teaching areas is still poor, including the animal care unit and some horticultural teaching areas. All parts of the college estate are maintained to a high standard. Tidiness and good housekeeping are actively promoted and the arrangements for short-term and longer-term maintenance requirements are well organised.

18. Specialist facilities for curriculum areas are wide ranging and are up to industrial standards. Extensive horticultural resources include a wide variety of plant stock and planting areas, parkland and hard landscaping workshops. Excellent, modern equine facilities include two large riding arenas, one covered, stables and cross-country facilities. Horses are well cared for with a high standard of stable management. Good facilities for outdoor recreation teaching include a boulder wall, high and low rope walks and an extensive, mapped orienteering course. A lake in the college grounds is used for kayaking. The building redeveloped for use on indoor sports practical sessions is inadequate for human performance and fitness testing. A redeveloped building houses the animal care unit including a reptile room and aquarium. While adequate for teaching, most areas have poor access. Plans for a new cattery, as part of a joint project with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, are in hand. Effective use of a visitor centre and shop gives students on animal care, foundation and horticultural courses valuable commercial experience and opportunities for student projects such as the construction of a willow maze.

19. Redevelopment on the upper campus of a courtyard of dairy farm buildings into a classroom and student common room complex adjacent to practical units works well and has significantly improved the learning environment. Other free-standing classrooms, mainly of temporary construction, are of a less acceptable standard and overdue for replacement. A modern training centre has been created at Stinsford Farm for work-based learning courses and is well used. While there have been considerable improvements in print and other media learning resources, limited physical space in the dated learning resource centre restricts their effective use. A dedicated, centralised resource base is needed for basic skills to enable staff to share good practice effectively. Basic, drab residential

accommodation exists for over 50 students. The college has well-developed plans and funds allocated for a new learning resource centre and residential hostels to remedy these current shortfalls. Progress with these developments has been constrained by the listing by English Heritage of many parts of the campus.

20. Significant development of ILT resources, including the college's creation of a 'virtual' college estate, has promoted its effective use in teaching. An IT bus is used to give access to IT for students living in the more remote parts of Dorset. However, on foundation courses, there is no specialist software for visually impaired students. Other learning materials, such as handouts, are of a high quality and are effectively used.

21. Effective staff development has improved the quality of many aspects of teaching. Nearly all staff hold, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. A high number hold assessor awards and have good vocational qualifications, especially in equine studies. There are poor procedures for monitoring the effective deployment of staff and teaching hours for some staff appear low while others have an excessive workload.

22. All full-time students, work-based learners and some students following longer part-time courses complete a basic skills assessment before key skills diagnostic testing. This level of assessment is not necessary for many students' prior attainment and experience, together with their skills and aptitudes levels and needs, are carefully assessed at the beginning of their courses. With the exception of business, IT and secretarial studies and animal care and veterinary nursing, however, the results are not consistently used to develop their individual learning plans or to set motivating goals, and much of this information is neglected in subsequent reviews. Initial assessment for work-based learners does not include assessment of their vocational skills or matching of their job role against the requirements of the NVQ. All students and work-based learners have their learning styles analysed, but little formal use is made of this information when planning their learning.

23. Assessment is satisfactory for students on full-time and part-time courses, but unsatisfactory for work-based learners. Assignment briefs are regularly updated and the thorough implementation of quality assurance procedures ensures that they meet college and awarding body standards. Students receive good feedback following practical assessments, but some feedback on written assignments is too brief and does not help them to improve their performance. Good use is made of the college's practical resources to make assignments relevant and interesting.

24. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for monitoring their own progress. Many assignments briefs ask the students to evaluate their own performance and the strengths and weaknesses of the work they have produced. Progress is reviewed thoroughly and carefully and full-time students are encouraged to re-take assessments if there is a possibility of raising the grade of a module.

25. Assessment practices in work-based learning are weak. Work-based learners have little understanding of the progress they have made or what they have to do to complete their qualifications. Assessment is insufficiently rigorous and is poorly planned and recorded. Too often there is insufficient observation of the learner's performance by the assessor and an over-reliance on witness testimonials and workplace diary sheets. The college has had difficulty in meeting the requirements of the awarding bodies for some horticultural programmes and this has delayed achievement for learners. The college has recently reviewed and updated its internal verification system and procedures, but these are not yet fully effective across all programmes and curriculum areas. Internal verification has failed to identify the weaknesses found in assessment practice.

26. The college offers a very good range of education and training to meet the needs and aspirations of students from Dorset and the surrounding area. Provision ranges from foundation to level 3 in almost all curriculum areas, with clear and well used progression routes to HE and employment. There is insufficient provision for outdoor recreation and leisure students at entry level and level 1, and no level 3 provision in floristry where the existing first diploma fails to meet the potential of many current students. There are good opportunities for students with low attainment or with moderate to severe learning difficulties, and the college has responded positively in providing E2E programmes and modern apprenticeships.

27. Work-based learning is available in most curriculum areas and offers opportunities for students from across the county to develop employment skills. There are good external links to widen participation on foundation courses. Following requests from schools and other partnership activities, a group of 28 students aged 14 to 16 from a number of schools attend a land-based NVQ level 1 course one day a week. This aspect of the college's provision is developing slowly. Courses meet the needs of students and meet external requirements and lead to high levels of student progression to FE, training or into employment.

28. Residential accommodation enables the college to attract students from a wide geographical area, and expansion of this over-subscribed resource is planned. Subsidised transport for students from across the county is very effectively managed to maximise access, and is integrated with a growing network of activities in the community. A well-attended summer school offers additional pre-enrolment induction to meet the additional needs of more vulnerable students. Business, IT and secretarial studies students are offered a practical pre-course introduction to essential skills, ensuring that they are equipped to begin their courses with confidence.

29. High-quality promotional and marketing materials inform prospective students about the college's provision fairly and accurately. These are made extensively available throughout the community. The college has a high profile at many agricultural, equine and horticultural shows and competitions, education and training fairs, and in local media, and actively pursues its mission.

30. There is an active student council which has representatives from each course group. Student needs and concerns are effectively brought to the attention of college managers on a regular basis, and students are positive about the lines of communication and actions taken. This forum successfully builds students' experience of citizenship and democratic engagement in their own learning environment, and nurtures their sense of being a part of the college and influencing the way it is run.

31. Students have the opportunity to experience work-related activities on the college estate and to take a very wide range of additional qualifications that enrich their main programme of study. Many of these are offered at no, or very low, cost and they considerably enhance students' employment prospects as well as developing further their vocational and personal skills. Work experience opportunities are also extensive in most curriculum areas. NVQ level 2 activity leadership students regularly go to France or Spain to work with an activities holiday company. Equine studies students are placed in high-quality competition yards. Animal care students go to varied and stimulating working environments. Visits, outside speakers and the chance of part-time paid work for the college's extensive commercial activities all effectively contribute to students' experiences.

32. The college has been highly successful over a number of years in responding quickly and flexibly to local business and customer demand, and has diversified its curriculum offer extensively: a college-devised ropes certificate is run at the request of multi-activity centre employers; dog grooming and training courses were introduced at the specific behest of the industry liaison group attached to animal care; RHS courses are offered at another local college; a digital video editing course has been run very successfully this year in response to local requests; numerous short courses are provided on demand; an accredited course in water and gas supply and fitting has been developed in response to labour market research that identified a local need. Such awareness of market and training needs is partly enabled by the strong links with industry and business that exist in most curriculum areas, informed by active employer liaison groups. These meet to review the quality and appropriateness of the courses in their area of work, and to make proposals for development. Employers are not sufficiently involved, however, in foundation courses, where they have no opportunity to influence training, or in business, IT and secretarial studies, where courses do not fully embrace current commercial practices.

33. Throughout their studies, students receive effective guidance and support which contribute significantly to good retention rates across most courses. The college successfully integrates students aged 16 to 18 and students aged 19 and over across a wide range of FE courses, and is now applying similar strategies to embrace the growing numbers of HE students and young people aged 14 to 16. The college responded to the low retention rate of students aged 16 to 18 by employing a re-engagement project worker to research the issue. This initiative is informing the work

of all tutorial and student support staff. Work-based learners are less well integrated and some are not supported as much as they need to be, especially with their additional social needs. There is good general awareness and some detailed knowledge by staff and students of statutory equal opportunity, anti-discriminatory, SENDA and child protection issues, and an active anti-bullying and harassment policy which is being implemented jointly by students and staff through the student council.

34. Information on courses, academic and welfare services, and students' rights and responsibilities is clearly communicated. This includes a variety of media, including an intranet service that is becoming increasingly popular and effective. Prospective students from schools attend taster days and open events, and college staff visit some schools to inform pupils about the college curriculum. Induction arrangements are well arranged, but a lot of information is compressed into a short time, and many students remain unaware of all the opportunities available to them. Social facilities are satisfactory, and responsibility for their proper use and for other social activities is taken by students through the student committee and the more formal student council which has wide student representation and direct access to the principal.

35. Tutorials are arranged through a combination of a central provision and a curriculum-focused programme, and are the responsibility of the curriculum managers. A tutor liaison group meets regularly to review and develop tutorial provision. Most students receive a number of group tutorials covering careers education and guidance, health and social welfare, and core study skills. The quality of these sessions varies, and in some curriculum areas they are given insufficient attention. The expertise of non-curriculum staff is not used to teach some of these tutorials. Careers education is not covered effectively in group tutorials, and timetables restrict the opportunities for small group tuition in specific study skills. There are good relations with the Dorset Connexions partnership, and a personal adviser attends college one day a week. Business, IT and secretarial studies students receive no group tutorials, but these students benefit from effective individual tutorials on a regular basis, and have good open access to their tutors at other times. They feel well supported at a personal level.

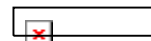
36. Individual learning support needs are comprehensively diagnosed and treated, and learning support takes careful account of curriculum requirements. The learning support staff have managed to change the way many students think about seeking and receiving help with literacy, numeracy, key skills and general study skills. Students comment that having learning support is much less of a stigma than it used to be and they value the support highly. There are insufficient rooms for individual support to be given. There is excellent support for specific learning difficulties, and students who experience barriers to learning as a result of conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficiency, mental health problems, cerebral palsy or autism are expertly supported in their studies. These students are fully integrated into the college.

37. Pastoral support is good, and staff are becoming more confident at referring students at risk. Support staff are well qualified and experienced, but their gender balance does not reflect that of the student body as a whole. Of students currently receiving additional pastoral support, 85% are still engaged on their courses. Mentoring is now established and a partnership counselling arrangement with a neighbouring college is in place.

38. Much of the work of the student support staff is in its early stages under new or revised policies, and teaching staff require further training in the impact of this work upon students. The different strands of support services available to students lack co-ordination, and this is compounded by the separate data systems that hold information on basic skills, key skills and learning support. Students without particular learning or pastoral needs are often given less time and attention in tutorials and some of them are consequently not being sufficiently challenged by the personal goals set for them. Some students comment that tutors do not help them enough to find suitable compulsory work placements.

## **Leadership and management**





39. Leadership and management are good. Governors, senior managers and staff share a common understanding and a clear vision relating to the future direction of the college. The mission and strategic objectives are widely understood and supported and closely linked to the business and curriculum planning process. Student numbers and the range of courses on offer have increased since the previous inspection. In November 1998, the college had 1,652 enrolments. In 2001/02, the number on role had risen to 4,034, with the majority of enrolments based on part-time students in the 19 and over age range. Retention rates for both the 16 to 18 and 19 and over age groups were generally above national averages for the period 2000 to 2002. Overall pass rates, for the same period, were above the national averages for students aged 19 and over, but were generally below the national figures for the 16 to 18 age group. Most teaching is at least at a satisfactory standard. Over 67% of sessions were judged to be good or better.

40. Quality assurance arrangements are generally effective and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Self-assessment reports produced by curriculum managers are generally well written, accurate and linked to the course review process. The reports are subject to detailed scrutiny and moderation. The college self-assessment report highlights many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. There is a well-organised programme of lesson observations conducted by a small team of curriculum managers. Judgements are discussed and moderated at curriculum team meetings. Views of students are gathered and analysed at course review meetings. There are many examples of improvements being made, for example in foundation studies, as a result of student feedback. The student council organises a series of focus group meetings to gather the views and comments of students on particular issues.

41. Management and leadership are satisfactory or better in all of the curriculum areas. Cohesive curriculum and course teams meet regularly to discuss student issues, update and exchange information, and to plan and review practice. Team members are not always fully aware of the requirements in submitting student data and there is some confusion regarding the management information system. The management of basic and key skills is satisfactory. Key skills are well integrated with teaching in business administration and horticulture. Achievement of key skills is good at level 1 and improving at all levels in all subjects. The management of aspects of work-based learning is poor. Although places for work-based learning and for work experience are well established, there is insufficient co-ordination and liaison between work-based learning and curriculum staff and assessment and the monitoring of work-based learners' progress is poor. The co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training is ineffective. There are particular problems with the management of E2E, mainly due to the unexpected high level of demand. Priority has been given to ensuring that students have suitable placements, but the programme has, so far, only included vocational and basic skills with no provision for the personal and social development which is mandatory. Negotiations are taking place with Dorset Youth Service in an attempt to resolve this problem. Record keeping in this area is poor and insufficient attention has been given to reviews and the monitoring of sub-contractors.

42. Communications are good. There is a well-organised programme of meetings which ensure that there is a good two-way flow of information between senior managers, curriculum leaders, student support managers and staff. Good use is made of electronic communication. All full-time academic staff have been issued with a laptop computer which provides ready access to the college intranet system. Staff have been kept well informed about developments relating to the proposals to build a new learning resource centre, along with additional residential provision. Staff development arrangements include the organisation of a training programme over the course of a year which provides a good combination of mandatory and optional sessions for governors, teachers and support staff.

43. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and bring valuable skills and experience to their work. The frequency of corporation meetings has been increased to ensure that all key decisions are made by all members of the corporation rather than by a small group of governors attending committee meetings. Clerking arrangements are effective and provide high-quality corporate and committee papers. Recent problems encountered in ensuring that governors receive papers in good time have been resolved. Attendance rates are generally good and carefully



monitored. The average attendance rate at corporation meetings in the period August 2002 to July 2003, was 82% and the attendance figure relating to committee meetings, over the same period, ranged from 78% to 84%. New governors are offered a good induction and effective support which, amongst other things, makes a clear distinction between the role involved in governance, leadership and management. The practice of linking governors to particular curriculum areas is working well and valued by teaching staff. This has helped to improve communications and develop a greater understanding within the governing body of the work carried out within the curriculum areas. There is no planned training programme for governors and, as a consequence, governors rely on invitations to attend college wide training events and conferences. Attendance rates vary.

44. The management of key skills provision is satisfactory. Key skills are timetabled on all full-time courses. Work-based learners attend the college for training in key skills. Following a period of poor results in key skills, the college has reorganised provision for key skills, basic skills and learning support. Each area has a co-ordinator to oversee a team of staff and/or learning support assistants. A development manager is facilitating the integration of the three teams to share resources, ideas and good practice. Staff are either qualified with basic and key skills awards, or are working towards them. New materials for key skills are more focused on the requirements of the external tests, and they are already having a positive impact on pass rates in the new online IT tests this year. The timetables for key skills have been redesigned, to enable students to take communications and IT in the first term and application of number tests in the second half of the course. Key skills in IT are taught in well-equipped classrooms with up-to-date IT equipment and access to the Internet.

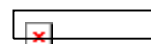
45. The college is experiencing difficulty in establishing an effective management information system which provides reliable data to assist managers in their planning and in judging the overall performance of the college. The self-assessment report recognises that the capacity and capability of the management information system and staff have proved inadequate. Remedial action has been taken in recent months to improve both the recording and analysis of student data, but further work is still required to ensure that managers have up-to-date information to use in their decision making. Progress towards developing the college as an inclusive institution is good. The college has developed a good range of policies to ensure equality of opportunity, but they are not applied consistently across the curriculum areas. The equality and diversity group has concentrated on the development of policies, and gathering and analysing data to identify issues and areas of work worthy of detailed scrutiny. External funding is being used to conduct a number of projects, including an analysis of the needs of travellers in the county. There is a comprehensive equality and diversity training programme which includes mandatory training courses for teaching and support staff. The programme includes, for example, training for all staff on the requirements and implications for the college of the SENDA. A working group has been formed to review the contents and presentation of the college prospectus to ensure that it reflects all aspects of equality of opportunity. Great emphasis has been placed on students being more involved in the work of the college. Attempts have been made to make students aware of college policies relating to bullying and inappropriate behaviour through the induction programme and the work of the student council. They are encouraged to express their views and complaints. Immediate action is taken to respond to problems highlighted through this system.

46. The college has good links with external providers. The college principal is a member of key planning and decision making groups in the locality, including the local LSC and local learning partnership. He also chairs meetings of the group of six specialist land-based colleges in the south-west region. Links with Bournemouth University are developing, particularly with the expansion onsite of foundation degree programmes. The college supports and attends a broad range of student and community-based events. Students from a number of local schools attend a well-organised link course leading to a recognised national qualification and there are plans to develop this provision to include up to 100 Key Stage 4 students from an increased number of schools. The college is responsible, with the support of LSC funding, for organising a programme of joint training events, for the 6 colleges and over 25 training providers in the Wessex region. The onsite facilities are enjoyed by visitors to the gardens, animal park and those attending conferences and social events. Governors, senior managers and staff have attended planning meetings to determine priorities and clarify the relationship between onsite educational and commercial activities.

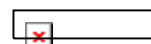
47. Financial management is satisfactory. The college does not have any borrowings and has

established an adequate, effective and reliable system of internal control with good financial reporting arrangements. A farm review has recently been conducted along with the transfer of the college catering service to an external contractor in an attempt to reduce costs. A planning application has been made for a new learning resources centre with additional residential accommodation. Given the significant increase in student numbers since the previous inspection, the development of a broader range of courses, generally good retention and pass rates, improvements in college management and the significant amount of good teaching this college provides good value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Agriculture



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

Work-based learning in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

#### **Strengths**

- high retention and pass rates on full-time courses
  
- very good progression
  
- effective practical teaching
  
- achievement of wide range of industry specific qualifications

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor work-based learning reviews
  
- poor assessment practices in work-based learning

- some poor recording on individual learning plans.

### **Scope of provision**

48. There are 43 full-time and 80 part-time students studying agriculture. Some 12 full-time students are on the first diploma, 11 on the national certificate and 20 on the national diploma. Part-time courses are offered at NVQ levels 2 and 3 in livestock production, mixed farming and extensive crop production. Some 29 work-based learners following foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships join part-time courses to gain basic knowledge and for assessment of competence on the college's commercial enterprises. There is a wide range of agriculture-related short courses designed to meet local needs, including the safe use of veterinary medicines, tractor driving and the use of all terrain vehicles. Full-time students take some of these short courses as additional qualifications.

### **Achievement and standards**

49. There are high retention and pass rates on full-time courses. While these have been consistently above national averages for the last three years, retention rates on the first diploma and national certificate declined in 2002/03. This was identified by the college and appropriate actions have been taken to improve retention rates in the current academic year. Practical work is of a high standard. Students demonstrate good practical skills in the use of tools and equipment. Class work and assessed work is at a satisfactory standard. NVQ pass rates are satisfactory, although they have declined in the past two years and the standard of assessment is often poor. Overall achievement of frameworks for modern apprenticeships is low, although learners do develop good practical skills from their employers and work experience supervisors. Pass rates on short courses are in line with national averages and all full-time students take some of these to improve their employment prospects. Overall key skill pass rates are satisfactory. Pass rates in communication at level 3 and application of number at level 2 are better than national averages.

50. There is very good progression both into employment and further studies. In 2002/03, of the 38 full-time students who completed their course 2 progressed to HE, 19 to another FE course and 16 moved into employment in the industry. The other student started a family. Students are punctual and, at 92%, the attendance level is very good. A class size average of over 12 students is greater than is normally found within agriculture.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Safe use of veterinary medicines	2	No. of starts	48	47	82
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	40	60	74
Tractor driving	2	No. of starts	27	31	25
		% retention	81	100	100
		% pass rate	32	74	80
First diploma in agriculture	2	No. of starts	14	12	7
		% retention	64	92	71
		% pass rate	100	91	100
National certificate in agriculture	3	No. of starts	23	20	19
		% retention	87	95	74

		% pass rate	95	94	100
National diploma in agriculture	3	No. of starts	14	12	11
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	93	92	90

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

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

51. There is effective well-planned practical teaching which ensures that students gradually improve their skills and knowledge and understand health and safety and animal welfare issues. In a tractor driving class with 14 students and 2 staff, while one teacher supervised students driving, the other helped the students prepare for the tractor driving proficiency test by going through the controls and warning devices. Students participate well in discussion in most classes and use their own experiences to help illustrate teaching points. Teachers use few visual aids other than handouts and overhead projection slides. Work-based learners who attend college for off-the-job training benefit from the generally good teaching. Most work-based learners receive good on-the-job supervision and training from their employers and supervisors, although the co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training is ineffective.

52. Most staff have recent relevant industrial experience and are suitably qualified. Part-time staff all work in the industry and bring the most recent industrial practices to their teaching. Most practical lessons take place on the college farm where the staff have more control of the availability of animals and other practical tasks. Local farms are used for visits and practical activities that cannot be accommodated on the college estate. Equipment and machinery are sufficient for the needs of the courses and the majority are up to date and reflect current industrial practice. Student routines are well organised and farm staff are sympathetic to the needs of students while still trying to instil commercial speed and values. Many work-based learners are employed at good farms which offer them a wide range of practical learning opportunities.

53. Full-time students experience a range of relevant assessment activities including assignments, knowledge tests and practical assessments. The standard of assessed work is satisfactory, but feedback to students does not always show them how they can improve their grades. There are poor assessment practices in work-based learning. There is insufficient direct observation of performance in the workplace and over-reliance on witness testimony, much of which is of poor quality. Assessment standards are poor and evidence in candidate portfolios often does not meet the performance criteria set by the awarding body. In one example, the witness clearly stated that the modern apprentice was not able to sort cattle to the required standard and that he needed to ask more questions if he got confused. However, this evidence was being used to show that competence had been reached.

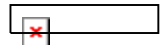
54. A large number of industry-relevant additional qualifications are offered and taken by students. These include use of chainsaws, safe use and application of pesticides, telescopic fork-lift truck training and the safe use of veterinary medicines. Work-based learners gain these qualifications as part of their modern apprenticeship. Final-year national diploma students take assessor awards by using evidence generated through supervision of first diploma students on farm duties. All of these additional qualifications significantly improve the employment prospects of the students. While there is no specific level 1 provision in agriculture, students wishing to study at this level can do so through the GNVQ foundation level land and environment course. First diploma students also take NVQ level 1 as part of their two days a week industrial experience. There is a wide range of short courses designed to meet local needs taught either directly by the college or through one of its franchised partners. Advice and guidance to students prior to entry, both through careers events and course leaflets, are good. Vocational staff are supportive and give sound advice on progression and personal issues. All students are screened on entry for basic skills and appropriate support is put in place, including classroom assistants for students with severe difficulties. Work-based learning reviews are weak with insufficient evaluation of individual progress, no review of previous targets, very few actions agreed, no discussion of equal opportunity issues and little review of health and

safety. There is some weak recording on full-time student individual learning plans with no record of enrichment activities and in some cases little record of tutorials.

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

55. Overall management of this area is satisfactory. Weekly timetabled team meetings ensure that staff are kept informed of developments. Targets are set and monitored by the course teams. Inspectors agreed with much of the self-assessment report, but considered that some of the aspects claimed to be strengths were in no way exceptional practice. All staff have an annual appraisal that also identifies training and development needs. Staff development is available and taken up by most staff to keep them up to current industrial practice. Equal opportunities are not reinforced in work-based learning reviews and are not integrated with classroom teaching. Quality assurance of schemes of work is minimal. Internal verification is satisfactory, although verification plans do not always show how all students work will be sampled.

### **Equine studies**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on full-time level 3 courses
  
- high retention rates on the first and national diploma course
  
- good teaching
  
- highly qualified experienced staff
  
- excellent riding resources
  
- exceptionally productive links with industry
  
- extensive opportunities for good work experience.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor assessment practice in work-based learning
  
- narrow range of course provision.

**Scope of provision**

56. The college offers full-time courses in equine studies including a first diploma at level 2 and a national certificate and diploma at level 3. These courses are based at the Manor Stables complex within the college campus. A range of short courses, including BHS examinations and the horse owners' certificates, is offered on some week days, evenings and at weekends. Foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships attend the college on a day-release basis college to develop basic knowledge and key skills. There are 56 students on full-time equine courses, 57 on part-time courses and 18 work-based learners. Most students are aged 16 to 18. Additional qualifications offered to full-time students include first-aid, riding and road safety and the safe use of veterinary medicines. Progression routes are available to a foundation degree course.

**Achievement and standards**

57. Pass rates on national certificate and diploma courses have improved to well above national averages. Pass rates on the first diploma declined in 2002/03 to well below the national average. Retention rates on the first and national diploma courses are high. All the students on the national diploma course have been retained for the last three years. Previously high retention rates on the national certificate course declined in the 2002/03 to around the national average. Key skills pass rates at all levels are improving and are good at level 1; 59% of students achieved level 1 application of number in 2002/03. Pass rates at other levels in 2002/03 were low. Pass rates on BHS qualifications at stage 1 and 2, taken as additional qualifications, are high at 93% and 100%, respectively. Framework achievements for work-based learners are satisfactory and improving. Students show above average levels of attainment in riding lessons. Their understanding of the how horses work and the importance of a correct riding position is well developed. Standards of turnout and care of horses, both in lessons and in the stable yard are high. At 92%, student attendance is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
First diploma in horse studies	2	No. of starts	17	22	21
		% retention	65	82	86
		% pass rate	91	94	81
National certificate in horse management	3	No. of starts	1	10	15
		% retention	100	100	86
		% pass rate	100	70	86
National diploma in horse management	3	No. of starts	11	12	11
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	100	93	100

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

**Quality of education and training**

58. Teaching of both practical and theory are good. Lessons are carefully planned. Students are clear about the aims of each lesson, participate well in discussions and activities and praise the quality of teaching. Teachers make effective use of relevant equine industrial contexts to illustrate teaching points and reinforce learning. Teaching links theoretical concepts and practical skills well. Lesson planning is good. Understanding of grassland theory was reinforced by including a physical evaluation of an adjacent horse pasture. Small group and individual work are used effectively to encourage independent work and develop evaluative skills. In a riding lesson on horses' flat work, students were well briefed, worked their horses independently and evaluated each horse's way of going. They made good progress in improving their handling of horses.

59. Riding instruction is good. Students are enthusiastic about their riding lessons and ride up to three times weekly. In a show jumping session, the teacher worked to improve the riders' show jumping position and control by careful use of canter distances in a grid work exercise. Correct emphasis was placed on control both in front and after fences. The students progressed well and controlled their horses to better effect. Many students learn from the opportunity to observe or take part in clinics taken by visiting riders of international renown. Supervised teaching practice works well and enables students to learn the basic principles of riding instruction. All students learn horse care skills quickly and become efficient through regular, routine stable duties. Health and safety and good working practices are effectively reinforced on the college yard.

60. All equine studies staff are highly qualified and have significant experience of the equine industry. Six staff hold the BHS instructor award and several are active as equine external examiners. Nearly all hold, or are undertaking, teacher training qualifications and assessor awards. Many staff currently compete in show jumping, dressage and horse trials' competitions. Students recognise the quality of the staff and value their commitment.

61. The college has excellent riding resources. A large indoor arena complex and an outdoor arena both have good viewing facilities and plenty of room for individual work. Their use as a competition venue gives students valuable experience of observing and participating in college run events. The college estate is used effectively to provide off-road and cross country riding for students to develop their skills in riding independently. A wide range of high-quality horses helps students learn about dealing with different problems and appropriate training methods.

62. The college has formed strong, productive links with the equine industry and with external organisations such as the BHS, British Show Jumping Association and British Eventing. Students benefit from excellent work placement opportunities across a range of equestrian establishments. All yards are rigorously checked for suitability and health and safety prior to the student starting placement. Employers are supportive and speak well of college work.

63. Assessment practice and internal verification on full-time courses are mostly effective. Prompt written feedback on assignment work also sets targets for improvement. Verbal feedback during riding lessons is accurate and specific to individual needs. Assessment and internal verification on NVQ courses are poor. Insufficiently detailed assessment records fail to cover evidence requirements including the type of assessment activity. Knowledge and understanding assessments do not fully cover the qualification requirements. Internal verification had not resolved these issues. Some students do not understand the requirements of the qualification and framework and most are unsure of their progress.

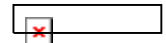
64. The range of courses offered is narrow with no full-time provision at level 1 and little part-time provision. Some students are inappropriately enrolled on level 2 courses which are too demanding for their level of ability.

65. The quantity and quality of support and guidance given to students are high. Course tutors provide effective support for their students through regular formal and informal tutorials. Problems are identified and dealt with at an early stage. Tutorials are effective in setting targets and monitoring progress as well as providing pastoral support. Systems are effective with rigorous recording and monitoring of students' progress.

### **Leadership and management**

66. Leadership and management are good. Management systems are established, well used and monitored at course manager level. Staff development activities, such as opportunities for teachers to gain teaching qualifications, have had a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching. The self-assessment was generally accurate, with a good level of staff involvement. There is satisfactory promotion and awareness of equal opportunities, although some students following work-based learning have a limited understanding. Low awareness of accurate student numbers on some courses hindered effective review of performance in 2002/03. Resources are well managed.

### **Horticulture, countryside and floristry**



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

Work-based learning in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on floristry and most part-time courses
  
- much good teaching
  
- high awareness of health and safety practices
  
- supportive and well-resourced work placements
  
- good range of progressive programmes.

#### **Weaknesses**

- some poor short-term target setting
  
- low pass rates on work-based learning in horticulture
  
- poor management of some aspects of work-based learning.



### **Scope of provision**

67. Full-time and part-time and short courses are offered in amenity horticulture, arboriculture, countryside management and floristry. At entry level, a countryside foundation programme is offered. Level 2 provision includes first diplomas in countryside and environment, floristry, and horticulture. A national certificate in horticulture and national diplomas in countryside management, and horticulture are available at level 3. HE progression opportunities are available within the college. Part-time courses include RHS certificates and diplomas, City and Guilds certificates and a range of arboriculture provision. NVQs are offered in forestry, amenity horticulture and arboriculture. Work-based learners join part-time courses to gain basic knowledge. A wide range of short courses is available in skills associated with countryside, floristry and horticulture. At the time of the inspection, there were 60 students enrolled in arboriculture, 128 in countryside management, 375 in horticulture and 34 in floristry. Approximately 85% of students are part time and 75% are aged over 19. There are 15 work-based learners following an amenity horticulture programme with 9 in forestry and 1 in arboriculture.

### **Achievement and standards**

68. Pass rates on most courses are at, or above, the national average. In floristry and on part-time courses, pass rates are particularly high. Retention rates are good on national certificate and RHS certificates. Enrolments and retention rates have declined significantly on first and national diploma in horticulture. Pass rates for modern apprentices are poor. In the past three years, no work-based learners following amenity horticulture have completed the apprenticeship framework. Key skill pass rates are low except for some areas of horticulture. At 85%, student attendance is good. Standards of work are good. The college won a silver medal at the Chelsea Flower Show. The products of floristry practical activities are sold to the public. Students take additional qualifications in drystone walling, safe use of pesticides, first-aid, chainsaw handling and basic tractor driving. Destinations are closely monitored and show good progression into employment and on to higher-level courses.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in horticulture, countryside and floristry, 2001 to 2003**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
First diploma in horticulture	2	No. of starts	18	20	6
		% retention	89	95	33
		% pass rate	63	84	100
First diploma in floristry	2	No. of starts	16	15	19
		% retention	81	100	84
		% pass rate	100	87	100
National certificate in horticulture	2	No. of starts	23	23	9
		% retention	87	83	89
		% pass rate	85	79	75
RHS general certificate	2	No. of starts	74	58	54
		% retention	72	71	85
		% pass rate	81	63	67
Certificate in gardening	2	No. of starts	*	71	44
		% retention	*	87	84
		% pass rate	*	44	51
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	11	10	25

countryside management		% retention	100	70	68
		% pass rate	91	86	70
Royal Forestry Society certificate in arboriculture	3	No. of starts	8	10	13
		% retention	88	100	92
		% pass rate	86	10	58

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

\* course did not run

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

69. There is much good teaching and learning materials are good. Thorough lesson planning includes effective reinforcement of health and safety. In the best lessons, a full range of activities is used to keep all students occupied and to develop relevant skills. In a tree climbing practical, by using ropes, positioning harnesses and karabiners, students were able to climb to a height with which they were comfortable. The majority of teachers are confident, give clear explanations and use praise effectively. Most students speak confidently about the requirements of their course, its content and relevance to commercial practice. IT is well used in teaching and in students' work. While teachers are aware of the individual learning styles of students, they do not always reflect this in their choice of teaching method. In less effective lessons, teachers talk too much, do not direct questions and do not check students' learning regularly. Key skills teaching is linked to course content and exercises used are vocationally appropriate. In one good lesson, horticultural students enthusiastically and simultaneously developed IT, garden design and communication skills. In other lessons, however, teachers failed to develop students' key skills.

70. Students use the college's gardens and estate effectively for practical teaching and experiential learning. There are formal and walled gardens, a lake, an undercover hard landscaping area, polytunnels, glasshouses, demonstration plots, woodland, a plumbing workshop, and specialist tool stores. All the working areas are extremely tidy. While other physical resources are improving, the glasshouses are reaching the end of their useful life. The gardens, grounds and visitor centre are open to the public providing valuable commercial experience for students. Classrooms provide a pleasant learning environment with informative displays on the walls. Although floristry resources have recently been upgraded, the accommodation is still basic. Visits to a wide range of local and out-of-county sites including gardens, estates, local nature reserves, and a local world heritage site take place regularly. There is productive involvement in community and school projects. All staff either hold or are taking, teacher training qualifications. Work-based learner placements are diverse, high-quality and well equipped. Well-monitored work experience is an integral part of full-time courses.

71. Assessment for college-based students is satisfactory. Assignment briefs clearly state the objectives, but are unimaginative. Teachers provide constructive feedback, but some is too generic and fails to identify specific areas for improvement. While much written work is comprehensive and reflective, some shows little evidence of research or basic presentation standards. Newly introduced records for assessment and internal verification have yet to make an impact. Insufficient internal verification of practical assessment for full-time courses takes place. In work-based learning, assessment practice and formal monitoring of progress is poor. There is insufficient use of work-based practical assessment except in sports turf. In forestry, the recording of assessment results is weak. In horticulture, the quality of portfolios is improving; however, there is too much reliance on witness testimony.

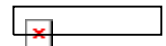
72. Careful analysis of student feedback informs most curriculum planning. However, only level 2 provision is available in floristry which does not meet students' needs. Many have the ability to work at a higher level. While the interview process works well to place most students on appropriate courses, initial guidance for mainly mature entrants to floristry does not accurately describe course content. Students receive a comprehensive induction and the results of initial assessment are

passed on rapidly to vocational tutors, but there is no initial assessment of vocational competence. Individual learning support is effective. Students value the informal support they receive, but the use of short-term target setting in tutorials is weak. Students are well supported while on work placement.

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

73. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report and cross-college procedures for review and evaluation are followed. Awareness of the use of management information is low, with some confusion regarding procedures for data entry. While appraisal works well and teachers confirm that their individual development needs are met, too few staff are helped to gain essential assessor qualifications which are needed for work-based learning. There is little sharing of good practice in work-based learning. A firm management response to address the shortcomings in the management of work-based learning identified by awarding body external verification has been made, but the recruitment of suitably qualified teachers has proved difficult. This has led to existing learners being seriously disadvantaged as hard and soft landscape options are not yet being taught despite some learners being on the programme for six months.

### **Animal care and veterinary nursing**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on first diploma and advanced national certificate courses
  
- good achievement of most additional qualifications on full-time courses
  
- effective and extensive links with industry
  
- effective use of the college farm livestock and resources to widen learning opportunities
  
- high standard of students' work.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- narrow range of teaching methods

- weak management of learning activities in the small animal care unit.

### **Scope of provision**

74. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in animal care and veterinary nursing from levels 1 to 3. Full-time courses include the first diploma at level 2, national diploma, advanced national certificate and national award at level 3. There are 31 part-time students enrolled on various units of the national award which is taught over a three-year period, allowing flexible attendance. There are nine work-based learners on NVQ programmes. Part-time college courses are offered in dog training and dog grooming. The majority of the 98 full-time students are aged 16 to 18. There are 56 part-time students.

### **Achievement and standards**

75. Retention rates on most full-time courses are at, or above, the national averages. Pass rates are good on first diploma and advanced national certificate, but declined on the national diploma to well below the national average in 2002/03. Except for application of number at level 1, achievement of key skills is well above national averages at levels 1 and 2. The standard of students' coursework is high. Tutors set an appropriately wide range of assessment tasks, including posters and presentations. Most students' work shows extensive research and excellent use of IT to enhance presentation. Weaker examples show poor referencing and lack a bibliography. Most students demonstrate a good level of practical skills and are confident handling a wide range of animals including horses, cattle and sheep. Duties in the animal care unit lack the rigour of a realistic working environment and there are lapses in attention to health and safety and hygiene.

76. There is good progression to the next level of study and to employment. In 2003, 73% of full-time students progressed to the next level of course or to employment. A significant number of students receive additional learning support. A wide range of additional qualifications is achieved by all full-time students including those in dog grooming, micro-chipping, first-aid at work, safe use of veterinary medicines and horse owners' certificates. In all instances, the college covers the tuition fees and, in most cases, the cost of the examination. At 83%, attendance at lessons is high.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in animal care and veterinary nursing, 2001 to 2003**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
First diploma in animal care	2	No. of starts	35	37	36
		% retention	86	92	83
		% pass rate	97	85	93
National certificate in animal management	3	No. of starts	29	26	*
		% retention	62	85	*
		% pass rate	83	68	*
National diploma in animal management	3	No. of starts	16	19	20
		% retention	88	63	90
		% pass rate	86	92	80

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

\* course did not run

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

77. All teaching is satisfactory or better with clear and up-to-date schemes of work and lesson plans. However, much teaching rarely involves students in analytical discussion, or encourages students to assess themselves or each other. Teaching relies too heavily on the use of handouts. Individual learning styles are identified for full-time students, but are not always recorded on lesson plans and not well catered for during lessons. Students use a digital camera confidently to record practical performance and to illustrate assignments. An effective series of business sessions included a visit to a grooming parlour for students to research and evaluate given aspects of the business. The animal care unit has recently undergone expansion to include well-stocked reptile and aquarium rooms, increasing the range of learning opportunities for students.

78. A wide range of work placements including veterinary practices, riding establishments, pet shops, dog grooming parlours, rescue organisations and wild life parks provides extensive opportunities for work experience. All new and most existing placements are visited, but inadequate formal records of the facilities, resources and outcomes of visits are kept. Work experience providers complete an evaluation and assessment of students. There is only one form for all courses and this does not reflect the different needs of the groups and the progression between courses and years. There is no formal monitoring of the training received and minimal monitoring of students' learning and progress.

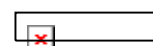
79. Most assignments show a good mix of practical and theory, and assessment of theory is appropriately varied. Feedback on written assessments sometimes lacks detail and clear guidelines on how to achieve better grades. The new internal verification system does not have a clear sampling strategy. There has been no internal verification of practical assessments to date.

80. There is good support for students. A summer school works well to introduce the vocational area and bridges the gap between school and college for those students who have been identified as needing support. Some students have personal learning support teachers in class. Course tutors have an open door policy and students receive a timetabled group tutorial once a week and an individual tutorial once a term. Staff are prompt to identify and resolve specific issues such as bullying. Tutorials are recorded, but actions identified and targets set are not sufficiently specific. Students receive adequate induction and a useful course handbook. They have a basic understanding of equality of opportunity issues. Work-based learners attend college on day release. Progress reviews in the workplace are timely, but fail to set sufficiently clear targets and rely too much on assessment at college.

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

81. Leadership and management of the area are generally good. The curriculum has recently been reviewed appropriately in response to student demand and in consultation with an active industry liaison group. Several full-time and part-time staff have recently been recruited. There is good informal communication and effective staff development. Timetabling of some large class sizes and long sessions with the same tutor demotivates students, affects their ability to learn and does not encourage effective utilisation of the small animal unit. In addition, the timetabling of block-release work experience in term time results in fluctuations in demand and some periods of underuse and some over-busy periods. There are good links with schools and staff are responsive to requests for taster days and work experience. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and realistic.

### **Business, information technology and secretarial studies**



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

### **Strengths**

- very good retention and pass rates on most courses
- well-planned and effective teaching
- wide range of opportunities for adults to gain qualifications
- effective support for individual students.

### **Weaknesses**

- no significant weaknesses.

### **Scope of provision**

82. There are 52 students on business administration courses and 537 on IT courses. The main full-time courses are the certificate in administration at levels 2 and 3. Individual timetables enable students on these courses to combine a range of options such as specialist IT and legal studies with their main programme of study. There is a wide range of ICT part-time and evening courses. These include the Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) certificate for IT users, CLAIT, the ECDL and computer-aided design. Courses are available from entry level to level 2. The level 1 certificate for IT users is also run in three village halls around the county. A short course in digital video editing has been introduced in response to local demand. The new certificate in administration at level 2 was successfully introduced in 2002 and the level 3 in 2003 as a full-time programme primarily aimed for people returning to work. The range of attendance methods provides many adult students with opportunities to learn which they may not otherwise have had. A distance learning course has also been recently introduced for ECDL. There are 21 adult students following professional development courses in teacher training. Many of these are employed as teachers by the college.

### **Achievement and standards**

83. Retention rates are very high on all courses and pass rates are high on most courses and outstanding on some. The retention rate for the diploma in administration and secretarial procedures level 3 has been over 92% for the past three years and the pass rate was substantially above the national average in 2003. There was a drop in the pass results for CLAIT for 2001/02 because candidates were not entered for the whole certificate. The college designed its own module on the Internet in response to student demand, but there was no external accreditation available. The certificate for IT users has such a module and the achievement for 2002/03 has improved. Nearly every student enrolled on the ECDL course at level 2 in 2003 was successful and the pass rate overall in IT examinations is very high.

84. The curriculum is designed to allow students to take additional qualifications as well as their primary learning goals on the full-time administration courses. This is effective in providing students with skills to improve their employability. At 84%, progression into employment is very good for full-

time students. Many develop greater self-confidence. Older students quickly master new IT skills to help them to communicate with their children or grandchildren. At 89%, attendance rates are very good.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in business, information technology and secretarial studies, 2001 to 2003***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
CLAIT certificate for IT users	1	No. of starts	522	430	720
		% retention	96	98	96
		% pass rate	73	20	78
City and Guilds databases stage 2	2	No. of starts	51	46	*
		% retention	100	98	*
		% pass rate	75	78	*
ECDL	2	No. of starts	43	97	151
		% retention	95	97	97
		% pass rate	95	100	95
Diploma in administration and secretarial procedures	3	No. of starts	30	25	30
		% retention	97	92	97
		% pass rate	79	70	86

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

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

85. Lessons are very well planned and effective. Most teachers are confident and enthusiastic about their subject. Lessons have clear objectives. All courses have detailed schemes of work linked effectively to lesson plans. A wide and effective range of teaching methods is used to motivate and maintain the interest of students. Learning is built up in a logical sequence and enables students to develop a wide range of personal and professional skills. Teachers regularly check their students' knowledge and understanding. They draw on their own and students' experiences and use up-to-date business examples on the certificate in administration. Staff and students make extensive use of IT to present their work. Students demonstrate very good ability in applying theory to practical problems in class work. Students are encouraged to work independently and to develop their learning and analytical skills. In one lesson, the teacher organised a card game including the use of group work to analyse information and to make decisions about features of a business organisation. The task consolidated previous learning and developed team working and communication skills. In another lesson, students produced attractive and informative leaflets which they presented to the class. They demonstrated good research and ICT skills and an awareness of design which could be accredited to their vocational qualification and to key skills. Students demonstrate good employability skills in administration and ICT. Key skills for IT and communications are well integrated with administration projects for level 2 students.

86. The standard of work on all courses is high. Assessment procedures are thorough. All IT tasks are marked on completion and students are given immediate feedback. There is clear and constructive written feedback on all marked activities. There is a wide range of assessment activities used to prepare students for examinations. A business communications class had completed a report and the tutor used the first part of the lesson to discuss the students' marked assessments. The students discussed their approaches to research and business style and tone. It was a good lesson, where students learned from one another.

87. Teachers are suitably qualified and have appropriate industrial backgrounds, although some administration tutors lack up-to-date experience of current commercial practices. Rooms are well furnished with appropriate notices on the walls and decorated with plant displays. All computers and software are modern and comparable with those used in commerce and business. There are some cramped classrooms with poor ventilation. Community courses are well resourced with high-quality laptops and printers, which the tutor transports to village halls. Students can access the college intranet to draw down learning material and to communicate with their tutors by e-mail when they are unable to attend college. This is particularly useful for part-time students who live some distance away. The team has produced large quantities of very good IT and administration learning resources.

88. Teachers have high expectations of students and provide prompt feedback on work carried out. Students' work is thoroughly marked and written responses give clear and constructive guidance for improvement. There is regular monitoring and recording of students' progress. Students speak positively about their progress reviews and the feedback they get on their performance. The tutorial system operates effectively for full-time students. Following tests at the end of each term, students are set individual learning targets in their learning plans to improve their performance and are clearly aware of what is expected of them. The individual reviews of full-time students aged 16 to 18 are used to provide written reports to parents.

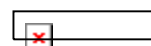
89. There is a wide range of opportunities for adults to gain qualifications. Students from a wide area of Dorset and beyond attend the full-time administration courses. The small size of the classes is attractive to students who wish to develop IT skills in a supportive environment. Younger students enjoy attending classes with more mature students in preparation for employment with all ages. The distance learning programme in ECDL is popular with the widely spread communities. The college has set up numerous courses for specific purposes for local businesses, such as IT skills for a farming organisation and editing photographic images for a helicopter company. The college is highly regarded by agencies in the local community. For example, the college responded to social services by providing a training course for a student who had been excluded from formal education. The student achieved six IT qualifications during the year.

90. Academic and personal support for students are good. There are good facilities for new students to develop basic IT skills before they start their primary course through taster days and through materials developed by the teaching team. Some students have been loaned computers for use at home so that they can keep up with their peers. The learning needs of every individual student are considered; those with special learning difficulties receive appropriate support and others receive specific additional support for their IT skills. When necessary, students can have one-to-one support in the classroom. An additional IT session on a Friday afternoon gives full-time students access to an IT room for additional practice and support.

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

91. Leadership and management are very good. There are well-designed programmes to promote inclusion. Curriculum management is effective and efficient, and communications are excellent. Staff clearly understand their roles. Self-assessment and sharing of good practice are effective. Use of target setting and action planning is well developed. There have been improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching materials and common management systems are effectively shared. Staff development is well managed. Course files are very good and administration is thorough. Links with employers are few and employers are not involved in curriculum planning and training. Improved induction has helped students to settle quickly into their learning programmes.

### **Outdoor recreation and leisure**



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



Work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates on full-time programmes
- good teaching in practical lessons
- excellent facilities and resources for outdoor education
- productive links with employers to provide effective work experience
- wide range of additional qualifications.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient range of provision for sports students at entry level and level 1
- poor achievement of modern apprenticeships
- some poor accommodation for theory and indoor practical sessions
- poor assessment of work-based learning.

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

92. The college provides sports and recreation courses specialising in outdoor education. Courses offered include GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism, first diploma in sport (outdoor education), NVQ activity leadership all at level 2 and national diploma in sport (outdoor education) at level 3. A range of additional qualifications including National Pool Lifeguard Qualification, Community Sports Leader Award, first-aid and Duke of Edinburgh awards are offered to full-time students. There are 48 students on work-based programmes for foundation or advanced modern apprenticeships in sport and recreation. The majority of the 88 full-time students are aged 16 to 18.

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

93. Retention rates on full-time programmes are good. Retention rates on the NVQ level 2 activity leadership course have improved to significantly above the national average in 2002/03. Pass rates on this course are also high. Students progress through the 24-week college programme to a 10-week period of paid work experience with a leading national multi-activity holiday provider. Many obtain full-time employment at the end of the period. Students achieve good standards of work in lessons and successfully meet learning objectives. In one example, students used their skills and knowledge effectively in planning, preparing and testing activities for a taster session for a group aged 15 to 16. There have been low pass rates, below national standards for the last three years, on the AVCE (double award) leisure and recreation. This programme has now been replaced by the national diploma in sport (outdoor education). No candidates have achieved the Community Sports Leader Award for the last two years due to failure to complete and log the required voluntary hours after completion of the taught course. Pass rates for modern apprentices are poor. Only one advanced and four foundation modern apprentices have completed their framework since the college started offering work-based learning in sports and recreation in 1998.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in outdoor recreation and leisure, 2001 to 2003***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	20	24	28
		% retention	85	58	82
		% pass rate	59	71	69
NVQ activity leadership	2	No. of starts	10	13	16
		% retention	80	92	93
		% pass rate	88	67	86
Community sports leaders award	2	No. of starts	33	49	26
		% retention	100	84	81
		% pass rate	30	0	0
National pool life guard qualification	2	No. of starts	8	12	13
		% retention	100	92	92
		% pass rate	88	*	85
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	12	**	**
		% retention	0	**	**
		% pass rate	0	**	**
AVCE leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	9	16	18
		% retention	78	81	68
		% pass rate	71	69	77

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

\* data not available

\*\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

94. There is good teaching, learning and attainment in practical lessons. Independent learning is promoted through a range of well-structured tasks and activities, including effective work in pairs and small groups. There is some unsatisfactory lesson planning when lessons are timetabled for half or full days. There is little use of IT in teaching. Most learning materials and handouts are of a good standard and used effectively.

95. A good range of well-maintained specialist equipment is available for practical outdoor pursuit lessons. Considerable investment in the outdoor education curriculum has taken place. It is now well equipped for kayaking, climbing, caving, expedition training and problem solving. There are good onsite facilities for a variety of outdoor pursuits activities with a lake for kayaking and canoeing, 750 acres of grounds with a mapped orienteering course, a high and low ropes course and an indoor boulder wall which help students to gain good levels of skill. A number of qualified staff, with recent experience in the outdoor industry, teach practical outdoor pursuits on all full-time programmes. There are poor facilities for indoor practical sport activities. They are inadequate for fitness and human performance testing, such as bleep testing, and wider practical sporting activities. Students are taught a number of theory lessons in huts that are old, drab and have few resources.

96. There is good use of assessment in the workplace for full-time NVQ level 2 activity leadership students. Marking is accurate and meets awarding body requirements. Internal verification procedures have recently been reviewed for all programmes, but are not yet fully implemented. On work-based learning courses, there is little evidence of planning of assessment and insufficient rigour in terms of sufficiency of evidence and the validity of assessment decisions.

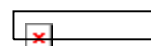
97. There is a good range of additional qualifications available for full-time students to follow which enhance employability. These include National Pool Lifeguard Qualification, Community Sports Leader Award, first-aid and Duke of Edinburgh awards. Good links exist with employers locally, nationally and abroad and provide work experience opportunities for both full-time and work-based students. NVQ level 2 activity leadership students are planning to work in France this year with a leading national multi-activity holiday provider. Appropriate and innovative responsiveness to employers needs include the introduction of an in-house ropes course which is taught on outdoor pursuits programmes at the request of multi-activity centre employers. There is a narrow range of provision with none at entry level or level 1, no part-time provision for adults and no provision for young people aged 14 to 16.

98. There is good support for students with identified learning needs through the use of classroom assistants and extra timetabled support sessions. Initial advice and guidance, induction and the tutorial system are all adequate. While transport to off-site venues for outdoor pursuit activities is readily provided, students raised concerns about the quality of this transport on occasions. Careers guidance is readily available, helped by the fact that many staff have recent experience of working in the outdoor industry. Links have been forged with local employers resulting in activity visits mixed with talks about career opportunities.

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

99. Leadership and management for this area are satisfactory with good day-to-day course management and close, effective working relationships between staff. Changes have been made to the curriculum, with the introduction of new Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first and national programmes in sport in response to student needs. Steps have been taken to improve retention and pass rates on full-time programmes and are having a positive effect. The self-assessment report is well structured and evaluative. Effective course reviews take place. Action plans with targets are used, but there is no indication of how these are monitored. There is little active promotion of equal opportunities at curriculum area level. Course handbooks make no reference to the extensive employment opportunities for suitably qualified females.

### **Foundation studies, literacy, numeracy and basic skills**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
- high level of individual support on foundation courses
- very good development of practical skills
- good external links widen participation
- good flexible support for literacy, numeracy and key skills across the college.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on most programmes
- insufficiently planned development of personal and social skills
- insufficient external work experience for most students
- weak management of introduction of E2E programmes
- lack of dedicated accommodation and resources for literacy and numeracy.

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

100. There are 147 students with a broad range of learning difficulties following foundation programmes. Approximately half of full-time students and most part-time students are aged 19 or over. Programmes are flexible and students can attend for all or part of each week. There are currently 14 full-time and 37 part-time students on the skills for working life programme, and 11 full-time students working towards the countryside foundation GNVQ. Some 85 students are on work-based learning programmes, including 65 on E2E and 20 on Jobcentre Plus programmes for the unemployed. There is a good choice of options within programmes, including work experience and vocational tasters in woodwork, horticulture, land-based operations, agriculture, tractor driving, construction skills and animal care. The college works with partners such as mental health charities,

Connexions, social services, NACRO and the Youth Service to provide sheltered workshops at college or centres in Blandford Forum, Christchurch and Upton. Some students learn practical skills in a local educational garden centre. All Jobcentre Plus clients are on work placements and attend subcontracted job search training close to their homes.

101. Literacy and numeracy lessons are part of the curriculum on all foundation courses. Students on other courses in the college are also offered literacy, language, dyslexia and numeracy support if they need it. A total of 112 college students have received literacy and numeracy support since September 2003. Some 11 modern apprentices on work-based learning programmes are having help for literacy and numeracy.

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

102. Students develop very good practical skills. Extensive use is made of the up-to-date equipment and workshops in horticulture, agriculture, construction and animal care. Skills are developed progressively as students gain confidence and self-esteem. Students are proud of their achievements. Improvements in literacy and numeracy skills are helping students with assignment work. Achievement of external certificates is good on all courses. The pass rates for all key skills at level 1 are well above the national averages, both on the foundation courses and across the various curriculum areas of the college. At 100% in 2002/03, progression into jobs or FE is excellent on the countryside foundation course. Some 51% of New Deal clients achieved jobs 2002/03, exceeding the target of 40% set by Jobcentre Plus. Retention rates are below national averages and declining on most courses, except skills for working life. Attendance and punctuality are good, at over 80% on most courses.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in foundation studies, literacy, numeracy and basic skills, 2001 to 2003***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	134	207	102
		% retention	81	83	72
		% pass rate	79	66	64
Key skills communication	1	No. of starts	79	111	60
		% retention	74	81	70
		% pass rate	81	65	69
Key skills IT	1	No. of starts	142	261	129
		% retention	85	82	77
		% pass rate	75	50	66
GNVQ countryside foundation	1	No. of starts	12	14	9
		% retention	70	78	67
		% pass rate	90	91	66
Vocational foundation certificate	1	No. of starts	18	54	33
		% retention	100	92	100
		% pass rate	72	95	100

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

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

103. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. The best lessons are well planned and structured, and

incorporate a good mix of theory and practical activities to consolidate learning and maintain interest. Most students are achieving targets such as the spellings of plant names, using the correct techniques and tools when planting, fabricating wrought iron items, and driving and maintaining tractors. They progressively work more independently. Students are well motivated and enthusiastically carry out practical tasks, participating well in class discussions. They develop good team working and research skills using the Internet. In weaker lessons, activities do not obviously link to the overall goals of the programme. Students are all set the same work, there is insufficient independent learning, and portfolios contain mainly handouts with little individual student work. Jobsearch training for Jobcentre Plus clients is helping them to gain jobs. Written work is set and marked frequently and constructive comments are fed back to students. Parents are kept informed of progress.

104. Students are prepared well for work by undertaking valuable realistic roles in the visitor centre and gardens at the college. However, most students do not have the opportunity to undertake external work placements to broaden their skills and horizons, except on the E2E and New Deal programmes, where there are good work placements and links with employers. There is insufficient planning and recording of students' personal and social development within programmes, although they are developing many improved skills such as timekeeping, punctuality, team working and behaviour management through their vocational training. There is no programme of activities to develop social or personal skills, few external visits, and most foundation students do not join in the social activities of the college.

105. The committed and well-experienced staff provide a high level of academic and pastoral support. Many students have moderate to severe physical and learning disabilities such as autism, mental health problems, attention deficiency syndrome, Down's syndrome and other barriers to learning. Staff and students treat each other with dignity and respect. Teachers are sensitive to the diverse needs of the students, adapt to individual learning styles, manage disruptive behaviour effectively and reward students with praise for achieving small milestones such as coming to lessons with the right personal protective equipment. In one lesson in horticulture, the tutor assisted a student with cerebral palsy to walk to the garden plot, provided him with a chair close to the garden and gave him specially adapted tools so that he could dig and plant shrubs. In the same lesson, the tutor was communicating with a student who could not speak by asking him to answer questions through signing or through pointing to pictures and at various tools. Students are sensitive to other students' needs and are quick to help others to understand instructions or complete tasks. Tutors are readily available to help students with personal problems, learning support assistants are used effectively in class, and there is a wide range of specialist support available to students in college and through external agencies. The week-long summer school induction is comprehensive and helps students settle in quickly to college life.

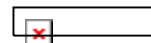
106. Most students make good progress in numeracy and literacy and are pleased with their improved skills when completing vocational assignment work. The initial assessment to diagnose learning support needs is thorough. This results in effective learning support being given in literacy and numeracy. All students have individual support if they need it, either by having a learning assistant in class or by individual sessions in the learning support centre. Tutors use materials which are relevant to the vocational programme being followed by students. Not all students take up the support offered, and this affects their progress adversely. There is a lack of dedicated accommodation and resources for literacy and numeracy, and a lack of privacy in the learning resource centre for students to have confidential discussions. There is insufficient sharing of good practice by staff.

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

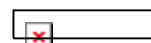
107. Programmes are generally well managed. Course teams work well together and there are regular meetings to disseminate and share information. Annual course reviews are effective and result in improvements. Staff appraisal and development are good and many staff are updating their skills and qualifications. Valuing diversity is promoted and any form of oppressive behaviour is dealt with promptly. There is little attempt to raise issues about equality and diversity in the curriculum. The management of the introduction of the E2E programme was not well planned: documentation in student files is incomplete, reviews are infrequent, and target setting for students is weak. The

internal verification process is satisfactory. There is insufficient involvement of employers in the planning of programmes.

#### Part D: College data



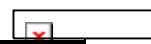
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	30	34
2	40	22
3	20	11
4/5	0	0
Other	10	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in 2003*

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	131	61	2
Land-based provision	714	1,622	28
Construction	8	1	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	0	0	0
Business administration, management and professional	94	2,043	25
Information and communication technology	153	186	4
Retailing, customer service and transportation	18	141	2
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	73	117	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	126	12	2
Health, social care and public services	101	101	2

Visual and performing arts and media	0	90	1
Humanities	9	12	0
English, languages and communication	219	50	3
Foundation programmes	302	62	4
Unknown area of learning	418	1,545	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,366</b>	<b>6,043</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2003

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	44	87	159	111	91	223
	Retention rate	100	88	87	99	93	90
	National average	83	84	81	74	80	70
	Pass rate	80	64	57	88	85	77
	National average	65	69	76	65	66	67
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	311	275	251	234	241	341
	Retention rate	88	82	87	88	83	81
	National average	77	77	77	69	71	71
	Pass rate	75	67	62	77	77	82
	National average	74	73	76	69	69	74
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	128	140	149	313	307	262
	Retention rate	97	85	83	90	87	85
	National average	71	71	75	62	69	64
	Pass rate	73	67	48	69	70	54
	National average	79	80	82	63	67	68

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)	56	41	2	51
Level 2 (intermediate)	81	15	2	38
Level 1 (foundation)	70	30	0	10
Other sessions	66	33	0	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>108</b>

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