



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Franklin College

### CONTENTS

---

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

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

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

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

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

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

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

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

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

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

[Science](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Information and communications technology](#)

[Health and social care](#)

[Visual and performing arts and media](#)

[Social sciences](#)

[History, government and politics and law](#)

[English, languages and communications](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

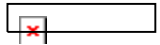
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

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

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

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

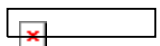
**Basic information about the college**



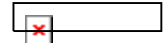
---

Name of college:	Franklin College
Type of college:	Sixth form college
Principal:	Mr P Newcome
Address of college:	Chelmsford Avenue Grimsby North East Lincolnshire DN34 5BY
Telephone number:	01472 875000
Fax number:	01472 875019
Chair of governors:	Mr Philip Gutcher
Unique reference number:	130566
Name of reporting inspector:	David Dana
Dates of inspection:	19-23 January 2004

**Part A: Summary**



## Information about the college

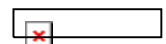


Franklin College was established in 1990 as part of the reorganisation of secondary education in Grimsby, then part of the County of Humberside and now North East Lincolnshire. The urban area of Grimsby and Cleethorpes has a combined population of 162,000. The major industries are food processing, fish sales, and car imports and exports. The commercial port of Immingham is nearby and there is a significant amount of industry on the south bank of the river Humber comprising mainly chemical and petro-chemical plants.

The college offers provision in 10 of the 14 areas of learning defined by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), although enrolments in some areas of learning are small. The provision includes 44 advanced subsidiary level (AS-level) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A-level) subjects with some general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects and a number of vocational qualifications at levels 1 to 3. The college currently has approximately 9,700 student enrolments, of whom some 7,200 are aged 16 to 18 and 92% of these are studying at level 3. The remaining 2,500 are adults. Some 96% of students are white and 55% of students are female. Some 50% of enrolments are at level 3 and 10% are at level 2. The majority of the 20% of enrolments at level 1 are adults on courses in the community.

The college has a number of partner schools for pupils aged 11 to 16 within Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Lincolnshire. The college draws students from all of the schools in the area, including the 11-18 schools in Cleethorpes. Grimsby College, a large general further education (FE) college situated close by, provides some GCSE and GCE A level courses alongside its vocational provision. Franklin College is a member of the Yorkshire and Humberside sixth form colleges' network of 11 colleges and the North East Lincolnshire Learning Partnership. The college is an associate college of Hull University.

## How effective is the college?



The quality of provision was judged to be outstanding in health and social care and chemistry and good in sciences, mathematics, information and communications technology (ICT), visual and performing arts and media, social sciences, history, politics and law, and English and modern foreign languages. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- high pass rates on many courses
  
- good management in most curriculum areas
  
- effective management and co-ordination of the continuing education provision

- comprehensive, well-organised and well co-ordinated range of student services
- excellent additional subject support for students
- good guidance on progression for full-time students
- effective arrangements with local schools for providing advice and guidance
- high-quality learning resources
- effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning
- wide range of provision for students aged 16 to 18 and adults in the community
- effective monitoring of students' progress including the setting and marking of homework.

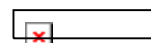
***What should be improved***

- timeliness of some initial assessment arrangements at level 3
- retention rates on level 2 programmes for students aged 16 to 18
- the quality of some tutorials
- accessibility to some specialist curriculum resources at peak times

- accessibility of management information to curriculum area teams
- poor implementation and evaluation of action plans in a minority of curriculum areas.

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

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

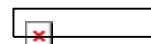


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science	<b>Good.</b> Contributory grade for chemistry: <b>outstanding</b> . There are high pass rates on many courses, with students studying chemistry and sports-related subjects achieving significantly better than their GCSE scores predict. Teaching is good and there is very good use made of ILT in the sciences. Pass rates and retention rates are low for GCSE science and AS-level human biology and these courses are not well suited to many of the students studying them.
Mathematics	<b>Good.</b> AS-level pass rates and retention rates are excellent, and GCE A-level results are good. Students' results at AS level are better than predicted by their GCSE scores. Teaching is good across a broad range of courses, although in some lessons not all students are sufficiently challenged. There is excellent use of ILT and other resources to help learning. Teachers provide very high levels of support to students and mark work rigorously with much supportive feedback.
Information and communications technology	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on many courses and students are supported comprehensively, but retention rates on some full-time courses are low. Adults benefit from a wide range of responsive community provision, and teaching on their courses is creative and well planned. The well-developed intranet resources are effectively used for learning on all programmes. However, there is insufficient planning and co-ordination of courses.
Health and social care	<b>Outstanding.</b> Pass rates on all courses are excellent. Retention rates are very good overall but the rate was below the national average on the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate course in 2003. Marking of assignments, subject support for students and feedback to them on their progress are exemplary. Students make good use of the wide range of learning and assessment aids on the college intranet. Most lessons make imaginative use of a range of

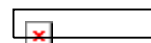
	teaching and learning methods. In a minority of lessons, there is too much whole-class teaching.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on a range of courses, but retention rates are uneven. Teaching is good overall and it is enhanced through an extensive programme of enrichment activities. There is a wide range of popular courses, and some resources have not kept pace with demand.
Social sciences	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on GCE A-level courses, where effective use of learning styles and assessment of work, together with very good learning resources on the intranet, are used to develop subject knowledge. The curriculum is well led and managed. Retention rates for sociology are low. The use of ILT in lessons does not match the level of use by students in independent study.
History, politics and law	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on GCE A-level courses and excellent results for government and politics at both AS level and GCE A level. Teaching is good, and students' skills of critical thinking and analysis are developed well. The effectiveness of questioning techniques in lessons is variable. Students' progress is carefully monitored and learning support is effective. There is good curriculum management.
English, modern foreign languages and communications	<b>Good.</b> There are very high pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level English courses and AS-level French. There is much effective teaching, complemented by a wide variety of enrichment activities. In modern foreign language lessons, there is insufficient use of the language being taught. There are good multimedia facilities in modern foreign languages, and staff exploit these imaginatively.

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



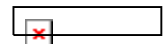
Leadership and management are good. Senior managers and governors have clear aims and values which are supported by staff and reflect the needs of the local community. While strategic objectives are clear, the planning to achieve them is sometimes imprecise. Teaching and learning are good. The college ILT strategy is being implemented effectively and the use of technology has had a positive impact on the quality of students' learning. Learning resources are generally of high quality and are sufficient to meet curriculum needs in most subjects. The overall performance of the college is good, with many students who complete their advanced level studies achieving better grades than predicted on the basis of their grades on entry to the college. Pass rates are generally at, or above, the national average for sixth form colleges, although the pass rates on level 2 courses are uneven. Retention rates on most courses are high, but are unsatisfactory on a minority of courses. Quality assurance is thorough and is largely effective. Self-assessment is thorough and effective, but in a few curriculum areas the implementation and evaluation of action plans are insufficiently rigorous. Management information is accurate and regular reports are provided for managers and governors. The management of the majority of curriculum areas is good, and the provision is good or outstanding in all curriculum areas. The college provides good value for money.

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



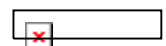
The college's response to educational and social exclusion is good. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and the support provided for students is very good. There is a well-designed manual for equal opportunities training for staff that focuses on equality and diversity, disability, gender and race. The college meets its statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The college has an equality forum group and monitors the relative performance of groups of students. However, equal opportunities are less well promoted at course and classroom level. The college has good links with a number of secondary schools to encourage young people to stay in education. They have been successful in attracting students with low GCSE results to continue in education and progress to higher education (HE). The part-time day and evening provision is attracting adults to a range of basic education and more advanced courses at the college and in community venues. The college has responded appropriately to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2000 (SENDA), with accommodation and resources being modified to provide access to all curriculum provision and nearly all areas of the college. Students needing specialist support for disabilities or learning difficulties are effectively supported. The college supports facilities such as the young parents unit, and some students from the unit attend college courses. A nursery is open from 07:30 to 21:00 and enables students with young families to participate in education during the day and in the evening.

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



There is a comprehensive, well-organised and well-co-ordinated range of services to support students, including initial advice and guidance, welfare, counselling, childcare and careers guidance from a committed team of support staff. There are effective arrangements with local schools that have agreed to participate in the scheme, for providing thorough and helpful pre-entry advice and guidance through an annual programme of events. Few students change courses after receiving the initial advice and guidance and attending taster events. There is excellent formal and informal subject support. However, the timeliness of some aspects of initial assessment arrangements at level 3 reduced the effectiveness of support in the autumn term of 2003. Tutors are well informed about the individual needs and progress of students, including the progress GCE A-level students make towards achieving their target grades. Group tutorials, which include the teaching of general studies, vary in quality. The quality of information and guidance of students wanting to progress to HE is excellent, with effective partnerships between college tutors and the Connexions service. Job-seeking workshops are provided for those students wanting to find employment.

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



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

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

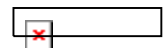
- friendly college atmosphere
  
- academic and personal support from willing, accessible staff

- mutual respect between students and staff
  
- helpful and timely feedback to students about their work
  
- good facilities for both study and recreational activity
  
- the virtual learning environment
  
- availability of enrichment activities.

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

- availability of specialist computer facilities
  
- control of smoking around the building
  
- elements of the tutorial programme, particularly key skills.

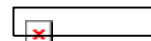
**Other information**



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

**Part B: The college as a whole**





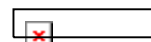
## Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	76	22	2
19+ and WBL*	90	10	0
Learning 16-18	73	25	2
19+ and WBL*	79	21	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. The college has increased the number of students enrolled who successfully completed their programmes of study (success rate) over the last three years to 2003 both for students aged 16 to 18 and for adults, while also increasing enrolments. In 2002, the college was placed in the middle percentile (50%) of sixth form colleges for success rates. Overall retention rates have been maintained at a similar level over the last three years but have varied by level of study, with significant improvements made at level 1, while at level 2, retention rates have declined and at level 3 they have not matched the increase in the national averages. Pass rates have improved or been maintained above the national average.

2. Students' attendance during the inspection was 86%. The inspection took place during an examination period for AS-level and GCE A-level subjects and attendance was lower than in a typical college week. Records show that attendance is normally about 90%: above the national average for sixth form colleges. The average class size in the lessons observed was 12.2 against a national average of 13 for sixth form colleges. In a typical week, class size would be 12.75.

3. Students generally demonstrate a mature approach to their studies. Students develop good practical skills in a number of areas, including science, sport and ICT. ICT is used confidently by many students for improving the presentation of their assignments and in research activities using the Internet. High-level skills of critical analysis, evaluation and research are well developed in a range of subjects, particularly by students who are likely to progress to HE. Subject essay writing skills are being developed to an appropriate level across the curriculum. Many adults quickly develop self-confidence and make good progress in their studies.

### 16 to 18 year olds

4. The college attracts students aged 16 to 18 from a range of schools in North East Lincolnshire, where the average GCSE points score is significantly below the national average. This has been reflected in the average points scores of students recruited to the college, which has declined over

the last three years and is currently 3.29 for students taking level 2 programmes and 5.24 for students taking AS-level subjects. Overall college success rates have improved at levels 1 and 3 but declined at level 2 over the last three years to 2003, while national averages have improved. In 2002, the college success rates were at the national averages and, apart from level 1 provision, these college results have remained the same in 2003.

5. The success rates for students studying formal qualifications at level 1 were low in 2001 but significant improvements in retention rates have led to success rates well above the national averages and these reached 95% in 2003. Retention rates have recovered from 38% below national averages to 18% above in 2003. Pass rates are generally above the national average and are particularly good on GNVQ courses, with pass rates consistently at 100%.

6. Overall success rates for level 2 programmes have fallen from above the national average in 2001 to just below in 2003. Retention rates have had the most significant impact on the drop in 2003, with retention rates falling to 70%. This is 10% below the national average. Pass rates overall have improved and in 2003 were 10% above national averages, at 94%.

7. The largest cohort of students (50%) is recruited to level 3 programmes. A nationally recognised system for comparing students' GCSE results with GCE A-level grades indicates that, overall, the students do significantly better than predicted by their GCSE results. The college sets challenging programmes for students at level 3, with most taking four and a few taking five AS-level subjects at enrolment. The University and College Admission Service (UCAS) points score per student in 2002 was 305.9 against an England average for all students of 254.7. Retention rates have been above or at the national average until 2002, but declined slightly in 2003. Retention rates for AS-level and GCE A-level courses have been maintained at 89%, but have been below the national average for vocational courses. Although above national averages, the pass rates have been slowly declining, but there has been an improvement in 2003.

### ***Adult learners***

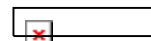
8. Overall success rates for adult students have been at, or above, the national averages for the three years to 2003. Retention rates have been maintained above the national average for the last three years except at level 3, where they dipped in 2003. Pass rates have been consistently above national averages at all levels of study.

9. Success rates at level 1 have improved over the three years to 2003. In 2002, the success rate reached the national average and further improvements have been made. Retention rates and pass rates have both made similar improvements over the same three-year period.

10. Level 2 long courses are mainly GCSEs. The success rates have improved slightly between 2001 and 2003 and have been consistently above national averages. Retention rates were 8% above the national average in 2002 and this level of retention rates has been maintained in 2003. Pass rates have consistently exceeded the national averages and there has been a further small improvement in 2003.

11. The majority of level 3 long qualifications are AS levels and GCE A levels and numbers of enrolments are relatively small. Success rates have been maintained slightly above national averages. While retention rates have been maintained at the same level, they have declined against the national averages and there was a further small drop in 2003. Pass rates have been maintained above national averages overall, but for GCE subjects dropped to below the national averages in 2002.

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



12. Teaching and learning were graded by inspectors in 147 lessons across seven areas of learning, covering eight curriculum grades. Overall the teaching was good. Teaching was good or better in 78% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 2%. This is above the national profile for sixth form colleges. There were some very good or outstanding lessons in all the areas inspected. The teaching for adults in the small sample of lessons observed was slightly better overall than for students aged 16 to 18 with 90% graded good or better and none unsatisfactory. However, there was a similar percentage of teaching judged outstanding and very good (grades 1 and 2) for both these age ranges and the level of learning taking place in lessons was also judged to be similar. The best teaching was found on level 1 courses, with 90% of lessons graded good or better. Level 2 courses had the widest range of teaching quality, with 87% of lessons graded good or very good, but nearly 5% of lessons judged unsatisfactory. Level 3 courses had the highest percentage of lessons graded very good or outstanding (grades 1 and 2), at 27%, but also had 25% graded satisfactory. The best teaching and learning took place in lessons where teachers combined theory and practical work, with over 80% of these lessons graded good or better and none graded unsatisfactory. The most effective teaching and learning took place in the sciences, mathematics and humanities.

13. In many subjects, the enthusiasm and expertise of the teachers generates high levels of interest in the students. In many lessons, teachers ensure that the students are fully involved in their learning through whole-class discussions and group activities. Students readily shared ideas and help each other to develop understanding of the concepts being covered. In mathematics, for example, the students were encouraged to think, share and discuss mathematical ideas. In English lessons, the teachers' enthusiasm for the poems of Blake and Wordsworth added to the insight that students brought to their analysis of the texts. Much teaching is imaginative. In a lesson on archaeology, a student helped in a demonstration on how the shape, size and attitude of a 'find' generated significant archaeological information. The imaginative use of the multimedia language laboratory and the learning materials available motivate the students to participate in learning activities. The mix of learning activities in lessons also helps to maintain students' interest and to address their individual learning needs and learning styles. Teachers use resources effectively in many lessons to generate or maintain interest. They make good use of the interactive whiteboards, available in many classrooms, for demonstrations, to introduce learning resources from the college intranet and virtual learning environment, and to access information from the Internet. The learning materials on the intranet are also inserted into presentations to make best use of the resources and to reinforce key learning points. Students also value the learning resources on the virtual learning environment and use them in college and at home for revision and to catch up on missed lessons.

14. Some 98% of lessons are satisfactory or better. However, in some of the less effective lessons, there is insufficient involvement of the students in the learning activities. Sometimes there is too much whole-class teaching and in some instances teachers do not plan their lessons in sufficient detail to ensure that students have time to complete the learning tasks set. In some lessons, the lack of involvement of students does not allow individual learning needs to be effectively addressed and in some the most able are not sufficiently challenged. Occasionally teacher-led question-and-answer sessions fail to probe students' understanding sufficiently to confirm learning and to ensure that concepts are effectively shared across the class.

15. The college operates from a single main campus, one mile from the centre of Grimsby, in buildings of various ages that are mostly developed from a former school. There are also ten centres used by the college for adult community provision in local schools and a number of learning centres. The college has made good use of the accommodation available and have improved the quality for students by converting, adapting and extending areas to meet identified needs such as additional classrooms, a nursery, students' lounge and refectory. A small amount of temporary accommodation is still in use; although it is old it remains fit for purpose through regular maintenance. The effective use of the accommodation has also increased the available social space around the college and this is used well by students.

16. The accommodation is well maintained, clean and welcoming, and many rooms and adjacent corridors have a clear curriculum identity. There is a sports hall, a theatre and dance studios, all of which provide good teaching and learning resources. There are adequate playing fields for various sporting activities and together with the sports hall these cater for a wide range of college sports

teams and enrichment activities. There are good displays of students' work in subject-specific displays in classrooms and corridors. A collection of the works of local artists, The Franklin Art Collection, is displayed in the college. Most specialist subject areas have good resources and teaching spaces. Resources are particularly good in science, ICT, health and social care and modern foreign languages. There is adequate access to computer workstations and appropriate software for students for the majority of the college day. The college has worked hard to ensure that all students have access to all areas of the college. Most accommodation is now accessible to students in wheelchairs. The one area not accessible to students is a part of the learning resources centre containing some of the book stock. The development of access to this area forms a part of the planned premises development programme.

17. The learning resources centre has an appropriate range of books, periodicals and other learning materials that are regularly reviewed and updated. The range of books available is enhanced by a local consortium loan arrangement with other libraries. Subscriptions for some periodicals are on-line. Computers are available for research and other academic work and, in addition, there are adequate numbers of study spaces for quiet private study. There is good Internet access and all students are given an introduction to Internet search techniques during induction. Learning resource centre staff are also available to support students during centre opening hours.

18. The implementation of the college ILT strategy has been well supported with equipment and professional development over the last three years. Electronic whiteboards are available and are used effectively in many classrooms; ILT champions have been promoting good practice in the use of ICT to support learning; and virtual learning environment software provides a repository for teacher-developed learning resources. These resources are accessible to students within the college and from home. Most curriculum areas are making some use of the intranet or virtual learning environment. Science and psychology teachers make particularly good use of ICT. Some teachers are beginning to use data from the intranet, such as the frequency of use of the resources by individual students as an indication of their level of private study and to use these in individual progress reviews.

19. In most curriculum areas, there are sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff. Where staff require a suitable teaching qualification, appropriate training is given. Other staff development activities support the professional development of staff to meet individual and curriculum team needs, although some teachers dealing with vocational provision lack sufficient recent industrial experience.

20. All full-time students are assessed, on entry, to identify their additional support needs. The college uses two assessment tools, one for students at foundation and intermediate level and one for those at advanced level. The college's value added information provides a good framework for planning and monitoring the progress of students studying at level 3, who are provided with a target minimum grade at the beginning of their course, based on their performance at GCSE. They sit a subject-teacher devised assessment of skills during their first half term, but these are not standardised or centrally monitored. A standardised diagnostic test is also taken at the beginning of their course, and this information is used to further refine students' target grade. The results of the latter test were not available until January of 2004, making it difficult for tutors to design and implement all the necessary support early in their course. Students 'at risk' of leaving their course are identified at an early stage and their progress is monitored by their personal tutor and the senior tutor.

21. The college has clear procedures for assessing and monitoring the progress of students. Homework is planned well, set regularly and marked thoroughly. On most courses, students are given clear indications as to how they can improve their work.

22. The college offers a wide range of courses that effectively meet the needs of school leavers. Introduction of Curriculum 2000 has been managed effectively, and students are encouraged to study a broad and challenging programme that includes courses leading to qualifications, enrichment activities and key skills. There are 44 courses offered at AS level and GCE A level. There is a wide range of provision at levels 1 and 2, including GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses and a range of GCSEs. Curriculum enrichment activities are available to any student in the

college. A range of activities in the performing arts, modern foreign languages and sports, in particular, are well attended by students. The Students' Union is active and, as well as organising social events and raising funds, it successfully represents students' interests to senior managers.

23. The college is committed to improving social and educational inclusion in the area. A key aspect of this is the work with adults in the community. Approximately 2,000 part-time adults study in the college or in community centres in the area. Most of the provision is for ICT courses, but there are also large numbers of adults studying foreign languages and basic skills. There is also provision for some local employers, for young parents and for Year 6 pupils from local primary schools who attend the college to follow short courses in subjects such as information technology (IT) and problem solving. There are plans to provide HE courses in partnership with Grimsby College to improve progression opportunities locally. The continuing competition for students across education providers in the area has inhibited the co-ordination and planning of new courses to ensure that the overall needs of students aged 16 to 18 in Grimsby are met.

24. There is a clear policy that explains the college's approach to the provision of key skills. Level 3 students are expected to take at least one key skill at level 3. Separate ICT courses are provided and communications is taught within the tutorial programme, using a common assignment based on students' applications for university or employment. Relatively few students choose application of number. Students at levels 1 and 2 are expected to study all three core key skills, either in separate courses or by following courses such as GCSE mathematics or English. Many students partially complete their portfolio of evidence, although in 2003, relatively few were entered for the formal qualification. The college is committed to key skills and has introduced changes this year to try to increase the numbers who fully achieve a key skills qualification. These include a revised programme for teaching ICT and an improved system to monitor students' progress. It is too early to assess the impact of these changes.

25. The college supports its students very well. The student services team is dynamic and is committed to supporting and developing individual students so that they make the most of their time at the college and can prepare effectively for their futures. Students feel very well cared for. The college provides a range of well-co-ordinated, easily accessible services, including welfare, financial, childcare and personal support, as well as learning support. Most of these services are available to part-time adult students for whom support systems are still evolving.

26. Through well-established links with a number of local schools, prospective students receive helpful pre-entry advice and guidance, but not all schools are willing to participate. A yearly programme of events, which includes open days, a Year 10 activity day and workshops for Year 11 pupils, enables applicants to make an informed choice. Each year, the college runs two taster days in July, to enable prospective students to sample college life and courses before making their final decisions. Staff in schools and Connexions advisers are kept up to date with the range of the college's provision on offer. Information is available in the college prospectuses and on its well-designed website. The recruitment process is clear and impartial. Senior staff interview all applicants from schools and places are offered on the basis of clear entry requirements. Some 98% of students aged 16 to 19 were accommodated on their requested courses in 2002 /03. The college's induction programme for full-time students helps them to settle in quickly. Part-time adult students also receive a short induction. There are college handbooks for all students, though these are not well used by them.

27. There is good support for students needing specialist support for disability or learning difficulties. The college has a specialist teacher who works with dyslexic students and is developing the use of assistive technology to support those students who have specific learning needs. Two classroom assistants support individuals or small groups of students, including adult students. Students receiving additional support achieve better grades than they might expect from their prior achievement. Links between support staff, teachers and personal tutors are effective and ensure that students' progress is monitored. Students particularly value the excellent additional subject support provided by teachers, often outside their timetabled hours.

28. Most teachers are also personal tutors, organised into three teams, each headed by a senior tutor. Tutor teams have briefing meetings each week to prepare them for tutorial lessons, and tutors

have relevant updating and training. The planned tutorial programmes include group sessions and individual interviews. The quality of tutorials for full-time students is generally good, though sometimes the lack of clear planning allows individual students to opt out of activities or dominate discussions inappropriately. Adult students on part-time programmes receive support informally through subject teachers.

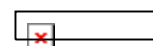
29. Personal tutors are responsible for monitoring the overall progress of full-time students. The progress of full-time students is reviewed weekly at tutor periods and on designated review days during the year. A full written review is undertaken once a year, with an interim written review during the first term, and students take these reviews very seriously. Consultation evenings occur three times a year and parents and guardians are encouraged to contact the college at other times if they have any concerns regarding a students' progress.

30. The monitoring procedures utilize the target minimum grade alongside a 'performance indicator' report that measures the student's commitment, punctuality and current performance. This provides personal tutors with a powerful and effective monitoring tool on which to base their individual discussions with students. The progress of level 1 and level 2 students is also monitored using the performance indicator report. Where a student's progress is of concern, an individual action plan is developed with the student and shared with the parents or guardians. Information on attendance is collected electronically and is quickly fed back to subject and personal tutors. Absence patterns are analysed and where there are concerns these are followed up by tutors and senior tutors. There is effective use of individual learning plans with adult students on IT courses that enables students in the same class to work at their own pace and at different levels.

31. The quality of information and guidance for students wanting to progress to HE is excellent. This is provided by tutors in partnership with the Connexions service. Job-seeking workshops are provided for those students wanting to find employment. A careers area holds up-to-date information and computers with appropriate software for students to use. A high proportion of between 70% and 80% of students progress to HE annually. Information about their destinations is used for planning, to give advice to later HE applicants and to inform schools about the successes of their former pupils.

32. The Student Information Desk provides an initial information point for full-time students, and a Continuing Education and Training Unit provides a similar service for adults. Personal support on finance and welfare issues is readily available and the college uses welfare funds sensitively and creatively to help students in need. The college maintains effective links with external specialist agencies to assist students. The college's 44-place nursery is open from 07:30 until 21:00 daily to provide childcare cover for all daytime and evening provision.

## Leadership and management



33. Leadership and management are good. Overall the students' achievements are good or very good. The college demonstrates a strong commitment to raising the expectations and aspirations of students through giving them an education of high quality that promotes ambition and enables progression. Retention rates on most courses are high; however, they are unsatisfactory on a minority of courses. Where low retention rates occur, it is often through students dropping individual subjects rather than leaving the college. The college's good achievement is impressive given the background of very low GCSE performance amongst 16 year olds in North East Lincolnshire. The college accepts many students on to level 3 programmes with a low GCSE scores and of these a significant number progress to HE.

34. Senior managers and governors have set clear aims and values which are well supported by staff and reflect the needs of the local community. Senior managers have an open and consultative style. This team meets regularly and is successful in identifying, discussing and addressing issues

facing the college. Lines of responsibility are clear. However, while strategic direction is clear, the planning procedures addressing those objectives are sometimes imprecise. Action planning is generally of a high quality, with an effective monitoring procedure.

35. Governance is good. Governors are well informed about the college's performance. They are drawn from a variety of backgrounds and are committed to the local community. Governors are appropriately involved in strategic planning and provide good direction to the senior college managers. Each governor has a formal link with a curriculum or cross-college area. They attend events in each of these areas and report back to colleagues, providing them with a valuable insight into how the college's strategic priorities are being addressed. Their training needs are carefully considered and a variety of avenues are explored to ensure that governors are kept up to date. Governors have a yearly training session with senior and middle managers to inform on strategic priorities.

36. Communications in the college are effective. Time is given to curriculum, tutorial or management meetings each week. There are regular formal meetings which focus on the students' progress and teaching and learning strategies. The college recognises the importance of consulting staff at all levels in helping to maintain a sense of common purpose and commitment.

37. The management of the majority of curriculum areas is good. Curriculum directors and co-ordinators provide effective and energetic leadership. Course teams meet regularly. In many curriculum areas, there is productive sharing and standardisation of course materials, assessment, assignments and monitoring of targets and action plans. The continuing education provision is managed with ambition, energy and sensitivity and focuses on local needs. Guidance and welfare services are very well managed, with a clear emphasis on the needs of students. There is excellent additional subject support for students. The views of students and parents or guardians are systematically collected and are used to inform the review process.

38. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. There is a well-designed manual for equal opportunities training focusing on equality and diversity, disability, gender and race. The college meets its statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and SENDA. However, equal opportunities are less well promoted at course and classroom level.

39. Quality assurance is thorough and is largely effective. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly and accurately identified through self-assessment. There is a well-planned and well-co-ordinated self-assessment process. Well-presented and well-planned materials have been produced to enable management and staff to play a full part in the self-assessment process through high-quality training. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college in its self-assessment reports. However, in a minority of areas, there is a lack of rigour in the implementation and evaluation of action plans. For example, retention rates decreased in 2003 but this issue has not been addressed adequately in all curriculum areas.

40. The college has made a significant investment in staff development, with clear priorities to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A well-trained team of internal observers conduct lesson observations and produce critical and assessments. However, lesson observation in a minority of areas lacks sufficient rigour and issues identified are not always dealt with. Lesson observation grades contribute to appraisal, which is viewed as a positive process by the staff.

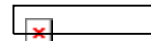
41. The management information system provides a comprehensive and accurate range of information which helps staff record and monitor students' progress. Curriculum and course managers conduct detailed and rigorous analysis of key data such as pass rates, retention rates, progress against minimum target grades and students' GCE grades compared with predicted grades to evaluate areas of strength and weakness. The management information system staff produce accurate and regular reports for managers and governors. Staff in the majority of curriculum areas make the best use of the data available. However, this home-grown information system uses an old operating system, is not easy to use and is limited in its capacity to provide for the expanding data needs of the college.

42. The college has good links with a number of secondary schools, which have been enhanced by the appointment of a director of schools' liaison in 2002. This appointment has given a clear direction to the college's involvement in pre-16 education. A wide range of activities has been organised including twilight GCSE sessions and a mentoring programme for 11-16 schools. Not all curriculum areas, however, have had the opportunity for involvement in these programmes. The college plays a strong role in the North East Lincolnshire Learning Partnership 14 to 19 group. The Franklin Academy organises classes for primary school students and the Franklin Academy of Sports and Training (FAST) provides a highly valued sports mentoring system for 11-16 schools using college students.

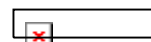
43. The college is an active member of the North East Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and other local strategic groups. However, competition limits co-operation at a post-16 level and this has consequences for the quality, breadth and effectiveness of the provision within the area. The continuing education staff at the college have established partnerships with employers and local community groups to develop dedicated and innovative programmes. Particularly good use is made of four community development workers to develop effective links with community groups.

44. The financial management of the college is satisfactory. The college has moved recently from category A to B status. Enrolment projections for 2002 and 2003 fell short of projections based on an exceptional increase in 2001. Measures to address this are presently under consideration by the senior managers and governors. Addressing the strategic and operational implications of this enrolment issue has been protracted. College management accounts are produced in good time and are widely distributed to both managers and all governors. There is also very good property management. The college gives good value for money with resources and staff deployed effectively.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Science



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

Contributory grade for chemistry is **outstanding (grade 1)**

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on many courses
  
- good level 3 examination results, particularly for chemistry and sports-related subjects
  
- good use of ILT to guide students in the sciences



- good teaching, particularly in chemistry and sports lessons
- broad and diverse range of enrichment activities for sports students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates for GCSE science and AS-level human biology
- low pass rates on GCSE science, AS-level and GCE A-level human biology and GCE A-level biology courses
- failure of some courses to meet the needs of students.

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

45. There is a wide range of provision at level 3 consisting of AS-level and GCE A-level courses in biology, human biology, chemistry, physics, and sport and physical education, and AS-level electronics. There is also an advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) leisure and recreation course. GCSE science and biology are offered for students who have previous low grades. GCSE human physiology and health was introduced in September 2003 for both full-time students and for adult part-time students in the evening. There are approximately 350 students studying science subjects and 160 on sport related courses.

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

46. Pass rates are high on most courses and are well above the national averages on chemistry and sports related courses. Students on these courses also achieve significantly better than predicted by their GCSE scores. Pass rates for GCSE biology improved in 2003 to 31% above national averages. There has been a decline in the pass rates for AS-level biology and physics to below national averages in 2003. GCE A-level physics results are generally good, but GCE A-level biology results have been poor for two years and AS-level and GCE A-level human biology results have been poor for the last three years. Similarly, pass rates for GCSE science declined to 20% below national averages in 2003. Retention rates are high across the science and sports curriculum areas, but have declined slightly in 2003 for all AS-level subjects. Retention rates are low for GCSE science and AS-level human biology.

47. The standard of students' work in lessons is good. Their written work contains well-presented answers showing clear understanding of the topics being studied. Students in practical lessons demonstrate good analytical skills and higher levels of reasoning and evaluation than are frequently found at the stage reached in their courses. GCE A-level students develop good evaluative and analytical skills. These skills are weak in some human biology and GCSE science students. Health and safety are effectively promoted and implemented.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in sciences, 2000 to 2003***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE Biology	2	No. of starts	19	19	20
		% retention	79	89	85
		% pass rate	33	29	71
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	68	93	75
		% retention	88	88	88
		% pass rate	88	83	74
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	52	87	75
		% retention	88	90	84
		% pass rate	89	100	95
AS-level sport and physical education	3	No. of starts	65	95	86
		% retention	89	87	84
		% pass rate	93	89	96
GCE A2 chemistry	3	No. of starts	*	31	60
		% retention	*	97	95
		% pass rate	*	100	100
GCE A2 physics	3	No. of starts	*	25	34
		% retention	*	88	97
		% pass rate	*	95	97
GCE A2 sport and physical education	3	No. of starts	*	40	61
		% retention	*	98	98
		% pass rate	*	97	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

### Quality of education and training

48. Teaching is good overall and is very good in chemistry and sports lessons. Overall, the majority of lessons are good or better and all chemistry and sport lessons are good or better. Lesson plans are effective and detailed and, combined with well-developed schemes of work, provide clear guidance on how the subjects develop over the academic year. The best lessons are well structured and teachers use a range of activities, materials and equipment to promote students' learning. Students in a sports lesson explored the structure and function of blood vessels using tubes of different diameter and strength. They demonstrated a good understanding of the topic and through a series of physical exercises were able to apply the concepts within a sports context. Teachers used extended questions or other techniques well to promote discussion and develop analytical skills and to promote students' understanding of the concepts being covered. In a GCSE biology lesson, students used concept maps with key words of plant structure and function to reinforce their own learning and challenge each other's understanding and knowledge by drawing links between the words and diagrams. Enthusiastic and stimulating teaching coupled with excellent subject knowledge produces lessons which motivates and encourages students to learn. Chemistry students were stimulated by an enthusiastic interactive exploration of chromium chemistry which resulted in a clear understanding of abstract concepts. In addition to excellent teacher support, chemistry students make extensive use of the very well-developed intranet containing demanding learning materials that help them to learn. More able students are encouraged to complete questions from the chemistry special papers available on the intranet. In some poor lessons, teachers do not fully

involve students in the learning and often fail to address the different learning needs of the students.

49. The curriculum is well resourced. There are appropriately equipped specialist laboratories and sports rooms, good levels of specialist equipment and well-qualified staff. All teachers have subject-specific degrees or higher qualifications and all have a teaching qualification. There is good technician support for science and sports programmes. All laboratories and two sports classrooms have interactive whiteboards. The sciences have a well-developed and active intranet site containing learning materials. This also acts as an independent learning resource of past papers and marking schemes and highlights interactive web-based software on a variety of topics for use by staff and students. There are numerous high-quality paper-based learning materials to help learning.

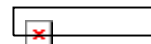
50. Assessment and monitoring are rigorous, well documented, and are used effectively to monitor progress on all level 3 courses. All level 3 courses use initial assessment early in the course to identify students' learning needs. Past GCSE grades are used to predict and set target grades for achievement and to monitor progress. Student record sheets are used to record track marks and grades from each unit and are used effectively in monitoring students' progress. GCSE science does not have such a rigorous, well-developed assessment system. All teachers regularly set and mark assignments. Marked work is returned promptly with written comments on how to improve and make progress.

51. Students placed great value on the quality of the support and guidance that they receive at every stage of their college career. There is a well-organised and informative induction programme that covers the requirements and expectations of each course. Those students requiring additional subject support are encouraged to attend support sessions and their progress is closely monitored. At the start of their courses, all sport studies students complete a training principles programme to help them with their coursework and to improve their study skills and time management.

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

52. Curriculum and course leadership are very good. Managers conduct detailed, rigorous analysis of key data such as pass rates, retention rates and students' progress against their predicted grades. This information is used to evaluate the quality of the provision offered and to identify areas of strength and weakness. However, the analysis does not identify that the provision offered does not suit the academic backgrounds of all the students enrolled, particularly some students studying GCSE science and AS level human biology. All staff are involved in this self-assessment process. Action plans set challenging targets for improvement. There is appropriate emphasis on the development of good teaching and the sharing of good practice. Course teams meet regularly to discuss course development, the production of learning materials and standardisation of coursework. New teachers are observed by course managers and these teachers are able to observe experienced staff to aid the sharing of good teaching practice.

## **Mathematics**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good teaching using a range of methods
  
- excellent use of ILT and other resources to aid learning

- high pass rates on AS-level mathematics
- rigorous marking of students' work with supportive comments
- wide-ranging support for students.

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient challenge for more able students
- low pass rates on one-year GCSE courses.

### **Scope of provision**

53. The college offers a broad range of courses to meet the needs of students of differing abilities. The provision includes AS-level and GCE A-level mathematics, with choices of modules in pure mathematics, statistics, mechanics and discrete mathematics. In addition, a small number of students each year study AS-level or GCE A-level further mathematics. The college also offers GCSE mathematics courses at foundation and intermediate level, including a popular short course for those who already have grade D in GCSE mathematics. A course leading to the certificate in adult numeracy is also available to those wishing to improve basic mathematical skills. There are approximately 260 enrolments at level 3 and a further 350 enrolments on level 2 programmes and below.

### **Achievement and standards**

54. Students achieve well at AS-level. Pass and retention rates are above the national average and the grades students achieve are consistently higher than their GCSE grades predicted. Pass rates at GCE A level are also good. The overall pass rates are at the national average, with students achieving the grades predicted. On the GCSE mathematics one-year course, retention rates dipped considerably in 2003 to well below the national average, and pass rates at grades A\* to C are low, although many students improve their grade. Students work hard in lessons, have a mature approach to their studies and produce work which is carefully thought through and neatly presented. Algebraic skills are largely appropriate to students' level of study. Students have the skills to discuss and communicate mathematical ideas and most contribute effectively to group work. Students are almost always attentive in class and attendance levels are high.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics (1 year)	2	No. of starts	134	126	139
		% retention	80	86	66

		% pass rate	41	38	40
GCSE mathematics (short)	2	No. of starts	42	124	110
		% retention	93	95	89
		% pass rate	59	58	59
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	143	202	168
		% retention	81	80	85
		% pass rate	70	80	79
GCE A2 mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	45	83
		% retention	*	93	99
		% pass rate	*	98	96

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

\* course did not run

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

55. Overall teaching is good. Most teaching is good or better and no lessons are unsatisfactory. Teaching is carefully planned and builds on previous work. The aims and objectives of lessons are almost always shared with students, who participate well. Students are encouraged to think about, discuss and share mathematical ideas. Group activities in lessons result in effective peer support and reinforce learning. Mathematical concepts are built up carefully and incrementally to facilitate learning, and students' understanding is checked at every opportunity. The use of laminated cards on which all students in a class can write and display their answers simultaneously allows this process to be carried out both efficiently and effectively. Students experiencing difficulty are easily identified and this enables teachers to help them individually while monitoring the progress of the class as a whole. As a consequence of the assessment methods used, lessons are conducted at a brisk and productive pace. Students are very much involved in the whole learning process and contribute much to their own learning. Interactive whiteboards are imaginatively used to illustrate concepts. In one very good GCSE lesson on mathematical transformations, both teachers and students used the whiteboard to demonstrate visually the effects of translation, reflection and rotation. Teachers are adept at employing everyday examples to illustrate mathematical ideas. For example, the problems of skiing were used effectively to clarify the significance of the gradients of tangents to a curve. However, in some lessons, the most able students are not given extension activities that are more challenging than previous activities. Teachers show great sensitivity in their dealings with students experiencing difficulties, and through careful choice of language in explanations are able to maintain students' motivation.

56. Teachers are well qualified and experienced, and effectively support students from a wide range of ages and backgrounds. Continuous professional development includes updating IT skills and exploring how technology can be used to improve their teaching methods and the support they can give to extend students' learning. The college intranet is easily accessed by students and contains a range of useful learning material which students can use during private study at college and at home. The mathematics accommodation is all in one area of the college and this has enabled teachers to create a strong subject identity with interesting displays and posters that identify the key role of the subject in a range of contexts. There are well-organised displays of students' work that provide high-quality examples of what can be achieved.

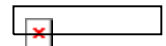
57. Students' work is marked conscientiously and rigorously to appropriate standards and returned promptly. There is effective and supportive feedback to students that clearly identifies errors, informs them how the marks are allocated and helps them to improve their performance. Students also appreciate the wide range of subject support that is provided. Students can drop in to timetabled support lessons or may be referred by their teacher. In addition, teachers make themselves available to provide extra assistance to students at other times. Mathematics learning materials are available

on the intranet and provide further subject support that is regularly used by most students. Extra revision classes are timetabled at examination time. The use made of the additional support is monitored carefully to measure its impact.

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

58. The curriculum area is well managed, with good organisation and strong teamwork. Teachers are enthusiastic and are committed to raising standards. Meetings are held regularly and result in action points to address the outcomes. However, there has been slow progress in formally identifying the actions to take in addressing the issue of low retention rates for GCSE mathematics. The actions now taken appear to be having an impact, with indications that there is improvement compared to the same period in the previous year. There is regular sharing of good practice and resources between teachers. Lesson observations within the mathematics team contribute to the sharing of practice. The broad range of courses offered in mathematics promotes equality of opportunity across the whole ability and age range and there is considerable uptake from all sectors of the community.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on many courses in 2003
- good teaching on part-time courses for adults
- effective use of well-developed electronic resources for learning
- wide range of adult provision responsive to community needs
- comprehensive support for students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on some full-time courses
- inadequate planning and co-ordination of some courses.

### **Scope of provision**

59. There is a wide range of provision from entry level to level 3 for full-time and part-time students. Full-time students take GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate level. The level 3 provision covers AVCE ICT and AS-level and GCE A-level courses in computing and ICT. All these courses are provided on the main campus. Part-time students can also take courses at the main campus or ten community venues. There are accredited courses such as computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), European computer driving licence (ECDL), and integrated business technology (IBT) as well as leisure courses such as 'surf the net' and 'computing for the terrified'. There are 228 full-time and 851 part-time students studying ICT at the college.

### **Achievement and standards**

60. There are high pass rates on many courses in 2003. All students taking one-year ECDL or the 12-unit AVCE courses passed. Pass rates were also high on AS-level computing, AS-level ICT and GNVQ intermediate ICT. There is satisfactory progression to HE: 36% of AVCE and 43% of GCE A-level students who complete their course go on to university to study related courses. Many adult students broaden their knowledge of ICT in addition to progressing to higher level courses. Many students confidently use the software available and demonstrate a high standard of practical skills. Retention rates on most courses are satisfactory, but they are low on AS-level ICT, AS-level computing and GNVQ intermediate ICT courses. Over the three years to 2003, retention rates declined to well below the national average.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
CLAIT stage 1	1	No. of starts	257	139	114
		% retention	71	84	82
		% pass rate	93	89	91
ECDL (one year)	2	No. of starts	**	20	26
		% retention	**	85	88
		% pass rate	**	59	96
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	15	25	29
		% retention	93	80	69
		% pass rate	50	70	100
AS-level ICT	3	No. of starts	91	114	86
		% retention	84	81	64
		% pass rate	78	83	85
AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	**	20	26
		% retention	**	85	88
		% pass rate	**	59	96
GCE A-level ICT *	3	No. of starts	18	24	33
		% retention	83	100	97
		% pass rate	53	50	97
IBT	3	No. of starts	***	59	24

		% retention	***	83	71
		% pass rate	***	90	53

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* two-year GCE A-level course in 2001

\*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

\*\*\* course did not run

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

61. Teaching on courses for adults is particularly good. Adults benefit from a well-managed mix of small group, individual and whole-class teaching. All learning is individually planned and students' progress is closely monitored. Students gain self-confidence from the very enthusiastic and patient teachers. In one outstanding business lesson, a teacher's energy and efficiency generated a professional commercial ethos amongst the students. She drew attention to high achievements, addressed students' individual learning needs by discussing progress against individual learning plans, and then covered a key skills topic on apostrophes with the whole group.

62. Most lessons for full-time students are satisfactory or good, with effective and constructive individual support for practical tasks in most lessons. Teachers use a wide variety of learning activities including group work and presentations. In one good lesson, the tutor developed students' skills by asking them to evaluate a presentation she had devised to train others. In another outstanding lesson, highly motivated students developed websites for external customers to a professional standard. The interactive whiteboards in most classrooms are used well by teachers to support demonstrations, retrieve examples from the Internet and make presentations.

63. However, some satisfactory lessons are not well planned. Lesson plans lack detail, timings are unclear and activities go on for too long. There is little attention to individual learning needs and insufficient checks on learning.

64. High-quality electronic learning resources are used effectively by teachers and students to aid learning. A full range of learning materials including exercises, case studies, sample answers, schedules of work and notes is available to students and staff in lessons and at home. Computers are of an appropriate standard and are accessible outside of lessons. There are workstations designed to accommodate wheelchairs. However, a few rooms are small and this restricts the range of learning activities that can take place. Some resources are insufficient for the demands placed upon them. The new computer maintenance room is a popular and useful facility, but it is too small. Noise transfer between adjacent computer bays and the open-plan areas can some times be distracting. There is only a small range of printed materials in the library.

65. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assignments are explained well to show how students can aim for high grades. Students appreciate the clear and constructive feedback they receive on marked work. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements. Targets are set for students and progress is regularly reviewed. Satisfactory key skills assessment takes place during tutorial activities. However, opportunities for gathering key skills evidence are missed because they are not identified on assignment briefs.

66. There is a wide range of adult provision responsive to community needs. Taught courses at all levels from entry to level 3 provide a good choice of formal or leisure learning. Sessions are scheduled flexibly to suit adults with responsibilities. The college is responsive to requests for new provision. One digital camera course runs twice in one evening to satisfy demand and some other subjects are taught on Saturdays. Taster courses and intensive short courses run during the summer. Courses are run for local companies in their workplaces. The range of courses for full-time students is satisfactory. All students are also encouraged to take part in enrichment activities such as work experience for GNVQ students and visits to local employers to review the uses of IT in commerce.

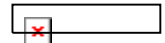


67. There is comprehensive support for students. Individual students are encouraged to attend additional support lessons and teachers make themselves available to help outside scheduled lessons. Optional drop-in lessons for all students are available for revision or to catch up. Good additional learning support is given in class for those with particular needs. Poor attendance or achievement is rigorously followed up in tutorials.

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

68. Leadership is satisfactory. Teachers are strongly encouraged and supported in their continual professional development. New teachers are effectively mentored. Communication is good and there is a lesson observation system to monitor performance in the classroom. Regular departmental meetings sometimes include time for training. Part-time tutors meet on Saturdays. There are close links with local strategic learning partnerships to co-ordinate adult provision in the area. However, schemes of work and lessons plans vary in usefulness and this has been identified by the college; this issue has not been effectively addressed. There is no standard process or information to assist teachers to identify alternative approaches to teaching that would allow them to address different learning styles or provide challenging additional activities for the more able students. Tutors are experienced and well qualified, but some have insufficient depth of knowledge about current industrial practice. Some new courses were introduced without sufficient time for staff to gain the expertise to run them. Self-assessment reports prepared by each section have been combined into a brief but useful document.

### **Health and social care**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- effective use of ILT to aid learning
  
- excellent pass rates
  
- high standard of students' work
  
- good monitoring of students' progress and feedback to students
  
- very good subject support for students
  
- productive teamworking.

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient active participation in learning by students in some lessons
- unsatisfactory attendance on GNVQ courses.

### **Scope of provision**

69. The college offers four health and social care courses. These are GNVQ at foundation and intermediate levels, a one-year AVCE course and a two-year AVCE course. This year, 24 students enrolled on GNVQ courses, 8 at foundation level, and 54 students enrolled on the AVCE courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

70. Pass rates are very high. They reached 100% on all courses in 2002 and 2000. Students progress well. For example, this year, six students progressed from foundation to intermediate level and ten students progressed from intermediate to advanced level. However, this is progression within a narrow pathway of provision. Approximately 85% of successful students progress to HE. The standard of students' work is high. Most students achieve higher grades than those predicted on the basis of their qualifications on entry. The proportion of higher grades achieved has exceeded the national average on all courses over the last three years. Students make good use of a range of sources of information in completing their coursework. Students at all levels have good IT skills and use both the college intranet and the Internet for research.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GNVQ Intermediate	2	No. of starts	15	18	22
		% retention	80	83	73
		% pass rate	92	100	100
AVCE (one year)	3	No. of starts	*	25	38
		% retention	*	92	87
		% pass rate	*	100	100

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

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

71. Teaching and learning are good or better in most lessons. Students are focused and hard working. Teachers make good use of a range of appropriate methods to involve the students in learning activities and to check their progress. There is a mix of whole class, small group and individual learning activities that cater for the learning needs of individual students and enable each to be supported appropriately. In many lessons, both teachers and students make effective use of IT. Direct access to the college intranet through the interactive whiteboard enhances the students' learning experience. In one lesson, a teacher gave students easy access to a range of information

about a disability that they were then able to use in a group task and revisit when necessary. In another, a powerpoint presentation provided the basis for an interesting class discussion through which the students learned about the purchasing and supply procedures in the National Health Service and their implications. An extract from a television programme was used with and without the sound to illustrate attitudes to disabilities. Lessons were generally well planned. Teachers link topics to relevant assignments and coursework. In a minority of lessons, there is an over-emphasis on information giving. Students spend much of the lesson copying from the whiteboard or overhead transparencies. They do not engage in activities to help them to reflect on and consolidate the information they have received. Though there is a wide range of attainment, there are few activities that enable the promotion and checking of individual students' progress. Attendance is poor in GNVQ foundation lessons.

72. Learning resources and accommodation are good. There are well-equipped base rooms, one with an interactive whiteboard, and a computer room with sufficient computers for the size of classes. Classrooms have displays of the work of current students that are of very high quality. The department has developed an extensive range of learning materials on the college intranet. It is well used and valued by students, most of whom can access it from home. It contains reference texts, core notes for all units, video programmes, powerpoint presentations, assignment guidance, tests and model answers, and access to relevant Internet websites. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Most have assessor as well as teaching qualifications. Recent recruits to the department have up-to-date vocational experience. Most full-time teachers have not had recent vocational updating, though all have attended appropriate awarding body and college staff development events.

73. Assessment is rigorous and systematic. Work is set, marked and returned promptly. Students receive effective oral and written feedback that gives them clear pointers to improvement. Arrangements for the setting and marking of assignments and coursework are clearly communicated to students at the start of the year. Teachers work closely together to prevent bunching of deadline dates. Students state that this gives them time to do their best work. Teachers monitor students' progress carefully and give extra support to those who need it.

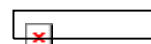
74. The range of specialist courses is narrow, but some students take other courses such as GCSEs in English and science in order to broaden their choice of study at a later date. Advanced level students take AS-level general studies as part of the tutorial programme. In the current year, 34 students are following additional subjects at GCSE or AS level.

75. Students are well supported. The subject support they receive is of a very high standard. There are weekly timetabled subject support workshops for students at each level and in-class support for students in GNVQ lessons. Students whose coursework is falling below the standard of their minimum target grade are referred to the workshops for specific support. Students who wish to further improve can drop in and request appropriate support. Students' individual learning plans show that the support they receive improves their achievement.

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

76. Curriculum leadership and management are good. There is productive teamworking both among staff as a whole and among those who teach specific units. Teachers work in unit teams and jointly develop and update schemes of work and relevant resources. All staff attend the regular, minuted team meetings. The main focus of these meetings is students' progress and achievement. All staff are involved in self-assessment. Too little emphasis given in self-assessment to retention rates on GNVQ courses.

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



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on several courses
  
- good teaching
  
- wide range of provision
  
- excellent enrichment programme that enhances learning.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates in 2003
  
- lack of access to some resources for students at peak times.

### **Scope of provision**

77. The provision covers an extensive range of level 3 visual and performing arts and media courses. There are AS-level and GCE A-level courses in fine art, graphics, photography, textiles, dance, theatre studies, performance studies, music (classical and popular music for students who cannot read music), music technology, media and film studies. There are GCSE day and evening courses in art, photography, music and media. Life drawing is also offered as an evening class. In addition to the academic offer, there is an admirable enrichment programme, particularly for the performing arts. In 2003, there were 990 enrolments of students aged 16 to 19.

### **Achievement and standards**

78. Pass rates in most subjects are above the national average, with many courses having 100% pass rates at some time during the past three years. On AS-level and GCE A-level performance studies and GCE A-level drama and theatre studies courses, pass rates have been 100% for the last three years. GCE A-level photography students and GCE A-level graphics students consistently achieve well above the national averages for high grades and the photography students achieve higher grades than predicted by their previous GCSE achievements. However, AS-level textiles pass rates have been below national averages. Retention rates fluctuate, but most courses were below national averages in 2003. During the week of inspection, attendance was 83%. Staff and students enjoy good relationships but some teachers are reluctant to challenge students when they are late for lessons. The standard of practical work is high on most courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level drama	3	No. of starts	43	23	33
		% retention	95	100	79
		% pass rate	100	96	96
AS-level performance studies	3	No. of starts	15	29	26
		% retention	80	90	81
		% pass rate	100	100	100
AS-level music theory	3	No. of starts	23	35	33
		% retention	91	92	82
		% pass rate	100	100	96
AS-level level media	3	No. of starts	92	112	91
		% retention	85	86	83
		% pass rate	99	92	94
AS-level graphics	3	No. of starts	19	18	21
		% retention	84	100	86
		% pass rate	100	89	100
GCE A-level photography	3	No. of starts	33	25	17
		% retention	97	80	100
		% pass rate	81	100	94
GCE A-level art	3	No. of starts	25	30	36
		% retention	100	90	92
		% pass rate	96	100	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

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

79. Teaching is mainly good and is rarely less than satisfactory. In music technology, very good use is made of interactive whiteboards and students are required to demonstrate their understanding using specialist equipment. Lesson plans and schemes of work accurately reflect the demands of the syllabus and students are kept informed of progress. Where class sizes allow, teachers use group tutorials as good preparation for HE. Students display good study techniques and are expected to be responsible for their own learning and to fully participate in collaborative initiatives, particularly in performing arts. Drama students were able to practically investigate the influence of John Arden on the local playwright John Godber. The extra time given by staff outside of lessons is appreciated by students. In media classes, students demonstrate sophisticated and perceptive understanding of how new interactive technology paradoxically encourages passivity.

80. Resources are mainly good. Performing arts benefits from having both dance and drama studios, though the former is requisitioned for examinations twice a year. The visual arts have adapted existing accommodation satisfactorily, though the number of students wishing to do fine arts is too large for the space available. Photography is located in a temporary building; however, most essential equipment is available and the subject is resourced well, with reference publications including the work of Robert Mapplethorpe. Music technology has good ICT facilities, but they are insufficient for the number of students needing to use them at specific times in the academic year. Staff are well qualified, with several recently gaining appropriate teaching qualifications, and the subject teams and students benefit from the current practitioners who are part-time teachers.

81. Students' written work is marked thoroughly and returned quickly by staff. Assessment is rigorous and is used to monitor students' progress by identifying strengths and weaknesses. Awarding bodies comment favourably on the integrity of internal assessment and moderation. Though subject teams work closely and cross-mark work where appropriate, there are no formal internal verification procedures. There is close monitoring of students' progress but the identification of additional learning needs is unstructured and it is often left to individual staff to determine what support students need.

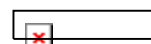
82. There is a commendably wide range of provision, particularly at level 3. All aspects of the performing arts are offered as are two-dimensional and three-dimensional visual arts. There is a more restricted offer at level 2. The enrichment programme is excellent. There are regular visits to exhibitions, theatres, concerts and opera at Covent Garden. Students have opportunities to participate in regular choral activities and musical theatre and dramatic productions. The choice of performance is highly demanding and rewarding, and recent works have included Faure's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Gloria*, the bawdy ancient Greek comedy *Lysistratra* and challenging modern works like *Our Country's Good* and *Cabaret*.

83. Pre-enrolment information and guidance are accurate and impartial. Students feel that the provision reflects the impression they were given prior to enrolment. They appreciate the support they receive from tutors on both course-related and personal issues. Parents and guardians are kept informed about students' progress. The tutorial system is highly structured and incorporates academic and pastoral needs. The teaching of key skills is also part of the tutorial provision, although students are often indifferent to the requirements.

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

84. Leadership and management are good. Rather than there being one overall manager for the provision, there are three members of staff each responsible for a cluster of courses. Though course teams work closely together, there is little opportunity to share good practice across the curriculum area. Professional development is well supported and teachers are encouraged to update their training by attending appropriate courses and by becoming subject examiners with awarding bodies. Where staff do not have teaching qualifications, they are supported financially to gain them. Teaching staff are not all clear about the self-assessment process or about college policies and strategies for retention rates.

### **Social sciences**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high achievement at advanced level
  
- effective use of a variety of learning styles
  
- very good use by students of new technologies to develop independent learning

- effective assessment practices
  
- good leadership and management

**Weaknesses**

- low retention rates on advanced level sociology courses
  
- little use of ICT to enrich students' learning
  
- inadequate lesson planning.

**Scope of provision**

85. The area offers sociology and psychology at AS level and GCE A level. Approximately 350 students are enrolled on courses in the area, of whom 66% are following advanced courses. Some 87% of enrolments at AS level and 93% at GCE A level are on psychology. There is an evening class for adults in AS-level psychology. GCSE child care has been introduced this year.

**Achievement and standards**

86. Pass rates have been above national averages in each of the last three years for AS-level psychology and in two out of the last three years for AS-level sociology. For GCE A-level sociology and psychology, pass rates were both 100% in 2003. Retention rates are low for advanced level sociology. In 2003, retention rates were significantly below national averages at both AS level and GCE A level. Most students achieve at a higher level than that predicted by their GCSE results when they started the college. Students' attainment in lessons is generally good. They are encouraged to see the two subjects as part of their lives as well as qualifications to be achieved and many of them are able to fluently apply the subjects to current social issues. Many students go on to study these subjects at university.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in social sciences, 2000 to 2003**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	162	193	195
		% retention	84	82	87
		% pass rate	93	87	87
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	39	41	43
		% retention	72	71	74
		% pass rate	86	76	88

GCE A2 psychology	3	No. of starts	*	86	96
		% retention	*	94	86
		% pass rate	*	94	100
GCE A2 sociology	3	No. of starts	*	16	**
		% retention	*	100	**
		% pass rate	*	94	**

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* two-year GCE A-level course in 2001

\*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

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

87. Overall teaching and learning are good. Teachers identify students' individual learning styles at the start of their course and use them in their teaching to promote students' learning. Individual students' learning styles are taken into account in lessons, in assessed work and in the virtual learning environment. Teachers have a strong commitment to meeting individuals' needs, and teaching styles are matched to students' differing learning styles.

88. The curriculum is well planned and schemes of work are good. However, lesson plans are insufficiently detailed. They lack clear objectives and timings and they do not prioritise activities. In a number of lessons, teachers do not have enough time to summarise learning and check that objectives have been met.

89. Students' learning is focused on the requirements of the examination and also on the context of the subject as a whole. Teachers are keen to use subjects other than their own to develop students' understanding of concepts. Students help in the teaching. For example, in a sociology lesson, a student who was also studying psychology explained clearly and effectively to the other students the ethical problems with Milgram's experiment into aggression. Students are actively engaged in most lessons. They start promptly and purposefully. Good behaviour and mutual respect are features of the learning.

90. The learning materials used are of high quality and are evaluated by focus groups of students to check their effectiveness. The assessment of students' learning in lessons is good. In a psychology class, the teacher asked individual students differentiated questions so subtly that the students were unaware of the differences.

91. There is a high-quality virtual learning environment that is well used by students, particularly in psychology. Students use it at college and can gain access from home. Its use is monitored by teachers and students not using it are interviewed to ascertain the reason. The materials are appropriate for students with differing abilities and interests. The use of ICT to enhance students' learning is poor. The electronic whiteboards that are available are rarely used in lessons and opportunities to use the resources in the virtual learning environment and on the Internet are missed. Equal opportunities are integrated into most lessons. For example, a lesson on Yerke used his IQ tests as a mechanism to raise the issue of ethnocentrism and relate it to contemporary society.

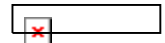
92. Assessment of students' work is thoughtful and incorporates concepts from the subjects studied to enhance its effectiveness. Students are also encouraged to relate anxiety, examination stress and motivational factors to their own performance. The process makes effective use of student self-assessment, assessment of each other and on-line assessment together with thoroughly marked written assignments. Homework is marked and returned promptly. Students are guided and supported effectively. Students' preferred learning styles are assessed at the start of their courses and additional support is provided appropriately. There is a formal process that allows students to have additional subject support, which is well used.



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

93. Leadership and management are very good. The curriculum area is led with enthusiasm and there is a strong team ethos. There are high standards of record keeping. The documents used for monitoring students' progress are used effectively as an appraisal system for staff, in addition to the college system, and are useful in identifying staff development needs. Equal opportunities are monitored, although there is no formal strategy to attempt to address the gender imbalance that exists on some courses. The self-assessment report is thorough and identifies the main features of the curriculum area.

### **History, government and politics and law**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high and continuously improving pass rates on GCE A-level courses
- outstanding provision in government and politics
- enthusiastic and effective teaching
- good development of students' critical analysis skills
- regular assessment of students' progress leading to effective learning support
- high proportion of students progressing to subject-related courses in HE
- good curriculum management.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor questioning techniques of some teachers

- o insufficient variety of resources used in lessons.

### **Scope of provision**

94. The college provides AS-level and GCE A-level courses in history, law and government and politics. Critical thinking is also offered at AS level. Evening classes for part-time adult students are available in GCSE and AS-level archaeology. Approximately 440 students are enrolled on these courses. Some 95% of students are full time, aged 16 to 18.

### **Achievement and standards**

95. Most students successfully complete their courses. There are high and continuously improving pass rates at GCE A level. In 2003, of the 179 students completing their course in history, law and government and politics, 175 achieved a pass grade. An average of 62% of law and politics students obtained a high grade. AS level pass rates have been high over the past three years. On AS-level law courses, these have been well above the national average and there has been an improvement in the percentage of those obtaining a high grade. In the same period, history pass rates have steadily fallen to below the national average. Students' pass rates for government and politics are outstanding at AS level and GCE A level, with 100% pass rates in each of the last three years. A larger proportion of these students achieve higher grades than were predicted from their GCSE achievements. Retention rates for 2003 are close to national averages except for AS-level law, where the retention rates have fallen to below the national average. Problems have been identified and are being addressed. There is good progression to further study or employment. For example, in 2003, approximately 50% of law students went on to subject-related courses in HE.

96. Overall, students' work is good and often of high quality. Students acquire a sound understanding of subject content and use new knowledge intelligently. Higher-order skills such as critical analysis and evaluation are well developed. This is particularly evident in history and government and politics. For example, government and politics students demonstrated exceptional skills in analysing sources of power to determine who governs in modern democracies. In a history lesson, complex issues of Irish home rule were critically appraised with skill. Essay writing skills are good. Law students are challenged to examine and comment on complex legal decisions. All students are encouraged to use IT skills in investigative research outside of lessons. Insufficient time is given to improving standards of oral competence.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in history, government and politics and law, 2001 to 2003**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
AS-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	15	30	16
		% retention	93	93	88
		% pass rate	100	100	100
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	79	97	97
		% retention	95	96	90
		% pass rate	97	89	85
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	127	137	140
		% retention	86	89	81
		% pass rate	94	90	89
GCE A2 history *	3	No. of starts	52	58	73

		% retention	87	95	95
		% pass rate	82	96	99
GCE A2 law *	3	No. of starts	46	75	98
		% retention	93	95	92
		% pass rate	93	93	97

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* two-year GCE A-level course in 2001

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

97. Overall the quality of teaching is good, with a high proportion of lessons that are good or better. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and lessons are well prepared. There are clear objectives and topics are covered thoroughly. Group work is frequently used to enable students to share ideas and support each other. In politics lessons, students are enthusiastic, interested and participate well. Students value their teachers' interesting approach to teaching the subject, which they thoroughly enjoy. In archaeology lessons, the teaching is precise and charismatic. In an exceptional adult GCSE lesson, various resource materials were used to promote learning. For example, in one lesson, a student represented an unearthed human remain. The teacher demonstrated what could be learned from the shape, size and foetal position of the 'find'. Students work confidently and in most lessons they learn well. For example, GCE A-level history students, examining the reputation of the Gestapo in Nazi Germany, develop expertise in comparing reputation with reality. Emphasis is placed in lessons on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of learning skills to understand and use knowledge effectively. A GCE A-level politics lesson on how to measure the effectiveness of pressure groups culminated in the production of a model answer to an examination question. In the satisfactory lessons, poor timekeeping sometimes reduced the effectiveness of learning when teachers fail to allow enough time for discussion. In other lessons, teacher-led question and answer sessions are rarely used to probe understanding deeply, to promote discussion or to involve all students. These weaknesses adversely affect the development of good oral skills.

98. Teachers are well qualified and have a diverse range of experience. Accommodation is generally good. There are excellent resources, including high-quality handouts, although these are not always used effectively in lessons. Little reference is made to extended reading and use of websites. Where interactive whiteboards are available, they are underused. On law courses, the use of ILT is promoted for research tasks but there is little use in the classroom. There are wall displays, but these are not used or referred to in lessons. There are excellent links with the learning resources centre, which is well stocked with textual and electronic-based learning materials.

99. Students' work and progress are assessed and monitored well. Initial assessment is used to identify students with particular learning needs, especially in law. Appropriate support is provided and students' progress is monitored. Assignments are set regularly and marked sensitively and constructively. Samples of work from politics students are extremely well marked. Students who fail to get a pass mark are required to make changes to reach the required standard. Progress is measured against projected minimum target grades and where students are underachieving they are given additional learning support.

100. Students take part in a wide range of curriculum enrichment activities. Law students run a law society, a gazette and socio-cultural events, such as a television-style 'question time', to which the local community is invited. Politics students visit Westminster and each year six of them have a week's work experience in parliament with the local members of parliament. Archaeology students go on field excursions.

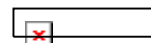
101. Students value the additional learning support and guidance they receive. At subject level this includes one-to-one sessions in non-teaching time. There are twice-weekly support workshops for

history students that run throughout the year. Some students are directed for additional help following poor progress.

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

Management of the curriculum is good. Teachers work well in course teams and there are regular meetings to review progress. Communications with part-time staff in history and politics are good. There are regular course reviews and self-assessment is realistic, although some judgements lack robust evidence and action plans do not always have clear targets for improvement. Good use is made of management information, performance indicators and students' opinions in reviews. Schemes of work are comprehensive but curriculum policies are not always clearly recorded and implemented.

### **English, languages and communications**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates for GCE A-level English and AS-level French
  
- effective and stimulating teaching of English
  
- effective use of new learning technologies for modern foreign languages
  
- rigorous procedures for assessment
  
- extensive provision of enrichment opportunities
  
- strong academic and pastoral support from friendly, accessible teachers
  
- good curriculum leadership and management.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates for GCSE English
  
- low retention on GCE A-level English courses
  
- insufficiently detailed planning of some lessons
  
- insufficient use of the languages being taught in modern foreign languages.

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

102. There is a wide range of advanced courses in English language, English language and literature, English literature, communication studies, French, German, Spanish and Russian. There are GCSE courses in English and Spanish. There is some evening provision including AS-level English literature, GCSE English, creative writing and four foreign languages. Some adult classes take place at community centres. Full-time students can submit work for assessment for the key skills qualification in communication. They also benefit from a variety of subject-related enrichment activities. Approximately 400 students are following courses in English and modern foreign languages.

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

103. In 2003, there were very high pass rates for modern foreign languages, with 100% pass rates for GCSE Spanish, AS-level French, AS-level German, GCE A-level French, GCE A-level German and GCE A-level Spanish. There were also very high pass rates on the three English courses at advanced level including 99% pass rates for AS-level English language and GCE A-level English language and literature. GCSE English had a low pass rate of 39%, which is 10% below the national average. The proportions of high grades for AS-level communication studies and AS-level English language are good. On other courses, the proportions of high grades are low. For example, 20% of students on AS-level English language and literature achieved high grades, which is 9% below the national average.

104. There are low retention rates on most GCE A-level courses in English. In 2003, retention rates on AS-level English language and literature and English language were 9% and 14%, respectively, below the national average. Retention rates on AS-level communication are also below the national average, at 80%. Retention rates improved in 2003 on GCSE English and AS-level English language. Retention rates on foreign language courses are very good. In 2003, all the students who started GCE A levels in French, German and Spanish completed their course.

105. The standard of students' work in lessons is good. Students in English lessons occasionally need encouragement from their teachers to participate confidently. They are able to argue a case convincingly and can often suggest unusual perspectives on an issue. Students can write coherently and accurately and they develop sound skills of analysis and interpretation. In foreign language lessons, most students speak comprehensibly and have reasonably good accents, but there is insufficient use of the language they are learning. They answer directed questions and respond to spoken tasks competently. Few initiate conversation or answer undirected questions. They do not see the foreign language as the normal means of communication in the classroom.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in English, language and communications, 2000 to 2003***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	106	121	136
		% retention	78	88	84
		% pass rate	41	55	39
AS-level English language	3	No. of starts	69	85	88
		% retention	84	87	93
		% pass rate	98	99	99
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	123	130	115
		% retention	92	86	80
		% pass rate	94	93	96
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	71	84	83
		% retention	89	85	86
		% pass rate	94	97	97
GCE A-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	72	83	84
		% retention	88	98	90
		% pass rate	92	99	99
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	43	38	55
		% retention	81	95	96
		% pass rate	97	97	96
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	29	17	19
		% retention	59	94	100
		% pass rate	88	94	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

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

106. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. There is much effective teaching of English. Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and experienced. Most are external examiners or moderators, and this aids their understanding of the syllabus. Schemes of work are well designed to maximise students' achievements. Planning for some individual lessons is insufficiently detailed, resulting in some poor timing of activities. Learning takes place in a friendly, supportive atmosphere that encourages participation and promotes learning. Students acquire confidence in voicing their opinions. In one lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm for literature and the mastery of the material, reciting works by Blake and Wordsworth, inspired the class to analyse the poems with confidence and insight. A large amount of enrichment material is available for students on the college intranet, which is also used to link to relevant websites. In foreign languages, some lessons rely too much on a question and answer methodology that fails to challenge students directly.

107. Students are well supported in their studies. Teachers are accessible and give freely of their time to support students. English teachers provide additional advice about university applications to all students who are applying for English. Teachers take account of students' individual needs. In one GCSE lesson, the teacher had strategies for helping several students to learn in their most appropriate way: some orally, some by video and some from a special display on the wall. In other lessons, the needs of individuals are recognised and responded to in a less systematic fashion. Broader key skills are developed naturally in English lessons where there is much group work and research activity.

108. Students' work is marked promptly. There are well-established and rigorous systems for assessing work, using examination board objectives on cover sheets, and underpinned by the teachers' experience as examiners. Sometimes the comments on the work do not explain sufficiently how the student might improve.

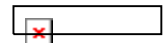
109. Teachers are committed to widening the personal and cultural horizons of their students. Students benefit from regular trips and exchange visits to France, Germany, Spain and Russia. A study trip to Paris is linked to themes in the syllabus. Some students do work experience in Germany. English students have opportunities to join in theatre performances, a Great War battlefields trip, the creative writing club and the student magazine.

110. Resources for learning, especially in foreign languages, are good. The facilities in the languages suite are used imaginatively and confidently by students. Four language assistants are employed to support students' learning. English rooms are not as well equipped. Rooms are bright and attractive, with excellent and relevant wall displays. Some English rooms are overcrowded. There is poor use of English books in the learning resources centre and the stock of books is insufficient for the large numbers of users.

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

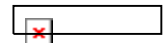
111. Leadership and management of the curriculum area and of course teams are good. Part-time staff are well integrated with their teams; there is a strong sense of the subject base and a good team ethos. The self-assessment report is clear-sighted and thorough. Lesson-plans, schemes of work and student handbooks are produced to consistent patterns. Subject teams focus on specific courses, to review students' progress and produce resources. Lesson observations are undertaken and teachers are paired for observations of each other's teaching. Equal opportunities are supported by the range of classes open to adults, especially at centres in the community, and ventures like the young mothers' unit, where GCSE English is offered. However, equal opportunities are not always a central part of schemes of work and lesson plans. Students with specific learning difficulties are well supported in lessons.

### **Part D: College data**



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

<b>Level</b>	<b>16-18 %</b>	<b>19+ %</b>
<b>1</b>	1	46
<b>2</b>	23	36
<b>3</b>	57	11
<b>4/5</b>	0	0
<b>Other</b>	19	6
<b>Total*</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



*Source: provided by the college in 2004*

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

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

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments (%)*
Science and mathematics	1,615	68	15
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	78	3	1
Business administration, management and professional	233	613	8
Information and communications technology	885	955	17
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	177	2	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public services	74	181	2
Visual and performing arts and media	709	329	9
Humanities	3,429	76	32
English, languages and communication	1,464	33	13
Foundation programmes	36	148	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,700</b>	<b>2,408</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2002

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

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	194	72	38	548	821	577



	Retention rate (%)	73	43	82	67	62	73
	National average (%)	79	80	78	71	70	72
	Pass rate (%)	90	71	77	97	71	72
	National average (%)	70	66	71	67	70	75
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	949	379	441	329	368	310
	Retention rate (%)	46	79	78	73	74	79
	National average (%)	80	80	81	71	72	71
	Pass rate (%)	88	90	89	89	78	78
	National average (%)	80	85	84	70	68	71
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,786	3,729	4,352	130	88	188
	Retention rate (%)	78	84	88	73	68	73
	National average (%)	75	80	89	63	64	69
	Pass rate (%)	90	88	87	94	83	73
	National average (%)	85	86	88	65	67	75

*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)	73	25	2	109
Level 2 (intermediate)	87	9	4	23
Level 1 (foundation)	90	10	0	10
Other sessions	100	0	0	5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>147</b>

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

Office for  
Standards  
in Education

