Farnborough College of Technology

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Farnborough College of Technology
Type of college:	General Further and Higher Education
Principal:	Christine Davis
Address of college:	Boundary Road
	Farnborough
	Hampshire
	GU14 6SB
Telephone number:	01252 407000
Fax number:	01252 407041
Chair of governors:	Robert Rendel
Unique reference number:	130689
Name of reporting inspector:	Phillip Romain
Dates of inspection:	19-23 January 2004

Part A: Summary
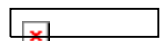
Information about the college
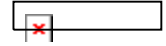
Farnborough College of Technology is a medium-sized general further education (FE) college in Hampshire. The college operates mainly from one site in Farnborough but also delivers learning in four community learning centres in Farnborough, Aldershot, Fleet and Bordon. In addition, programmes are delivered at a number of school sites throughout the local area. In 2001/02, the college enrolled 12,275 students. Approximately 85% were adults and 85% of the total were classified as studying part time. There were approximately 1,320 full-time (full-year and part-year) students aged 16 to 18. The college offers programmes in 13 areas of learning; retailing, customer services and transportation are not offered. The provision in science and mathematics, land-based, construction, and humanities is small. There is provision for work-based learning, with about 130 learners on programmes. The college offers courses from pre-entry level to post-graduate level and has a significant number of higher education (HE) students. The college serves the relatively prosperous areas of Farnborough, Aldershot and the surrounding towns and villages of the Blackwater Valley. These areas have low levels of unemployment, but there are significant pockets of deprivation in the locality. In addition to the urban areas served by the college, students are also drawn from rural communities across mid and north Hampshire. The college co-operates with a sixth form college and two local secondary schools with sixth form provision. The college has very recently been awarded centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) status in applied information and communications technology (ICT) for business.

How effective is the college?
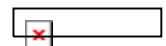
Inspectors judged provision to be good in two curriculum areas and satisfactory in five. In two areas, hairdressing and beauty therapy and foundation programmes, provision is unsatisfactory. Work-based learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy is unsatisfactory and the entry-to-employment (E2E) programme is very poor. The college's key strengths and weaknesses and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- o   good financial management

- o   supportive tutorials

- o   good resources and student facilities

- o   good provision in catering

    o   the wide range of provision

    o   the well-stocked learning resource centre.

What should be improved

    o   the unsatisfactory provision for students in hairdressing and beauty therapy, including work-based learning

    o   the unsatisfactory provision in foundation programmes, particularly in E2E

    o   the unsatisfactory quality of teaching in some areas

    o   the underdeveloped use of individual learning plans

    o   the lack of rigour and effectiveness in quality assurance arrangements

    o   unsatisfactory management of some 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
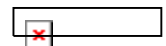
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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

| Engineering	**Good.** The management of engineering training is good, giving consideration to the changes in local industry needs. Student retention rates have been poor, although pass rates for those that do remain are good. Students develop a wide range of engineering skills during well-taught lessons. The teaching of key skills is particularly effective.
Business	**Satisfactory.** Support for students on the extensive range of courses is good, but the setting of progress targets is inadequate. Retention rates are good on most courses. Pass rates are good on some courses, but low and declining on others. In some lessons, teaching is uninspiring, but on most accounting courses teaching is good. Formal mechanisms for sharing resources and good practice are few and the use of performance data by curriculum managers is underdeveloped.
Information and communications technology	**Satisfactory.** A wide range of part-time technical courses and enrichment opportunites are available. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall in improving retention and pass rates, which are now mainly satisfactory. There is not enough good teaching and quality assurance is insufficiently effective.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	**Good.** Catering contributory grade: **outstanding**. Sports lesiure and travel contributory grade: **satisfactory**. Levels of achievement on hospitality courses are high. Teaching is very good. Students produce a very high standard of work, both practical and written. Accommodation and facilities are excellent in hospitality, but onsite facilities in sport are poor. Assessment in hospitality is thorough.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	**Unsatisfactory.** Work-based learning contributory grade: **unsatisfactory**. Much teaching is poor and uninspiring and assessment of students' progress is inadequate. There is poor professional practice in hairdressing and the management of hairdressing and beauty provision is unsatisfactory.
Health and social care	**Satisfactory.** Achievement on most courses is satisfactory, with good pass rates on some courses. Pass rates on national vocational qualifications (NVQ) courses are poor. Teaching is satisfactory, but the more able learners are not sufficiently challenged. There are many visits and visitors to enrich the learning experience. The curriculum is well managed.
Visual and performing arts and media	**Satisfactory.** The standard of work is good in most areas. There are some high pass rates in photography, but there are low pass rates on many courses, linked to low retention rates on some courses, and few high grades are gained on national diploma courses. On most courses, there is good attainment of industry skills and links with employers in media. Technical resources in media and photography are good, but some accommodation in dance, music and art and design is inadequate.
English, foreign languages and communications	**Satisfactory.** Most teaching is good or better; a small minority is unsatisfactory. An extensive range of courses is offered in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), meeting the needs of a multicultural community. Quality assurance arrangements are well managed.
Foundation programmes	**Unsatisfactory.** E2E contributory grade: very poor. There is good development of students' skills in literacy and numeracy, good retention rates and a wide range of provision to meet students' needs. In E2E, there is effective matching of students to work placements. However, there is much poor teaching and inadequate target setting and reviews. In literacy and numeracy, insufficient attention is given to individual students' needs. On the E2E programme, identification of students' personal and social development needs is poor and

	curriculum management is weak.

## How well is the college led and managed?
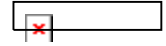
Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Governors, managers and staff have a clear and shared view of the priorities for the college. The strategic direction of the college is clearly understood. Retention and pass rates have improved, but rates are too often still below national averages. Senior managers have done much to direct the college's energies into addressing the key indicators of success, but the quality of management in curriculum areas varies significantly, from good to poor. Governors fulfil their responsibilities. Financial management is strong, and the college offers satisfactory value for money. The promotion of equal opportunities within teaching and learning is underdeveloped, but the college continues to work actively on this issue. Quality assurance processes lack rigour, including the self-assessment process.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?
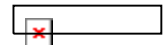
The college's response to education and social inclusion is satisfactory. The senior managers are committed to equal opportunities and the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) and the Race Relations Amendment Act. However, in some areas, the full implementation of these policies has not been achieved at all levels. In some areas, there is insufficient analysis of the performance of different groups of students. There is insufficient promotion of equal opportunities in a few lessons and tutorials. The college is inclusive in its admissions of students in most areas and employment of staff. In literacy and numeracy, the college has expanded its provision significantly within the local community. However, the quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is unsatisfactory. The college has made good progress in making the main campus accessible to students with mobility difficulties, but there are some key areas where accessibility is poor.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?
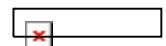
The college offers good initial advice and guidance. A central information centre effectively provides a wide range of information, advice and guidance. A few students are on inappropriate courses, as a result of poor advice from some tutors. The student services induction and the comprehensive course inductions are effective. Additional learning needs identified from initial assessment are acted upon promptly. Most students receive good learning support, either in classroom sessions or one-to-one. Retention and pass rates for students receiving support are significantly above average. A few classes with a large proportion of students with additional needs do not receive the type of support or guidance that they need. Tutorials are good and students value highly the support and advice they receive. Careers education is provided in the college by the local Connexions services, two days a week. This is ineffective and few students or tutors make use of this service. There is a comprehensive range of support for personal, financial, domestic, childcare, transport and health problems.

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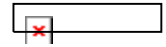
Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below.

What students like about the college

- o   the supportive staff

- o   being treated as adults

- o   the library and access to computing facilities

- o   the pre-enrolment information and induction

- o   student services and the students union

- o   the range of courses

- o   the friendly environment.

What they feel could be improved

- o   canteen portions and prices

- o   local transport

- o   feedback on how they are performing

- o the amount of practical work

- o lunchtime activities

- o car parking

- o temperature control in classrooms.

Other information
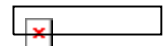
The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The 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
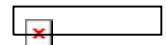
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors
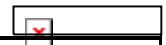
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	57	33	10
19+ and WBL*	63	27	10
Learning 16-18	51	39	10
19+ and WBL*	59	33	8

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
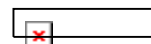
1. The level of students' attainment in many lessons was mainly satisfactory and sometimes good. However, it was low in many hairdressing, beauty therapy and foundation lessons. Students in most curriculum areas develop a range of appropriate practical skills, although in some lessons progress in developing these skills was slow. Students demonstrate impressive skills in photography. In engineering, students develop a wide range of practical skills. Students in hospitality produce a high standard of work in practical, theory, assignments and coursework. Beauty students produce a good standard of written work, but hairdressing students demonstrate poor health and safety practices. Students on E2E programmes develop few skills. Progression to HE is good, particularly in engineering and in health and social care.

2. The average attendance rate in the lessons observed was 80%. This is 4% higher than the average observed rate in the period 2001 to 2003 for general FE and tertiary colleges. Attendance was highest in hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, at 90%, and lowest in English, languages and communications, at 76%.

16 to 18 year olds

3. In 2003, students' success rates were just above the national average at level 1, below the national average at level 2 and significantly below the national average at level 3.

4. Over the four-year period to 2003, retention rates have fluctuated. At level 1, the retention rate has improved from below average to above. At levels 2 and 3, retention rates have fallen overall. At level 3, the retention rate has fallen from the national average to 11% below. Over the same period, pass rates have generally improved at all levels, but with significant fluctuations. For example, at level 1, rates have moved from below the national average to significantly below, but then recently up to the national average. The most significant improvement is at level 3, where pass rates have improved from well below the national average, but still remain 4% below.

5. The overall completion rate for work-based learners has increased from 17% in 2001/02 to 36% in 2002/03. This compares favourably with the local average of 29%, but is still very low.

Adult learners

6. Apart from level 2, pass rates for adults have improved significantly in 2003. Pass rates at level 1 have improved from below the national average for three years to above in 2003. At level 2, the rate has consistently fallen and is now below the national average. At level 3, pass rates have been below the national average for three years and are now above by 4 percentage points.

7. With the exception of level 1 courses, retention rates have been consistently above the national average for the three years to 2002. In 2003, retention rates were above the national average at all three levels.

Quality of education and training
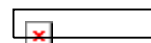
8. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 203 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 59% of lessons, satisfactory in 31% and unsatisfactory in 10%. The proportion of good or better lessons is a little lower than the national average of 63% for general FE colleges. Learning was good or better in 55% of lessons, satisfactory in 37% and unsatisfactory in 9%. The general standard of teaching, training and learning was broadly similar to that achieved when the college was last inspected in 1999, though in some areas it has deteriorated. The best teaching was in hospitality and engineering and the weakest was in literacy and numeracy, E2E, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Teaching and learning were better overall in lessons for adults than in those for students aged 16 to 18. For mainly adult groups, teaching was good or better in 66% of lessons, satisfactory in 27% and unsatisfactory in 7% compared, with 57% judged good or better in lessons for students aged 16 to 18, 33% satisfactory and 10% unsatisfactory. In work-based learning provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy, however, teaching and learning were poor. Only 29% of teaching/training and learning were judged to be good or better, 29% satisfactory and 43% unsatisfactory. Students studying on courses at level 3 receive better teaching than those on level 2 courses where, overall, 13% of lessons were unsatisfactory.

9. In the most successful lessons, teachers planned activities for learning well and managed time carefully. They kept students on task. Students were expected to recall previous learning and teachers were adept at connecting earlier learning to new topics. Teachers gave clear instructions to students regarding work to be done and monitored individual students' progress thoroughly to ensure the tasks were completely properly and on time. They sometimes devised a range of different materials and used varying teaching methods to meet the different learning needs of students. In some lessons, teachers combined effectively the teaching of theory and practice, for example, in hospitality, engineering and health and social care. Some teachers asked searching questions of individual students to verify whether they had learned what they were intended to learn and to encourage students to think for themselves. In practical lessons, for example in engineering, teachers gave good demonstrations, followed by vibrant discussion, so that students understood the demonstrated process and the reason for approaching work one step at a time. In hospitality, thoughtful demonstrations and careful monitoring of students practising specialist techniques helped students to develop industry-standard skills. Some teachers have high expectations of their students.

10. In the less effective lessons, topics were introduced too slowly or with too much exposition from the teacher, so that students became bored and lost concentration. Some lessons were not well planned or managed. Students' inappropriate behaviour was sometimes left unchallenged. In some literacy and numeracy lessons, there were no lesson plans and little structured learning for students. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of their students. In many areas, but notably in literacy and numeracy, E2E and beauty therapy lessons, teachers did not provide differentiated materials so that the more able students could extend their learning and abilities and those who needed more help could work at a slower and more structured pace. Often, questions about the topic under discussion were asked of the whole class. While some students were able to answer the questions correctly, the rest of the class remained silent and passive and teachers did not check whether all their students had understood what was intended. Sometimes, when students gave incorrect or partial answers, teachers failed to tease out how or why they came to the wrong conclusion. Some teachers were too ready to give answers instead of encouraging students to work them out themselves. At the end of some lessons, there was poor consolidation of the topics covered. In a few lessons, students lost otherwise productive time by having to copy too much from the board. In other lessons, teachers read aloud from a textbook and students had to write notes from the dictation. Students arrived late in a significant proportion of lessons, but teachers often failed to challenge their lack of punctuality. Latecomers often disrupted lessons and teachers had to go over ground already covered.

11. Most permanent teachers are well qualified and have appropriate vocational experience. However, too many of the significant number of hourly paid teachers do not have a teaching qualification.

12. Accommodation is clean and the main areas are bright and stimulating. However, some teaching rooms are dull and lack natural light, others are too stuffy, too hot or too cold. Overall, the resources

to support teaching and learning in the classroom are adequate. Hospitality uses an excellent virtual learning environment and media uses industry-standard equipment, some of which has been donated by the industry. The provision of specialist accommodation varies. Some is very good, for example, industry-standard kitchens for catering and an industry-standard television studio for media. There is poor accommodation for hairdressing, art, dance and music. The hairdressing salons do not provide a real working environment. Lack of storage space in the hair and beauty salons presents a health and safety hazard.

13. The college's canteen facilities are generally good. The college has good nursery facilities for students and staff on the main site. Students value the well-managed and stocked learning resource centre. Although it is weak in supporting modern foreign languages, it has a wide range of resources and services to support teaching and learning in other areas.

14. Computing facilities are adequate. They are good in some areas such as the learning resource centre and hospitality, but inadequate for foundation programmes. The college is well equipped with interactive whiteboards. The college has an established intranet which is well used by staff and students. Students are able to access the college electronic resources on both the intranet and extranet.

15. Internal verification is effective in most curriculum areas. It is co-ordinated across the college by an internal verification forum; however, a minority of curriculum areas do not adequately support the work of this forum. There is a thorough policy, reviewed recently, which sets out clear aims, requirements and procedures for checking assessment practice. Records are used well in most areas. In visual and performing arts and media, and health and social care, standards are being raised.

16. In some areas, assessment is very good. For example, in hospitality, assessment is candidate led and thoroughly planned, and in engineering, formative assessment is highly effective. Initial assessment is also very good for students on EFL and ESOL courses where individual learning plans are used effectively to monitor progress. In most areas, assessment is fair and accurate, and students are very aware of the processes of assessment, including planning and appeals. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, assessment is weak, there are insufficient assessment opportunities for apprentices, target setting is inadequate in reviews and individual learning plans are not used effectively.

17. Initial assessment in literacy and numeracy for full-time students is satisfactory. A test is marked and collated efficiently and results distributed quickly. Staff appreciate their accuracy and the speed with which results arrive, enabling them to individually plan students' learning at a time when this is most needed. However, on some courses, particularly for many part-time students, initial assessment is unsatisfactory. The use of initial assessment in identifying personal and social needs is inadequate on the E2E programme.

18. The college has a wide range of learning programmes, from entry level to HE. In two areas, pre-entry level qualifications are offered. The college works with 15 local schools to provide vocational education for some 150 students aged 14 to 16. The college also runs an E2E programme and work-based learning in a number of curriculum areas. A policy of non-competition with other local providers of full-time 16 to 18 education has avoided duplication.

19. The college responds well to the needs of the community. In health and social care, a partnership with the University of Surrey and a local hospital has been formed to address the lack of trained nurses. The college works with a charity to provide homeless people with skills for employment and daily living. The learning centres situated in the main areas of local towns attract learners who would not normally become college students. Asylum seekers are integrated into the mainstream courses and provided with support where required. Contacts with employers are excellent in some vocational areas but weak in others. For example, there is a strong link with the media industry through sponsorship and patronage by employers in this area, but the demise of the aerospace industry in Farnborough has left the college with few contacts in engineering. There are good links with the army, for which the college provides courses.

20. There is a good range of enrichment activities for most students, both as a discrete programme and as part of their main programme. The activities develop the students' confidence and provide them with skills for life and work.

21. Students receive good initial advice and guidance. Staff in the information centre have developed a great deal of knowledge about the courses available and are well qualified to give advice and guidance. However, a minority of students are on inappropriate courses based on poor advice and guidance from some tutors.

22. All full-time students and some part-time students are given an initial assessment test to identify any additional literacy and numeracy support needs. However, not all students requiring support are identified at this stage. Some needs are identified during the course by the tutor or the students themselves. Although the additional learning support is very effective, not all students requiring support are receiving it. There is insufficient staff available to provide support for all evening classes or to provide specialist assessment in dyslexia and support to those who need it.

23. All students receive an effective induction to their course of study. All full-time students have regular, effective group and individual tutorials. Tutors monitor attendance and punctuality, but there is considerable variation between courses in the standard that students are expected to maintain. In some areas, students' late arrival to lessons is not challenged.

24. The college provides a good range of support services to students including counselling, specialist support for disabilities, financial assistance, help in finding accommodation, careers advice, occupational health advice and a chaplain. There is one small multi-faith room, though it lacks washing facilities. The college provides day nursery facilities for children of staff and students' children aged three months to eight years. There are 33 places available and at times there has been waiting list.

25. The college is responding well to child protection issues. The director with responsibility for child protection issues has good knowledge and experience. The college has child protection policies and procedures covering the nursery and young people attending the college. The college is developing a policy for vulnerable young adults.

26. Impartial careers advice and guidance are provided through a sub-contract arrangement with the Connexions service. The adviser is only available two days a week. Currently, few students are accessing the service.

Leadership and management
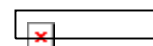
27. The leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Governors, managers and staff clearly understand the priorities of the college. There is a strong focus on financial management, improving students' performance and responding to the community.

28. The college's performance has improved. The overall pass rate for students has improved significantly in the last year, although it is still below the national average. Within this overall improvement, there is a significant variation; for example, the success rate for adults at level 2 is 3 percentage points below the national average, but the rate for adult students at level 1 is 9 percentage points above the national average.

29. Communications within the college are effective. The college intranet, newsletter and corporate development days provide effective means for sharing information. Corporate development days are effectively used to promote policy and priorities and for staff at all levels to engage in discussion with managers. Senior managers are visible around the college and accessible to staff. The principal

consults widely with staff and students. The equality forum, for example, was recently established to provide an opportunity for students and staff to contribute their views on equality and to influence the development of the college's equality of opportunity policy. Heads of school regularly make presentations on their area of work to governors.

30. The quality of management in curriculum areas varies widely. It is good in engineering, English and modern foreign languages, health and social care and hospitality. In these areas, direction and priorities are clearly understood and supported by well-thought-out action plans. Clear targets, based on accurate data, are set and action taken to achieve them. There are also robust internal verification procedures. The quality of management is satisfactory in business studies, ICT and visual and performing arts and media. It is poor in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in foundation programmes. In these areas, managers fail to take action to remedy identified weaknesses. The available management information is not effectively used. Poor teaching is not identified and there is poor promotion of, and practice in, equal opportunities.

31. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They closely monitor financial performance. The college has effectively moved from being in deficit to having an operating surplus. Governors effectively discharge their responsibility for academic oversight of the college. The curriculum and standards committee closely monitors students' performance and feedback from them. It also examines plans for changes to the curriculum offer. A wide range of staff made a significant contribution to the college's strategic plan for the period 2002 to 2007. Governors made their own, appropriate contribution. Although governors made a contribution to this year's self-assessment report by examining their own performance, they did so without the benefit of a clear set of criteria against which to judge themselves.

32. Financial management is strong. After several years in which it made an operating deficit, the college has made surpluses in each of the past two years. All staff have a clear understanding of the importance of financial planning and of managing expenditure. The deployment of resources is carefully monitored to ensure their efficient use. The senior management team effectively monitors class sizes and small classes are allowed to run only where there is a clear educational benefit. The college has a sharp focus on value for money.

33. The college has reliable management information, which is widely available in electronic format. Levels of confidence in the data are high. A good range of reports are promptly produced. Managers have robust information to inform their decisions. In some curriculum areas, however, managers do not make effective use of the available information. Data returns to the local LSC are submitted on time and are accurate. Over the last two years, the college has had consistently clean audit reports.

34. The college's quality assurance processes are poor. Inspectors agreed with only two of the grades published in the college's 2002/03 self-assessment report. They graded one area higher and six lower, by one grade in five cases, and by two grades in one case. The college has a comprehensive system of classroom observation. However, observations are insufficiently robust and failed to identify the level of unsatisfactory teaching in some areas. The proportion of lessons graded good or better by college observers is overgenerous and consistently higher than that of inspectors and of a team of external observers. The system of observation is inconsistently applied across curriculum areas.

35. The college has a detailed process for course review, self-assessment and development planning. However, some course reviews and some departments' self-assessment reports are weak. In some areas, curriculum development plans identify key weaknesses which do not appear in the final self-assessment report and do not receive sufficient attention to remedy them. Statements of strength are too often not accompanied by the evidence necessary to support them and are in some cases merely statements of standard practice. There is little evidence that action plans are systematically followed through to a conclusion. Inspectors found weaknesses that were not identified in the self-assessment report, as well as weaknesses that were still present after being identified in a previous inspection report.

36. The college has an established appraisal scheme for staff. The scheme helps staff to identify what they need to do to improve their performance. The scheme identifies staff development needs

and informs the staff development plan. A process of performance management has been introduced for operational managers. It clearly focuses on the college's identified key priorities. Managers value this approach which helps them to understand what is expected of them.

37. The college has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity; however, the implementation of policy and promotion of equality are variable in the curriculum areas. In engineering, a significant effort has been made to improve the gender balance and the proportion of women on engineering courses has increased to 11%. In other areas, little effort has been made. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, photographs portray stereotypical female images and dress and hygiene codes for beauty salons are biased. Data on the relative performance of different student groups are available, but not always used to inform decisions.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas
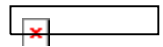
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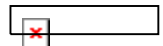
Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- o high pass rates on many courses

- o good progression into HE

- o much good teaching

- o very good key skills teaching

- o highly effective formative assessment

- o a well-managed curriculum.

Weaknesses

     o   low retention rates on many courses

     o   low pass rates on national certificate courses

     o   insufficient links with employers.

Scope of provision

38. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time engineering programmes from level 1 to level 3. These include courses in general engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, computer-aided draughting and design, and motor vehicle repair and maintenance. Aerospace engineering is also offered, but there are very few students on these courses. There are 337 students on programmes; 150 are aged 16 to 18, 133 are adults and a further 54 are aged 14 to 16. Most students, 191, attend part time and the remainder attend full time. There are 7 students on work-based learning programmes.

Achievement and standards

39. Pass rates on many programmes are high. Most are above the national average. Some are significantly better than the national average, particularly on the motor vehicle repair and some computer-aided design courses. However, pass rates on national certificate courses are low and have been in decline for the past three years. There are low retention rates on many courses. The college recognised this in its self-assessment and has introduced management strategies to address this. Students' attendance and progress records indicate some positive impact resulting from these initiatives.

40. Students are developing a wide variety of practical skills, including electronic assembly, circuit measurement, milling, fabrication of sheet metal and motor vehicle repair and servicing. Most are producing high-quality work during lessons, including complex welded and fabricated structures and centre punch tools. Research assignments completed by students are of a satisfactory standard. A high proportion of students progress into HE. Students' achievements are celebrated in the college through an annual prize giving ceremony. Course tutors consider academic achievements, attitude and the students application to work when allocating awards. Students' attendance and punctuality are generally good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair and maintenance skills	1	No. of starts	12	27	17
		% retention	50	70	88
		% pass rate	100	89	100
City and Guilds 2301-04 computer-aided draughting part 2	2	No. of starts	57	54	54
		% retention	81	74	74
		% pass rate	74	80	80
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	17	20	23

diploma from 2003)		% pass rate	69	17	69
National certificate	3	No. of starts	36	30	18
		% retention	53	50	67
		% pass rate	84	73	58
AVCE in engineering	3	No. of starts	23	30	35
		% retention	91	57	43
		% pass rate	81	94	80
City and Guilds 2301-08 computer-aided draughting part 3	3	No. of starts	19	27	16
		% retention	74	81	94
		% pass rate	79	91	100

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

Quality of education and training

41. There is much good teaching. Teachers use their enthusiasm for their subject to explain well engineering theories and workshop techniques. Vibrant group discussion and effective practical demonstrations are often used to good effect. Good use was made of information and learning technology (ILT) in some lessons. Computer-aided design software using three-dimensional modelling is used to explain engineering processes prior to the actual machining of components.

42. The resources in some workshops and laboratories are of poor quality. In the welding and motor vehicle workshops, welding equipment, engine component assemblies and engine system demonstration rigs are not operational and some do not adequately reflect current industry standards. There is good access to a wide range of computer training resources. The latest editions of engineering training software are available. The learning resource centre is well equipped with a wide range of engineering journals and technical publications. Classrooms for some motor vehicle and electronics lessons are cramped. In the electronics laboratories, there are not always sufficient training resources for the number of students attending.

43. Formative assessment of students' work is highly effective. Assessments are well planned and frequent. Students are actively encouraged to provide evidence from a wide range of activities. The feedback given is detailed and includes the agreement of realistic targets for the improvement of performance. Individual learning plans are used to good effect. Students are progressing through their programmes at a pace most suited to them. Students work through a series of theory and practical activities until they are confident about their ability to perform a task safely. The tracking of students' progress is good. Progress tracking sheets are clearly displayed on the walls of classrooms and workshops, keeping students fully informed of where they are in their programme of learning. More able students are progressing well and frequently assist other students in their class.

44. The college offers a wide range of programmes. Programmes have been selected to offer students the best opportunity for achievement and progression into HE. There have been a significant number of changes to the programmes offered over the past three years. Programmes are offered at levels 1 to 3. A combination of courses is also offered. For example, all students complete a manufacturing engineering qualification in addition to their national certificate or advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) coursework. This development of practical skills in addition to their academic requirements gives students a much greater awareness of engineering concepts. The range of qualifications completed also provides them with a greater variety of employment options. Changes in local industry needs have also been well considered. The reduction in aeronautical engineering and the increase in manufacturing and electrical and electronic engineering courses are examples where curriculum changes have been made.

45. Although a wide range of sporting and academic enrichment is available, there are few

vocational enrichment opportunities for students. Engineering students do not have the opportunity to visit engineering-related activities outside the college. There is also a lack of work-experience opportunities for students.

46. Support arrangements are satisfactory. Initial assessments are satisfactory and identify the most suitable level of support for each individual. However, insufficient learning support is provided in the classroom during vocational lessons. The students needing support are required to attend lessons held at the learning support unit. Numeracy support is extensive and literacy support is adequate. Where provided, learning support is effective and given in a sensitive and appropriate manner. Students with personal issues can easily access the college support and counselling services.

47. The strategy for key skills teaching is particularly good. Task-based learning allows each student to work at a pace most suited to him or her. Extensive tutor support is provided. Students are encouraged to complete key skills at levels above those required in their vocational programme. The strategy is to prepare students for further training or HE rather than limit them to fulfilling only their immediate needs.

Leadership and management

48. Curriculum management is good. A significant number of improvement strategies have been introduced, including better feedback and communication to parents and the development of shorter modules of learning and improved progression opportunities. Some positive impact has already been identified from these changes. Retention rates for the current cohort of students, in comparison with the retention rates for the same period last year, show significant improvement. The college has developed extensive partnerships with a number of local schools and now offers a wide range of programmes for students aged 14 to 16. A significant effort has been made to improve the gender balance on engineering programmes. At the time of inspection, 11% of students on engineering programmes were women. Internal verification practices are good. There are insufficient employer links. The college had extensive links with companies in the aviation industry, but there has been significant decline in this sector locally and the college has insufficient contact with other engineering companies.

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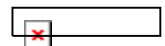
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good student retention rates on most courses

- consistently high pass rates on foundation and intermediate GNVQ business courses

- good teaching and learning in most accounting lessons

- good support for students

o   an extensive range of courses.

Weaknesses

o   low and declining pass rates on AS-level and GCE A2 business studies

o   uninspiring teaching in some lessons

o   inadequate setting of progress targets for students

o   few formal mechanisms for sharing learning resources and good practice

o   insufficiently developed use of performance data by curriculum managers.

Scope of provision

49. The college offers an extensive range of business, administration, management and professional programmes, from level 1 to HE courses. Most full-time and part-time courses are provided on the main Farnborough campus. A small number of part-time courses are offered at locations in the community, mainly in book-keeping. Full-time courses range from levels 1 to 3 and there are excellent opportunities for students to progress to degree, foundation degree and higher national diploma (HND) programmes. Management and higher-level personnel programmes are offered on a full-cost basis. At the time of the inspection, there were 80 full-time students enrolled, of whom 74 were aged 16 to 18 and 6 were adults. A total of 741 students were studying on part-time courses. Of these, 52 were aged 16 to 18 and 689 were adults. There was just one student on the modern apprenticeship in accounting.

Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates on most courses are good. Pass rates are mixed. They are consistently high on foundation and intermediate general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses, though enrolments are relatively small. Pass rates are low and declining on advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and general certificate of education A2 (GCE A2) business studies courses, and on the certificate in personnel practice. They are also low on some of the higher-level courses in accounting and marketing.

51. AVCE students perform better than other level 3 students, based on their eventual achievement compared with their entry qualifications. Students are generally focused and pay attention in lessons and typically produce work of a satisfactory or good standard. Most accounting students progress well and their work is particularly good. For example, NVQ level 2 students completed sales invoices, double entry transactions and trial balances well. Students on a higher-level accounting

programme worked hard on investment appraisal exercises, made appropriate judgements and demonstrated good development of their critical evaluation and reflective thinking skills. In some lessons, though full-time students worked adequately on a variety of computer software packages to produce business documents, some needed to work more quickly.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Book-keeping stage 1 (1-year course)	1	No. of starts	53	56	45
		% retention	49	66	60
		% pass rate	65	46	63
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	13	18	14
		% retention	77	89	86
		% pass rate	80	94	92
NVQ accounting (2-year course)	2	No. of starts	44	40	50
		% retention	82	88	86
		% pass rate	78	69	81
Advanced GNVQ/AVCE business	3	No. of starts	24	26	34
		% retention	50	81	47
		% pass rate	92	57	94
GCE AS business studies (2-year course)	3	No. of starts	21	41	53
		% retention	62	80	74
		% pass rate	100	79	64
GCE A2 business studies	3	No. of starts	*	33	39
		% retention	*	94	92
		% pass rate	*	74	64
Certificate in Personnel Practice	3	No. of starts	33	37	20
		% retention	100	95	100
		% pass rate	88	86	70
NVQ accounting (2-year course)	4	No. of starts	65	51	41
		% retention	92	55	68
		% pass rate	36	75	68

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)
* course did not run

Quality of education and training

52. Teaching and learning are mostly good in accounting. Teaching is often very well planned and tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers make good use of current business examples to enrich learning. Students are interested and committed. They develop high-level skills quickly and often work co-operatively with fellow students. In an extremely well-planned and facilitated lesson in time series analysis, the teacher considered the prior skills of the students in detail and planned activities with these in mind, which enabled students to develop advanced skills in using spreadsheets and writing financial reports.

53. However, too much teaching in other areas is often dull. The quality of lesson planning varies considerably and in some lessons teachers did not incorporate a sufficient range of activities to meet individuals' needs. Common failings are teachers talking too much and involving students in discussion too little. Teachers often fail to ask questions of particular students to involve them more in the lesson, to make them think for themselves, or to check whether they have learned what they were meant to learn. Such features were common in theory lessons in business administration.

54. ILT is not used sufficiently in lessons. There is insufficient access to specialist technology in most rooms. Other resources are satisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and most have teaching qualifications, though many full-time teachers lack recent industry experience. Library resources are good. Students have good access to computers for independent study. Some rooms lack identity and have few or no relevant subject display materials. Some rooms are adversely affected by noise from other areas. There is a `virtual learning environment system', but it is embryonic and is relatively little used yet by staff and only recently available for access by students.

55. Assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Assignments are suitably designed and students are clear about the assessment requirements. Homework is regularly set and marked work, containing constructive feedback, is promptly returned to students. However, mistakes in students' spelling, grammar and punctuation are not always corrected by the teachers.

56. The setting of progress targets with students is inadequate. Initial assessment is satisfactory overall, but the results of initial assessment are not always used to inform individual learning plans for students. Tutors often fail to set interim targets for students in their learning plans and students do not have stepping stones to aim for to help them towards achieving their ultimate goals.

57. The college offers an extensive range of full-time and part-time provision, but opportunities for work-based learning are poor and there is no clear strategy to develop them. Employer links are satisfactory for business and administration courses. A period of work experience is incorporated on administration courses and business courses are enhanced by visits to local employers and by guest speakers visiting the college. A successful workplace mentor scheme helps NVQ accounting students to apply their learning in the workplace. Although the development of students' key skills is often identified in lesson plans, it is rarely included in lessons. Communication key skills are, however, fully integrated into the AVCE business course.

58. Support for students is good. Students value highly being able to contact their teachers and tutors readily on mobile phones and via e-mail, receiving quick responses. Induction for students is satisfactory. Most students identified as having additional learning needs are receiving appropriate learning support, either during lessons or in specific learning support sessions. Group and individual tutorials for full-time students are generally effective. Pastoral support is effective and some students have been helped by the college retention officer and counsellor to stay on their courses. Students have good opportunities to discuss programme and career choices.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication within the schools of study is good, but it is not coherent across the schools. There are few formal mechanisms for sharing resources and good practice. Internal verification is conducted effectively. New teachers are well supported by mentors. There has been much stronger focus on improving teaching and learning recently. In addition to college staff development days, staff receive training on teaching techniques in weekly staff meetings. Annual staff appraisals are conducted and objectives are set and reviewed appropriately. Teachers are observed annually, though the college's grading of lessons is overgenerous. While detailed observation reports identify appropriate targets for improvement, progress towards these targets is not formally monitored. Use of performance data by curriculum managers is underdeveloped. The area of learning self-assessment report identified some, though not all, of the issues identified during the inspection, and it exaggerated the level of performance of the area. Staff development days have helped to raise awareness of equal opportunities issues, though there are few clear actions to improve the promotion of equal opportunities as a result. There is no active promotion to remedy the gender imbalance on some courses.

Information and communications technology
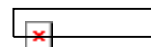
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   very high pass rates on AVCE and City and Guilds E-quals

- o   a very good range of part-time technical courses

- o   a good range of enrichment taken up by full-time students

- o   effective initiatives to improve retention and pass rates in learning centres.

Weaknesses

- o   low pass rates on AS-level ICT

- o   too much uninspiring teaching on full-time courses

- o   insufficiently effective use of data to secure improvements

Scope of provision

60. ICT programmes are provided by five departments of the college. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses. Part-time courses are available from entry level, to level 3 in the college, at learning centres and at a number of schools across the area. Adults may study units for a certificate or diploma in computer applications at part-time evening courses. Courses in using computers and common desktop programs, such as computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), European computer driving licence (ECDL) and City and Guilds E-quals, are available in college or at community venues. There are progression opportunities to HE within the college. The college is involved in piloting the new information technology qualification (ITQ) and has just been allocated a CoVE in ICT in collaboration with two other Hampshire colleges. Currently, 126 full-time students and 1,438 part-time students are enrolled on computing courses. Most of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18 and most part-time students are adults.

Achievement and standards

61. Overall retention rates are satisfactory or better on courses at levels 1 and 2. Retention rates on level 3 courses were unsatisfactory in 2001/02, but have improved and are now satisfactory. Pass rates have improved to satisfactory for most courses and are excellent on the AVCE double award in ICT. Students in the learning centres performed well in the e-qualification in 2002/03. Pass rates are unsatisfactory in AS-level ICT.

62. Most students show high levels of enthusiasm and interest in their subjects. Students on the AVCE courses are able to create programs within spreadsheets that check data input, but are insufficiently aware of the importance of planning work and testing their programs. Part-time adult level 1 students can confidently produce pie charts and graphs from spreadsheets. Attendance was satisfactory in lessons observed and is monitored well. Punctuality overall is satisfactory, but was poor in a significant number of lessons observed. Progression is satisfactory, with 60% of level 2 full-time students progressing to level 3 and 50% of AVCE students continuing to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	784	298	83
		% retention	85	94	86
		% pass rate	78	82	65
City and Guilds E-quals	1	No. of starts	*	378	799
		% retention	*	55	82
		% pass rate	*	38	94
City and Guilds 7261 diploma in computer applications	2	No. of starts	16	60	3
		% retention	63	65	100
		% pass rate	60	41	100
ECDL	2	No. of starts	96	102	81
		% retention	89	92	85
		% pass rate	75	85	48
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	38	49	33
		% retention	61	78	73
		% pass rate	65	50	71
AVCE (double award) ICT	3	No. of starts	60	62	47
		% retention	65	40	60
		% pass rate	90	96	100
GCE AS-level ICT	3	No. of starts	27	40	44
		% retention	74	58	73
		% pass rate	45	70	41

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)
* course did not run

Quality of education and training

63. In too many full-time lessons, teaching was uninteresting, undemanding and lacking in variety. Teachers did not sufficiently check students' understanding. Very few strategies were in place to cater for the needs of the weak or more able students. In the good lessons, teachers were enthusiastic and well prepared, used a variety of activities and checked learning frequently. In one good lesson, the teacher used simple materials to good effect to show the processing in the fetch and execute cycle, enabling the students to understand and effectively write simple assembler code. In a poorer lesson, the teacher ignored the lack of progress of the weak students and did not adequately explain the concepts that were not understood. Teaching in learning centres is better. Teachers there are technically adept and offer good learning support in a manner sensitive to the maturity of the students. Workbooks in learning centres are clear and easy to use.

64. There are sufficient staff to deliver the programme and support students. The virtual learning environment is not yet fully developed. Students on part-time technical courses can access copies of speaking notes and online training courses with interactive assessments. As yet, there has been little take-up of these opportunities. To date, staff training on the virtual learning environment has concentrated on how to manage course content and there has been insufficient staff development in the pedagogy of online learning. Full-time students can access documents on the college network from home.

65. Most classrooms are fit for purpose and adequately equipped. However, a minority are unsuitable for the teaching method selected. Some are too hot, cramped or have unsuitable seating that makes it difficult for students to develop safe working practices. The college does not have a standard operating system on all computers used by students so, in some lessons, teachers have to explain techniques more than once. One computer room did not have enough computers for the size of the group.

66. Assessment procedures are robust and in line with external requirements. Initial assessment is used appropriately to identify students' key skills levels and their literacy and numeracy support needs. Assessment is used well to monitor progress and inform full-time students about how they are performing and how they might develop further. These students understand the advice and are able to use it to improve. However, insufficient use is made of assessment to check the progress of part-time students. In learning centres, this has been recognised and addressed with a system of progress reviews.

67. The college offers a very good range of part-time technical courses for adults through its City and Guilds E-quals portfolio. It also provides a good range of courses for local employers, including the pilot ITQ. The four off-site learning centres offer an appropriate range of courses which complement the large number of learndirect courses available. They are well located to provide access to students from areas with low rates of participation in FE.

68. Full-time students are adequately supported by having learning support assistants timetabled into level 2 classes, or through the study skills section in the college learning centre. Students are also offered timetabled support classes, although the number of students who take advantage of this is low. A qualified skills for life and ESOL tutor supports students in the off-site learning centres. Tutors there have been trained in identifying and supporting students with numeracy and literacy needs. Induction programmes are well organised and valued by students. All full-time students have satisfactory weekly group tutorials. Targets for individual students are sometimes weak and target grades, although calculated, are not shared with the some students early in the year.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. The responsibility for ICT courses is spread across five departments. Staff share the college's purpose and values. The managers and all course leaders have good access to the management information system, which can provide valuable information. The course teams prepare evaluative self-assessment reports, with development plans which are monitored twice a year. There have been very effective strategies to improve success rates in the off-site learning centres. Observations of teaching and learning and results from students' surveys are not used sufficiently to secure improvements. Equality of opportunity is not well promoted. There have been insufficient initiatives to redress the gender

imbalance on full-time courses.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel
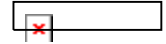
Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

The contributory grade in hospitality is **outstanding (grade 1)**

The contributory grade in sport, leisure and travel is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   very high retention and pass rates on hospitality courses

- o   much very good teaching

- o   high standard of students' work in hospitality

- o   highly effective links with industry

- o   excellent resources in hospitality

- o   good assessment of students' work in hospitality

- o   highly effective curriculum management in hospitality.

Weaknesses

- o   low retention rates on level 2 sport and travel courses

- o   poor facilities for sport on the college site.

Scope of provision

70. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in hospitality, sports, leisure and tourism. There are currently 215 students, 149 aged 16 to 18 and 66 adults. A total of 151 students are studying on full-time NVQ programmes in hospitality, GNVQ and AVCE courses in leisure, travel and tourism, and on the first and national diploma courses in sports and exercise science. NVQs in hospitality and a certificate in exercise and fitness are also offered for part-time students. Students take appropriate additional qualifications, for example, in food hygiene, health and safety, and sports coaching. An appropriate range of short courses are offered.

Achievement and standards

71. Retention and pass rates on all hospitality courses are very high. They are significantly above national averages. In sports, leisure and tourism, the results are more variable. Retention rates are low on level 2 sport and travel courses. Retention rates on the GNVQ leisure and tourism course fell from 67% in 2001 to 50% in 2002, significantly below the national average. Retention rates on the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma course were 56% in 2002, but improved to 79% in 2003. Students' attendance and punctuality are very good. The average attendance rate in lessons observed was 91%.

72. Students in hospitality produce a high standard of practical, theory and coursework. There is good evidence in students' portfolios of the wide range of work they carry out. Hospitality students develop good kitchen and restaurant skills that prepare them well for employment. First-year students work exceptionally well alongside second-year and level 3 students in the realistic virtual working environment in the kitchens and college restaurant. Students on sport and travel courses produce a satisfactory level of work.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ food preparation and cooking (2-year course)	2	No. of starts	48	35	43
		% retention	63	69	70
		% pass rate	97	96	90
NVQ food and drink service (2-year course)	2	No. of starts	32	20	29
		% retention	63	70	79
		% pass rate	100	100	91
General certificate of secondary education travel and tourism	2	No. of starts	30	15	17
		% retention	73	73	88
		% pass rate	86	100	100
Travel agents' certificate (primary)	2	No. of starts	51	25	27
		% retention	61	84	81
		% pass rate	39	71	77
NVQ food preparation and cooking (1-year course)	3	No. of starts	14	9	8
		% retention	71	78	88
		% pass rate	90	100	100
BTEC national diploma in applied science	3	No. of starts	*	16	14
		% retention	*	56	79

		% pass rate	*	67	91

Quality of education and training

73. Teaching and learning in many lessons are very good, primarily in hospitality. Teaching in practical lessons is better than in theory lessons. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Many lessons are well planned and lively, and teachers use clear and informative handouts throughout the practical lessons. Lessons are particularly well managed, meeting the needs of individual students. All students are set challenging tasks and produce a high level of work. Teachers use questioning very well to check students' understanding and learning. Teachers' demonstrations in practical sessions provide students with clear examples of what to aim for. In theory classes, teachers regularly refer to practical situations to help students put theory into context. Teachers in hospitality lessons used a computerised virtual learning tool to good effect. For example, it was used interactively in theory lessons to demonstrate how to identify the parts of fish that are of best quality. Students are able access the virtual learning environment at any time, including from home. Teachers are supportive yet demanding of their students and work hard to raise standards. In sport, leisure and travel, most teaching is satisfactory and some is good. However, some lessons are unstructured and students do not always learn as much as they should. The development of students' key skills is fully integrated into full-time programmes. All key skills development is undertaken by curriculum teachers. Students' key skills work is of a satisfactory standard.

74. The college has some good links with industry. For example, in sport, good use is made of external links to enrich learning and to relate theoretical principles to practical performance. Students have opportunities to watch Harlequins Rugby Club players and video them for movement analysis. Army athletics facilities are used in the summer term for sports performance practice. In hospitality, all students participate in a very good six-week, work-experience programme. This has resulted in many students gaining employment. There are also some good links with local schools to encourage Year 10 and 11 students to participate in taster sessions in catering, to help them decide if they wish to study in this area.

75. Resources in hospitality are excellent. The large kitchens are fully equipped to industry standards; one is used for training and one as a specialist pastry kitchen. The restaurant and bar are open to the public and offer modern menus, which reflect current trends. The college's restaurant attracts many customers, thus providing a realistic working environment for students where they can develop extremely good craft skills. There is a very good range of library books. Students generally have adequate access to ICT. Teachers are well qualified and have appropriate experience. The college has poor onsite sports facilities. Travelling to other sites is time consuming and students have restricted opportunities to relate theory to practice. There are no facilities to carry out stamina or multi-stage fitness testing. Students do not always get an adequate lunch and re-hydration breaks between a morning physical training session off-site and an afternoon theory lesson at the college. There is a well-equipped fitness suite on the college site, but this is not used enough to develop students' understanding of how theory is related to practice.

76. Assessment of students' work in hospitality is good. Assessment is thoroughly planned. Students are fully aware of when assessment takes place. Assessors ask a wide range of questions to check students' understanding and give excellent feedback. All assessments are thoroughly recorded. Students are making good progress towards achieving their qualifications. In sport, leisure and tourism, assessment is satisfactory; judgements are valid, fair and reliable. Students receive regular, helpful feedback.

77. There is a satisfactory range of courses in hospitality. There is a wide range of courses at different levels available to students in sport, with good progression opportunities. There is a small number of travel courses, including courses in airfares, ticketing and tour operations. However, no level 3 travel course is available. Students take additional relevant courses including, `welcome host', food hygiene and coaching courses. The range of enrichment activities for students is

satisfactory, though the level of take up is low.

78. Tutors provide good individual support for students, particularly in practical lessons. Students receive good advice and guidance prior to enrolling. A timetable of literacy and numeracy support lessons is available to students who are identified as having additional learning needs. Induction into the college is satisfactory. Students benefit from satisfactory tutorials and effective student services.

Leadership and management

79. Curriculum management in hospitality is highly effective. Course planning is extremely well managed and leads to continuous improvement. The weekly departmental meetings result in clear action plans. Collection and analysis of student and staff feedback are used effectively in development planning. There are very good staff development opportunities and one member of staff has been seconded to the National Learning Network (NLN) to develop ILT in the college. Internal verification is good. Good practice is shared within the department. In sport, leisure and travel, curriculum management is satisfactory. Course teams work well together. They review the curriculum on a regular basis and introduce new courses where appropriate. There is a commitment to equality of opportunity. Students are fully aware of the college's equal opportunities policy and the NVQ appeals procedure. Lesson observations are carried out regularly both in hospitality and in sport, leisure and travel.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy
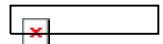
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

The contributory grade in work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- o high pass rates on some courses

- o the high standard of students' written work in beauty therapy

- o good numeracy and literacy support

- o a wide choice of off-the-job training days.

Weaknesses

- o much poor teaching

- o   poor assessment practices

- o   poor professional practice by hairdressing students

- o   unsatisfactory student progress reviews and action planning

- o   poor achievement by work-based learners

- o   unsatisfactory management of the hair and beauty programme.

Scope of provision

80. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy and holistic therapy. Work-based learning is offered in hairdressing through foundation modern apprenticeships. There are 123 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 35 adults. Of the 410 students on part-time courses, 256 are adults. Full-time courses range from level 1 to level 3. Part-time courses include waxing, advanced nail techniques, cosmetic make-up and a range of beauty therapy programmes. There are 82 foundation modern apprentices. Some 4% of students are male.

Achievement and standards

81. Pass rates were high on some beauty courses in 2003. Pass rates were above national averages, for example, in level 2 beauty therapy, which was 7 percentage points above the national average, and in cosmetic make-up, which was 14 percentage points above. Retention rates were also significantly above the national average for some courses. The pass rate for hairdressing NVQ level 1 was good, at 87%, which is 13 percentage points above the national average, but very poor on level 2, at 34%, which is 44 percentage points below the national average.

82. Retention and pass rates for modern apprentices who started in 2000/01 were poor. Just 42% of foundation modern apprentices and 33% of advanced modern apprentices achieved their full qualification.

83. Beauty students produce high standards of written work and have a good understanding of related theory. Many assignments and projects on anatomy, nail treatments and aromatherapy are well presented and thoroughly researched. The majority of hairdressing students' written work is satisfactory or better. However, poor health and safety practices are demonstrated by some hairdressing students. They fail to take essential precautions when applying colouring and bleaching products to clients' hair. Students fail to wear gloves or protective clothing. Students demonstrate poor occupational practice by putting end papers in their mouths before applying them to the hair. Second-year students have poor skills in sectioning hair for roller setting and they have insufficient knowledge of winding methods used for permanent waving.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	1	No. of starts	18	17	48
		% retention	78	76	65
		% pass rate	93	92	87
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	2	No. of starts	71	65	71
		% retention	68	51	34
		% pass rate	66	75	58
NVQ beauty (1 year)	2	No. of starts	35	34	26
		% retention	94	97	81
		% pass rate	79	79	90
Cosmetic make-up certificate (1 year)	2	No. of starts	72	54	57
		% retention	76	85	88
		% pass rate	71	83	90
Manicure and pedicure certificate (1 year)	2	No. of starts	62	66	57
		% retention	77	82	84
		% pass rate	63	56	94
International beauty therapists diploma	3	No. of starts	18	18	21
		% retention	100	94	100
		% pass rate	100	88	86
Body massage certificate (1 year)	3	No. of starts	88	96	77
		% retention	88	78	71
		% pass rate	95	92	93

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

__Quality of education and training__

84. There is a high percentage of poor teaching. Much teaching is dull and uninspiring and there is insufficient checking of learning. In many lessons, teachers did not use appropriate strategies to engage and motivate all students. The narrow range of activities often failed to develop independent and stimulating learning. There was unproductive use of students' time in many lessons. Students work at too slow a pace when preparing their work areas or completing tasks. Key skills teaching is not based on the vocational area.

85. There is a shortage of clients on both hairdressing and beauty programmes, so that students frequently work on each other. Skill development on clients is slow and there are reduced opportunities for assessment. Students do not work under commercial pressures. The theatrical make-up studio is of a reasonably good standard, but the college salons are unsuitable, unattractive and do not reflect a real working environment. Floor space is cluttered with students' belongings and equipment. Screening arrangements are inadequate to ensure privacy during client body work sessions. The positioning of couches compromises good health and safety practices when students are waxing upper body areas. The body work salon is too cold for treatments and there are too few wash basins in salons for good professional practice. Some theory and most practical rooms are too small for the numbers of students to make best use of their time. The range of products in hairdressing is narrow. Both the flow and temperature of water in hairdressing is difficult to control and often not warm enough to use on clients.

86. There is poor assessment practice in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. Assessment is slow for all students, but particularly for most full-time beauty therapy students for whom there is a planned delay of almost two terms. Many assessment plans are not agreed with hairdressing students prior to an assessment. Assessments are frequently carried out randomly and sometimes retrospectively. There are insufficient assessment opportunities for apprentices. Assessment takes place only in college for work-based students and does not consider evidence from the workplace. All students receive an initial assessment of numeracy and literacy needs. Literacy and numeracy support sessions are arranged promptly for most students. They are vocationally relevant and use a wide range of suitable teaching techniques.

87. Individual learning plans for both hairdressing and beauty therapy students are incomplete and poorly used. Progress reviews are poor and do not identify strengths and weaknesses. Some reviews for apprentices do not involve employers. Action plans do not contain specific, measurable and time-bound targets which focus on students' development. Individual learning plans are not frequently updated to drive learning and achievement forward. There is little use of accreditation of prior learning. Written feedback on many assignments and homework is unsatisfactory.

88. Employers of modern apprentices have a wide choice of off-the-job training days. There is a good degree of flexibility in the days students can attend college to accommodate the needs of the workplace. Full-time students have work experience for part of their course. Insufficient feedback is gathered from employers and used to improve the college curriculum.

89. Some unsuccessful beauty therapy applicants have been inappropriately enrolled on a foundation hair and beauty programme. Many have acceptable or good GCSE grades and have the ability to work at a higher level. The course does not meet their needs and many students are disillusioned. Retention rates have declined over the last three years and were 7 percentage points below the national average in 2003. The course is below the level of qualifications which the students have previously achieved.

90. Progression routes for foundation modern apprentices are poor. The college does not offer advanced modern apprenticeships.

91. Tutorials provide useful information about career options. The majority of students in hairdressing and beauty therapy are aware of how to get pastoral support and feel that teachers are supportive of their personal needs.

Leadership and management

92. The management of hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes is unsatisfactory. Curriculum design is poor. The management and planning of assessment are inadequate, as is internal verification. Much accommodation is unsuitable and its planned use is unsatisfactory. Recruitment strategies are flawed and insufficient flexibility is applied to entry requirements for full-time NVQ level 2 beauty therapy and hairdressing courses.

93. Students' awareness of equal opportunities is unsatisfactory. Only 4% of students are male. Strategies to address the significant gender imbalance within the vocational area are ineffective. Stereotypical female images are evident in this section of the college prospectus. The health and safety manual for beauty therapy refers to dress codes and personal presentation for females only.

94. Actions to address identified weaknesses are inadequate. Key weaknesses identified in the previous inspection for work-based learning have not been addressed. Many weaknesses identified in the school development plan have not been addressed or recognised in the self-assessment report. The weaknesses identified in two internal audits for work-based learning have not been addressed. None of the significant weaknesses around the quality of teaching and learning, poor student salon practices, ineffective reviews and individual learning plans are identified in the self-assessment report.

Health and social care
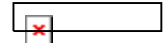
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   some good pass rates

- o   good student progression rates to higher levels of study

- o   good resources.

Weaknesses

- o   slow progress by students on NVQ courses

- o   low retention rates on NVQ and foundation caring for children courses

- o   lack of suitably challenging work for more able students.

Scope of provision

95. The college provides a wide range of full-time and part-time short and long courses, from level 1 to level 4. There are full-time courses at first diploma and national diploma levels in public services, at foundation, intermediate and level 3 in childcare, at national certificate and diploma levels in health and social care, and at intermediate level and national diploma level in health care. There are part-time courses in counselling at introductory certificate and diploma levels, and short courses in, for example, food safety and first aid. NVQ courses in care, in early years and in promoting independence are offered part time during the day and evening. Recently, an NVQ course in care has been offered at the workplace for those who have difficulty in attending college. Current enrolments are: 103 students in childcare and education, 51 in health and social care, and 57 in public services. In addition, there are 92 students on part-time NVQ courses in care, early years and promoting independence, 111 on counselling courses and 166 on a range of short courses.

Achievement and standards

96. There are good pass rates on the foundation level caring for children course, the certificate in childcare and education course and national diploma course in public services. The pass rates on these courses have been above the national average for either the past two or the past three years.

Pass rates on all NVQ courses are low and have been consistently poor over the past three years. In 2003, retention rates on the foundation level caring for children and on NVQ courses are poor and significantly below national averages. Many students on the NVQ courses have been making very slow progress towards achieving qualifications.

97. Student progression rates from one level of study to another are good. In 2003, on health and social care courses, 67% of students progressed from level 1 to level 2 courses and 68% from level 2 to level 3. In the same year, 30% of early years students progressed to HE, particularly to the foundation degree in early years which is offered by the college. Many other health and social care students went into employment. In 2003, a high proportion of students on public services courses progressed either to HE or to employment.

98. Students develop many vocational skills that are required for employment. The standard of students' written work across all courses is appropriate for the level of courses they are enrolled on.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Foundation course in caring for children	1	No. of starts	*	11	19
		% retention	*	82	68
		% pass rate	*	100	92
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	11	34	21
		% retention	100	68	76
		% pass rate	91	100	94
Certificate in counselling (renamed intermediate certificate in counselling skills)	2	No. of starts	24	41	50
		% retention	88	88	80
		% pass rate	100	97	85
NVQ early years, childcare and education	3	No. of starts	5	26	11
		% retention	60	81	40
		% pass rate	0	5	100
National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	16	17	23
		% retention	88	53	70
		% pass rate	100	89	94
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	27	40	19
		% retention	93	68	89
		% pass rate	84	93	82

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)
* course did not run

Quality of education and training

99. Some aspects of lesson planning are thorough on many courses. Comprehensive guides for students on reading and Internet materials are prepared, and learning materials devised by teachers are of good quality. In the successful lessons, teaching methods were chosen to match students' preferred learning styles. Students benefit from relevant visits to organisations outside the college. Work placements are carefully chosen to enable students to observe good practice. However, in many lessons, there was insufficient intellectual challenge to meet the learning needs of the more able students. Teachers did not ask students probing questions and did not require in-depth

responses. Tasks for students are not complex. They do not require the skills of problem solving, reasoning or analysis. For example, in one lesson, students were exploring water as a hazard. They were set an insufficiently demanding group task which required them merely to recall and share personal hazardous experiences with water.

100. Good resources are available to facilitate learning. The accommodation in the centre for care and early years studies is of high quality. There is an extensive range of demonstration and learning materials in these rooms. Resources in the learning centre are satisfactory. The use of ILT in lessons is not developed, but students have easy access to computers and they are encouraged to use the Internet as a learning resource. Many public services and health and social care teachers have extensive vocational experience and this enables them to provide students with valuable illustrative materials during lessons.

101. Assessment of students' work, review of their progress, action planning and setting of targets are satisfactory across this curriculum area, except on NVQ courses.

102. All full-time students have a diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills when they come to college. Additional learning support is available in lessons and in specifically arranged sessions for students. The efficacy of this support has been measured and there are indications that it has helped to improve in-year student retention rate. Teachers provide much additional support during lessons. Part-time students, who constitute a significant proportion of the students, do not have their basic skills assessed. If additional learning support is needed, support similar to that offered to full-time students is available. However, it is more likely to be left to the tutor, trainer or assessor to provide it informally, and they do not have specialist training in delivering learning support.

Leadership and management

103. The curriculum is well managed. Quality systems are well established and teachers seek constant improvement. Performance data are analysed, but any action following the analysis does not often result in improved levels of achievement by students. There are some new initiatives to measure value added and the efficacy of learning support, but they are insufficiently developed. Course files are comprehensive and well organized. They demonstrate a high degree of planning and review.

Visual and performing arts and media
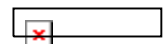
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o good pass rates in national diploma photography and GCE A-level photography

- o good teaching and learning in most areas

- o good attainment of industry skills in most areas

- o good technical resources in media and photography

- o good employer links in media.

Weaknesses

- o poor pass rates on many courses

- o poor retention rates on some courses

- o few high grades on national diploma courses

- o lack of display space for art and design work

- o some inadequate accommodation.

Scope of provision

104. There is a wide range of full-time programmes in media, the performing arts, music and music technology, art and design, graphic design, photography, interior design and upholstery. A large number of part-time courses are offered, in an attempt to widen participation, but there is low uptake. There is a good range of provision at level 3 and some AS-level and GCE A-level provision in art and design, photography, film studies and media. Few level 2 courses are offered and only one level 1 course, in photography. Provision for students aged 14 to 16 is available in music. There have been recent changes in provision, with courses changing from AVCE to national diplomas. There are 415 students currently enrolled. The majority of these are aged 16 to 18, with a small number of adults.

Achievement and standards

105. Student pass rates up to 2003 have been generally below the national average, with the exception of photography. However, the standard of work being produced by current students is good in most areas. Students progress well, demonstrating impressive skills in photography and media, and many in all areas work confidently and with independence. Most students attain a good level of industry-standard skills. There are some good pass rates in photography. For example, at AS level, the pass rate was 92%, but there were poor pass rates on many other courses. In the national diploma in music technology, the pass rate was 71%, 10 points below the national average, and in AVCE media the pass rates were 27 percentage points below the national average. Few high grades were gained on national diploma courses. There are low retention rates on some courses, for example in GNVQ intermediate art and design, at 54% compared with the national average of 78%,

and in AVCE media, at 42% compared with the national average of 61%. Course changes that have been made have yet to have an impact on achievement. Students' attendance is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate performing arts and entertainment (first diploma in performing arts from 2003)	2	No. of starts	11	17	8
		% retention	64	24	75
		% pass rate	43	100	67
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	9	13	13
		% retention	56	69	54
		% pass rate	100	89	100
National diploma in graphic design	3	No. of starts	24	32	25
		% retention	83	63	64
		% pass rate	95	90	88
National diploma in music technology	3	No. of starts	19	13	16
		% retention	68	38	44
		% pass rate	46	100	71
National diploma photography	3	No. of starts	10	10	12
		% retention	70	70	83
		% pass rate	100	86	100
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	17	34	17
		% retention	70	68	88
		% pass rate	50	57	80

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

Quality of education and training

106. Teaching and learning are good in most areas. Students work independently, with appropriate support from staff. Courses are well planned and closely relate to the standards and content required for the relevant vocational awards. Teachers skilfully address the differing needs of students in photography but in other areas, though differentiation is mentioned in lesson plans, there is little formal application. Key skills are planned for carefully, although students' awareness is low and the pass rate is very low. The quality of teaching and learning in photography is good, and students produce high-quality work in photography and media. In a GCE A-level photography evening class, the impressive industrial experience of the tutor gave confidence to students in exploring advanced photographic techniques. Students in a national diploma media class acted autonomously and professionally as a team to rehearse and record a youth magazine programme. In music performance, good use of video was made to play back the performances for further analysis after an initial discussion. Students were able to indicate their improved understanding physically on their instruments and analytically in discussion. Students' attainment of industry skills in media, photography, performing arts and music is good. Students on national certificate media courses attain a high level of skill in photography and in computer-aided design. In photography, the technical and aesthetic quality of the prints produced and the skills demonstrated by the students reached industry standards.

107. Staff members are well qualified to degree, post-graduate, doctorate or equivalent vocational

level, or have substantial experience in the industry. All full-time and many part-time staff possess recognised teaching qualifications. Technical equipment in photography and music technology is good. Students have good access to high-quality equipment in the studio and in the darkrooms. In media, there is a fully equipped television studio, with modern cameras and a comprehensive control suite. There is good technical support to ensure that the areas are well maintained and problems are quickly dealt with. However, accommodation for dance and music is inadequate, and in art and design it is shabby and uninspiring, with worn-out furniture and cramped organisation of space. Storage space is limited, especially for three-dimensional work. There is very little display space, both in classrooms and outside in the wider environment. Students have little opportunity to see other students' work and learn from it. The environment is visually uninspiring. In one dance studio, there is only a semi-sprung floor and no floor-to-ceiling mirrors or barres. Some music rooms are inadequately sound-proofed. Furniture in the studio control room is badly situated, which impedes teaching and learning.

108. Good assessment practice is in place and standardised. Students receive assessment plans at the beginning of the course and good verbal and written feedback is given to them at regular intervals. Initial assessment is used effectively to inform course planning and, through an individual learning plan, to monitor students' progress throughout the course.

109. A good range of level 3 courses are in place, but at levels 1 and 2 the range of courses is narrow. In media, a useful employers' forum meets quarterly to discuss a range of curriculum and occupational topics. Work-experience opportunities for students are developed effectively with employers who attend the forum. A wide range of enrichment courses is offered, although the uptake is low. The induction programme is good. Students are given good advice and guidance before, and on entry to, college, with the provision of taster days and partner days. Students have adequate individual support. There is a learning support tutor attached to the school and tutors are available to give individual advice on an open-access basis.

Leadership and management

110. Clear direction is set by the head of school and curriculum manager and this is understood by staff. Good communications take place through regular meetings. Satisfactory quality assurance processes are in place. The development plan, based on the self-assessment report, is monitored half-yearly, but there is no formal continuous evaluation of targets. Managers have worked hard to make systems uniform and to ensure that all staff use similar formats of schemes of work, lesson plans, assignments and assessments. There is some use of benchmarking and awareness of the significance of value added data, but use of the data is in the early stages of development.

English, foreign languages and communications
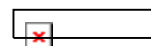
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- o   much stimulating teaching of EFL and ESOL

- o   very good initial assessment of language abilities in EFL and ESOL

- o effective implementation of actions for improvement

- o extensive use of the target language by modern foreign language teachers.

Weaknesses

- o poor retention rates on several courses

- o inefficient use of some learning resources

- o insufficient control over entry to GCSE English programmes and examinations

- o very poor pass rates in key skills - communications.

Scope of provision

111. There is an extensive range of ESOL courses, ranging from entry level to level 3. ESOL classes are held both on the main site and in community centres outside the college. In EFL, internationally recognised courses are offered at five levels. All students on full-time EFL programmes are fee paying. There is provision for GCE A-level study in three modern foreign languages and two English syllabuses. GCSE English courses are offered within the college and in community centres. Basic foreign language courses are offered in four European languages and in Japanese.

112. At the time of the inspection, there were 250 students enrolled on ESOL courses and 260 students enrolled on GCSE programmes. There were 120 students enrolled on EFL courses and 240 on basic foreign language courses. Some 90% of students are adults on part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

113. Pass rates on the majority of courses are equal or close to the national averages for colleges of this type. Retention rates are less impressive and on such courses as the first certificate in English, Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) Spanish and the certificate in advanced English, they fall below the national average. Pass rates in advanced English fall just below the national averages, but have achieved a positive value added residual score of 1.03 over the past three years. A high proportion of students achieved high grades in GCE A-level English in 2003. In GCSE English, the pass and retention rates in 2001 and 2002 well exceeded national averages, but dropped significantly in 2003, partly because of inadequate selection procedures. Retention rates have been good on the many basic foreign languages courses and pass rates, satisfactory. Pass rates in GCE A-level French over the past three years have been poor. Pass rates in all levels of key skills - communications are particularly low.

114. Students attain well in EFL and ESOL lessons. They are able to speak with levels of accuracy

and fluency at least appropriate to the level of programme being followed. Their listening and reading skills are appropriately developed. Some EFL students acquire ICT skills as part of their programme.

115. Students' attainment in modern foreign languages is markedly variable. In the best lessons, they achieve good levels of fluency and accuracy in the foreign language. They are able to ask and answer questions in the language, with good accents and intonation. In weaker lessons, however, students are hesitant and too ready to resort to English. Too much of their spoken work is based on written or prepared work, rather than being spontaneous, natural speech.

116. In English level 3 classes, students learn how to read and analyse the texts well and in language classes they understand how audience and purpose influence the register used by the writer or speaker. GCE A-level students demonstrate good levels of confidence and sensitivity when reading Shakespeare aloud. There is insufficient development of more specialist, technical vocabulary.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Foreign language - basic	1	No. of starts	154	232	209
		% retention	68	68	58
		% pass rate	80	68	78
First certificate in English	2	No. of starts	68	48	44
		% retention	60	71	75
		% pass rate	39	38	64
GCSE Spanish	2	No. of starts	15	19	31
		% retention	47	89	61
		% pass rate	43	71	47
Certificate in English for speakers of other languages	2	No. of starts	13	20	24
		% retention	92	95	92
		% pass rate	83	53	65
GCE A2 English language and literature (1 year)	3	No. of starts	32	44	49
		% retention	78	80	88
		% pass rate	60	91	91
Certificate in advanced English	3	No. of starts	39	27	20
		% retention	56	56	45
		% pass rate	59	60	56

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

Quality of education and training

117. Most of the teaching observed was good or better. However, a small proportion was unsatisfactory. Teachers are well qualified and know their subjects and students well. The most successful lessons are well planned, have clear objectives and employ a variety of engaging learning activities and materials. Most of the handouts and worksheets used are designed to meet a specific learning purpose. A central characteristic of all the better English teaching was the close analysis of texts and of language usage. In one A-level English class, some inventive exercises were

successfully presented to enable students to realise how their Shakespearean text might be enacted dramatically.

118. The better teaching in modern foreign languages occurred when the teachers used the target language almost exclusively. Many teachers are native speakers of the language they teach and present students with excellent role models and much good experience of the foreign language.

119. Most teaching on EFL and ESOL courses was stimulating and productive. The initial assessment of students' language abilities is thorough and effectively used to plan learning. There is a wide range of EFL and ESOL courses at all levels and students are placed in classes entirely appropriate to their language competence. Students in an advanced EFL class all participated in trying to define subtle differences in meaning (for example, between `I like to read' and `I like reading') and could follow the teacher's excellent explanation. Students in a beginners' class welcomed the reinforcement gained from thorough repetition exercises. Very little time was wasted in these lessons and class work was reinforced by homework based on excellent textbooks. In all of these lessons, there were students from a wide diversity of cultures - often as many as a dozen different nationalities in a class - and the teachers showed both enjoyment and skill in making the students feel welcome.

120. In less successful lessons, there were inadequate checks that learning was taking place. Few lesson plans indicate how learning will be evaluated in class. The format of the new lesson plans is not helpful. In many English lessons, questions were too often directed to the whole class rather than to individual students. The more able students monopolised the discussion and the views of others were not adequately explored.

121. In some literature classes, students had different editions of the novel being studied and time was wasted locating specific passages in the different texts.

122. There is inefficient use of the full range of learning resources. Little use is made of ILT, except in one EFL business course in which students additionally take a CLAIT course and learn the technical language associated with computing, finance, and business.

123. Most rooms are clean and well furnished, but many are too hot. There are no dedicated, appropriately equipped rooms for language teaching and the library does not fully serve the needs of the modern foreign language students. There is little literature in foreign languages and only two foreign-language periodicals.

124. Assessed work is generally accurately and promptly marked and the comments made are formative and supportive. The moderation and marking of the extensive GCSE coursework is well co-ordinated across all the centres.

125. Initial assessment of the language competence of all students applying to take EFL or ESOL courses is extremely thorough and contributes significantly to the successful teaching and learning on those courses. For modern foreign languages and GCE A-level English candidates, initial assessment or guidance is sometimes bypassed. However, there is effective use of individual learning plans in most programmes.

Leadership and management

126. Leadership and management are good. Several well-managed quality assurance procedures have recently been introduced. These are effective in improving the provision. Schemes of work are now adopted across the programme area and teachers' planning has improved. Managers effectively monitor teaching and learning. The lesson observations scheme is now fully operative and effective in most areas. The high number of sessional teachers working in external centres are successfully integrated in the teaching teams. There is good co-ordination of programmes. The moderation of GCSE English coursework and the internal moderation of the basic foreign language provision across the centres are effective.

127. Team leaders of ESOL, EFL and modern foreign languages are given an appropriate degree of autonomy and are responsible for compiling an initial self-assessment report. There is an honest, non-defensive culture of self-appraisal, but development plans fail to identify strategies to improve retention rates. The poor punctuality of some students is not addressed uniformly.

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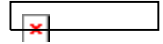
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

The contributory grade in E2E is **very weak (grade 5)**

Strengths

- o   good development of learners' confidence and personal skills in literacy and numeracy

- o   high retention rates in literacy and numeracy

- o   effective matching of students to work placements on the E2E programme

- o   a good range of provision to widen participation in literacy and numeracy.

Weaknesses

- o   poor planning of learning on E2E programme

- o   much poor teaching

- o   an insufficient range of learning resources in literacy and numeracy

- o   inadequate initial diagnosis of students' individual learning needs in literacy and numeracy

o   poor identification of students' personal and social development needs on the E2E programme

o   inadequate target setting and review of students' progress

o   insufficient focus on education and training opportunities on the E2E programme

o   weak curriculum development on the E2E programme.

Scope of provision

128. The college offers a wide range of part-time courses in literacy and numeracy, mostly for adults. Provision is based on the main site and at other centres in the community. At the time of the inspection, there were 225 part-time students enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses. This is an increase of 33% since 2002. Courses leading to accreditation are offered from entry level to level 2. The E2E programme is for young people aged 16 to 18. A total of 38 students are attending the programme. The length of time students spend on the programme is flexible and depends on their individual needs. Most students attend the programme for at least 16 hours each week. Students attend the college three days each week and are given a project or activity to work on for their self-study day. Students whose programme includes work experience usually attend their work placement for three or four days each week and attend college for one day.

Achievement and standards

129. Students on literacy and numeracy courses successfully develop their confidence and personal skills. They also develop effective communication skills by working well together. They are confident in answering questions and completing the work that has been set. The goal of achieving externally accredited certificates also greatly motivates students. In 2003, almost half of the students on literacy and numeracy courses underwent assessment for externally accredited qualifications and the pass rate was high. There are insufficient data relating to earlier years and trends cannot be identified. Many students are awarded a college certificate for their attendance and work. Retention rates on literacy and numeracy courses are high. The standard of students' work and their attendance are satisfactory.

130. Students on the E2E programme make poor progress. Many students develop few skills in theory sessions because of poor lesson and curriculum management and inappropriate levels of work. Individual learning programmes are poorly planned. A list of generalised objectives for individual students is set, but these are not broken down into clear, measurable targets against which to gauge students' progress. It is not possible for the college to assess appropriately whether students are making adequate progress over a period of time. There is poor planning of students' literacy and numeracy development and work experience. Retention rates on the E2E programme are satisfactory. Students' attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

131. There is much poor teaching overall in the curriculum area. In many lessons, teachers do not plan activities adequately, manage time poorly and use a narrow range of teaching and learning

activities. The assessment of students' work is inadequate, individual learning plans for students are incomplete and there is no adequate recording of the progress that students make. In literacy and numeracy lessons specifically, there is an overemphasis on whole-class teaching. Many lessons contain students of widely differing abilities, but all work at the same pace, with the same materials. In several lessons, where students all undertook the same task, some finished quickly and had to wait, doing nothing because there were no extension activities for them to complete, until their classmates caught up. In the better lessons, greater attention was given to meeting individual students' needs. Much of the teaching on the E2E programme was poor. For example, students were working on individual handouts for long periods of time. They became bored and disruptive, and learned little. Activities to develop personal and social skills are inadequate. Paper-based learning materials for E2E students are satisfactory, but there are insufficient alternative resources to support learning.

132. The range of learning resources is insufficient in literacy and numeracy. In the community centres, there are only 12 laptop computers for use across the whole programme and very limited Internet access. There is an over-reliance on paper-based resources, which in many instances are poorly produced. Accommodation is satisfactory and some of it is good. In 2003, some permanent staff were appointed in literacy and numeracy, which greatly reduced the number of part-time teachers and has led to a more cohesive teaching team. Most teachers have appropriate teaching qualifications in literacy and numeracy.

133. Most students undergo an initial screening test to identify their basic literacy and numeracy skills. For students on the literacy and numeracy courses, there is inadequate subsequent diagnostic assessment of their individual learning needs to identify the help they need with regard to reading, writing, speaking and listening, and specific aspects of number work. New diagnostic materials are available at the college, but the tutors are not yet using them. Most teachers still require training in the effective use of diagnostic assessment. Internal verification of the assessment of students' work is thorough and well organized.

134. The identification of students' personal and social development needs on the E2E programme is poor. Students undertake a range of initial assessments, but personal and social development needs are not adequately identified and subsequently are not effectively met. While there is a comprehensive assessment of literacy and numeracy, key skills diagnosis, learning styles and occupational assessments, these are not fully used to provide detailed learning programmes for individuals. For example, students who have achieved high grades in their GCSEs are, nevertheless, required to complete the key skills assessment at level 1.

135. There is a broad range of provision to widen participation in literacy and numeracy programmes. These have developed rapidly from approximately 6 courses to 41 courses at the time of the inspection. Under-represented groups have been attracted to attend college, for example, homeless students, students with a range of physical disabilities and mental health issues, women previously unused to pursuing education, and local community groups. Programmes are offered in a wide variety of community locations at various times, to meet a range of community needs. Students greatly value the local opportunities to learn. There is a good gender balance on programmes. Students have good opportunities to progress from one level of accreditation to another.

136. On the E2E programme, insufficient attention is given to the opportunities for education and training available to students. The emphasis of the programme is on employment for the participants. Staff are keen to help their students and are supportive with day-to-day issues, but they lack awareness of the education and training opportunities available to students. Little advice is given on career opportunities to students at the start of their programme. When students commence employment, the possibilities for linking some further training to their employment are not explored, despite most of the employers being large national organisations which support apprenticeships within their companies. In 2003, only 11% of the students moved into FE or training, and 34% went into jobs with no FE or training. Since September 2003, of those who had left the programme by the time of the inspection, a low proportion of 21% had moved into education or training, but 33% went into jobs.

137. There is inadequate target setting for students and review of their progress. On the literacy and

numeracy courses, some individual learning plans are incomplete. They do not contain long-term or short-term targets. Targets on learning plans and reviews are often general and inappropriate for measuring progress and many do not include completion dates. Students are unable to work to specific targets and to measure the progress they are making.

138. On the E2E programme, progress reviews rely heavily upon students' evaluation of their ability and not on the professional judgement of their tutors. Some of the teachers undertaking the review are unfamiliar with the students and their comments are general in nature, descriptive and insufficiently evaluative. Some reviews are held in inappropriate settings; there is sometimes no privacy and other students are in the same room. The department has recognised these weaknesses and plans to appoint a personal tutor for students who will be responsible for gaining feedback from all staff involved in the students' development.

Leadership and management

139. The management of foundation programmes is weak. The provision is managed within the school of community education and training. Staff meet regularly and day-to-day communication is effective. The provision is not monitored effectively and some significant weaknesses in teaching and learning have not been acknowledged. Managers observe all the teachers. Their lessons have been over generously graded in many cases. There is currently little co-ordination in the management of the various components of foundation programmes across the college and little sharing of good practice.

140. Curriculum development on the E2E programme is weak. The main focus of the programme is employment. There is a narrow range of options for students and little emphasis on education and training. The broader vocational component of the E2E programme is underdeveloped and the value of this option underestimated. There is a lack of activities to improve students' motivation, interest and breadth of experience. Teachers do not have sufficiently detailed knowledge of the E2E learning framework and do not know the difference between the former `life skills' programme and the E2E programme that has replaced it. Some teachers do not have the expertise required to develop students' skills effectively. They have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity. Students are aware of the college's complaints procedure. They have little knowledge or understanding of equality and diversity and their implications. Some practical activities to address this shortfall are planned, but none is yet in place.

Part D: College data

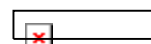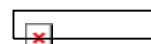|	
	☒

Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

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Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	17	26
2	41	18
3	33	18
4/5	2	13
Other	7	25
Total	100	100

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,036	661	8
Land-based provision	7	220	1
Construction	104	856	5
Engineering, technology and manufacture	318	532	4
Business administration, management and professional	413	2,635	14
Information and communication technology	1,038	4,882	29
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	26	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	479	432	4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	427	414	4
Health, social care and public services	364	698	5
Visual and performing arts and media	383	631	5
Humanities	340	422	4
English, languages and communication	1,158	977	10
Foundation programmes	860	706	7
Total	**6,927**	**14,092**	**100**

Source: provided by the college in 2003

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding	430	329	364	739	2,246	2,612

	transfers						
	Retention rate %	76	73	78	66	60	62
	National average %	76	75	76	73	69	70
	Pass rate %	62	57	62	61	66	52
	National average %	65	69	71	66	68	71
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,074	980	802	1,424	1,308	1,432
	Retention rate %	70	69	73	73	79	70
	National average %	72	70	72	70	68	68
	Pass rate %	69	65	62	73	69	70
	National average %	67	69	71	64	68	72
3	Starters excluding transfers	835	1,221	1,114	1,605	1,732	1,861
	Retention rate %	66	66	67	75	74	77
	National average %	67	71	77	69	68	70
	Pass rate %	63	64	73	60	63	64
	National average %	75	77	79	66	9	72
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	16	*	720	544	575
	Retention rate %	*	100	*	79	80	77
	National average %	66	73	71	67	67	67
	Pass rate %	*	69	*	42	51	57
	National average %	65	54	53	58	55	56

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 1999 to 2002: College ISR.
* fewer than 15 students enrolled

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	

Level 3 (advanced)	66	26	8	85
Level 2 (intermediate)	53	34	13	61
Level 1 (foundation)	57	39	4	28
Other sessions	55	28	17	29
Totals	**59**	**31**	**10**	**203**

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