



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Pendleton College

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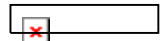
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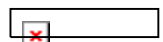
**Basic information about the college**



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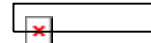
Name of college:	Pendleton College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Michael Sheehan
Address of college:	Dronfield Road Salford M6 7FR
Telephone number:	0161 736 5074
Fax number:	0161 737 4103
Chair of governors:	Edward Nally
Unique reference number:	130509
Name of reporting inspector:	Sean Hanan HMI
Dates of inspection:	1-5 March 2004

**Part A: Summary**



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## Information about the college

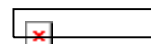


Pendleton College is a sixth form college in the city of Salford. The college merged with De La Salle College in 1997. There is a general further education (FE) college and another sixth form college in the city. The college offers education and training in 12 of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) areas of learning. No courses are offered in construction or engineering. In 2002/03, the college enrolled 1,437 full-time and 3,629 part-time students. This represented significant growth compared to the previous year. The college enrolls a wide range of students in terms of both age and ability. Some 36% of the students are aged over 19, compared to a national average in sixth form colleges of 7.4%. The percentage of students aged 16 to 18 following courses below level 3 is 35%, compared to a sixth form college sector average of 14.8%. Approximately 40% of the college's students receive financial support to help them in their studies. The college offers courses in subjects that are unusual in sixth form colleges, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, catering and equine studies. There is a large provision for adult basic education and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Salford has a population approaching a quarter of a million and a resident workforce of 100,000. There is a small minority ethnic population. The overall level of unemployment in Salford is 3.9%. It is an area of high social and educational disadvantage. Some 35% of school leavers in the city achieve five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) grades A\* to C, which is 19% below the national average. The local authority area ranks as the fourth most deprived in the northwest of England.

The college's mission is to be a centre of academic and vocational excellence for school leavers and adult learners in Salford and surrounding areas.

## How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of education to be outstanding in three of the curriculum areas inspected and good in six. Standards of teaching and learning are very good. The main strengths and weaknesses that should be improved are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- inspirational and dynamic leadership
  
- provision that is socially and educationally inclusive
  
- outstanding provision for adults in the local community

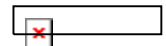
- broad range of provision for students aged 16 to 18
- highly supportive and caring environment for students and staff
- very high standards of teaching and learning
- high pass rates on most courses
- high value added on level 3 courses
- effective procedures for monitoring students' progress
- good support for students
- students' attendance and behaviour are good
- good progression opportunities for students, both within the college and into higher education (HE) and employment
- rigorous monitoring of key performance indicators
- effective strategies to improve retention rates
- reliable and accessible management information.

***What should be improved***

- o retention rates on a minority of courses
  
- o poor accommodation at the De la Salle Centre
  
- o the rigour of quality assurance in a few curriculum areas
  
- o aspects of the provision of key skills for students aged 16 to 18.

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

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

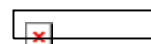


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	<b>Outstanding.</b> There are high pass rates and very high value added on most advanced courses. Very good teaching stimulates enquiry and motivates students in their learning. Support for students is effective in helping students to reach their full potential. Science students make insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT). Leadership and management of the area are outstanding.
Business	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates and value added on most courses. Well-planned lessons stimulate learning. The standard of students' work is good. Retention rates are unsatisfactory on the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate business course.
Information and communications technology and computing	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates and value added on advanced courses. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. ILT is used effectively and there is a wide range of courses offered for both full-time and part-time students. Some lessons for students aged 16 to 18 do not challenge students effectively.
Hospitality, sport and leisure	<b>Outstanding.</b> There are high pass rates and value added on level 3 courses. Confident, enthusiastic and exciting teaching facilitates effective learning. Students' work in catering is of a very high standard and there is strong and effective support for all students. Leadership is very good and there are effective strategies to improve retention rates

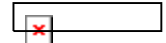
	at levels 1 and 2. There are insufficient opportunities for leisure and travel students to develop their skills in a commercial environment.
Health and social care	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on most courses and high value added on the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) in health and social care. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. Students are well motivated by a wide variety of learning activities. The standard of their written work is good. There are insufficient opportunities for these students to experience current practices in the workplace.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass and retention rates on most advanced courses. Teaching and learning are good. A good range of enrichment programmes are available to students. Retention rates on level 2 vocational courses are unsatisfactory.
Humanities	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on most level 3 courses and very high value added in law. Teaching is well planned and effective. Students benefit from a substantial and successful programme of enrichment activities. Study skills and exam techniques are integrated effectively into most lessons. Some teaching does not extend or challenge the more able students.
English and modern foreign languages	<b>Good.</b> There is high value added on most general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. There is good support for students and effective individual guidance. The English provision at level 2 does not fully meet the needs of full-time students.
English for speakers of other languages	<b>Outstanding.</b> Students' achievements in oral tests are excellent. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good and some is outstanding. Rigorous assessment procedures provide a very good learning context. There is very good pastoral care and support. The provision is effectively managed and contributes to the promotion of inclusion in the local community.

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



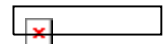
Leadership and management are outstanding. The college has made rapid progress to address the issues identified in the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The college has worked successfully with a broad range of partners to develop sustainable provision for groups in the community who are often excluded from FE. Governors are knowledgeable, committed and provide a clear strategic direction for the college. Strategic planning is effective, well researched and sets realistic and challenging targets. Quality assurance is good. The self-assessment report identifies clearly the key strengths and weaknesses. Students' progress is effectively monitored. Value added is used to celebrate achievement and to identify students' underperformance which enables swift and effective action to be taken. Management information is reliable, timely and user-friendly. It is used effectively to monitor attendance and students' progress. Most curriculum management is very good and there are clear lines of accountability. Communications in the college are excellent. Performance reviews for staff are thorough and link clearly to college strategic objectives. Staff development opportunities are good. Equal opportunities are thoroughly embedded into all aspects of college life. The college has exceeded its recruitment targets for the past three years and financial management is good. Resources are deployed effectively and the college provides very good value for money.

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



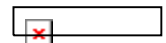
The college's response to education and social inclusion is outstanding. It has successfully promoted understanding, tolerance and friendship between students from different backgrounds. It attaches great strategic importance to widening the participation of young people and adults in the broad community which it serves. The college is making a major contribution to raising the aspirations of adults with low levels of educational achievement, and recruits strongly from under-represented groups, including many students whose first language is not English. Provision in ESOL is outstanding. Many students enter the college with low levels of prior achievement and make very good progress. The college meets its statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Enrolments and student achievements are monitored closely according to gender, ethnicity and disability. The college has assessed its accommodation against Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) criteria, but the implementation of the recommendations at the De la Salle campus have been delayed pending the outcome of the college's proposal to transfer its provision to the Pendleton Centre.

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



Support for students is good. Enrolment and induction are effective in facilitating the transition from school to college. Additional learning support arrangements are well managed. Support for students with learning difficulties is good. Learning mentors enhance the quality of curriculum support. Individual support for students is good, but the quality of the recording of the outcomes of one-to-one tutorials is variable. The tutorial system is managed effectively, both for students aged 16 to 18 and for adults. Students are able to discuss personal issues with trained counsellors. Careers advice and guidance are easily accessible, though interview rooms are small and much of the other space is not suitable for confidential conversations. Support for students who are applying to HE is comprehensive and helpful. There is effective advice about welfare and benefits. The college chaplain works closely with tutors to increase students' awareness and understanding of spiritual and ethical issues. Adult students are allocated to a personal tutor who is also one of their teachers. Attendance is rigorously monitored.

## 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***

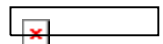
- the friendly and inclusive atmosphere
  
- helpful, supportive and caring teachers

- the wide range of courses
- good support for academic and personal problems
- good study facilities
- the wide variety of interesting enrichment activities.

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

- the food in the canteen
- access to computers
- some poor accommodation
- student social areas
- the relevance of some group tutorial activities.

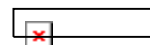
**Other information**



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



## Part B: The college as a whole



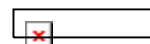
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	78	20	2
19+ and WBL*	78	22	0
Learning 16-18	78	20	2
19+ and WBL*	85	15	0

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

*\*work-based learning*

### Achievement and standards



1. Some 65% of students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on advanced courses. Pass rates on level 3 courses have improved markedly over the period 2001 to 2003 and are above the national averages for sixth form colleges. Overall retention rates on level 3 courses have risen since 2001/02, to around the national average for sixth form colleges in 2002/03. The college uses value added information to calculate how well students are achieving in their advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and GCE A-level studies compared to their previous attainment at GCSE. Overall, students are achieving significantly higher grades than are predicted by their GCSE results. Value added by students has increased during the period 2001 to 2003. The average point score for pass rates at AS level and GCE A level has risen from 12.9 in 2000/01 to 15.6 in 2002/03, despite a small fall in the average GCSE points score of students when they join the college.

2. At level 2, pass rates for GCSE and GNVQ courses are around the national averages. Pass rates on national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses are good. Retention rates are below the national averages for GCSE and GNVQ provision. The college has implemented strategies to improve retention rates and evidence of retention rates during 2003/04 suggests that there is a significant impact. At level 1, the NVQ pass rate is 94%, but GNVQ pass rates are below the national average.

3. Attendance has improved from 81% at the last inspection to 85% which is above the national average for sixth form colleges. There are effective progression routes for students, both within the college and into HE and employment. In 2003, 79% of level 3 leavers moved on to HE. Some 64% of the students studying at level 2 progressed to level 3 at the college and most of level 1 students stayed at the college to follow level 2 courses.

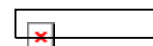
4. Students are highly motivated, learn quickly and make good progress from the time they first join the college. Written explanations are clear and well presented. Research and study skills are good. Oral skills are well developed, particularly in English. Students are able to sustain an argument and develop a point of view effectively. They answer questions confidently in lessons and enter into knowledgeable discussions with their teachers. In catering, students' work is impressive and demonstrates high levels of skill and commitment. Students in visual and performing arts work creatively with flair and imagination. Science students can design experiments taking into account the need for controls and with an awareness of the importance of external variables.

5. Students gain awards and recognition in a variety of external activities. Mathematics students compete in the UK Senior Maths Challenge. Catering students have appeared in the regional finals for restaurant of the year and for consumer of the year. The college also creates opportunities to recognise achievement and celebrate success. On hairdressing and beauty therapy courses, effective feedback is used to recognise improved work. There are also many achievements in a wide range of sporting activities such as, football, hockey, netball and rugby.

### **Adult learners**

6. In 2002/03, approximately 36% of the students were adults. Pass and retention rates for these students are significantly above the national averages at all levels of provision. The overall pass rate on level 1 courses in 2002/03 was 94%, which is 39% above the national average. Pass rates at levels 2 and 3 exceeded the national averages by 19% and 9%, respectively. Retention rates on courses at levels 1 and 2 are significantly above the national average. Retention rates on level 3 courses are also above the national average. In 2002/03, about half the entries at level 3 were for AS-level and GCE A-level courses, for which the retention rate was 10% above the national average.

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



7. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 148 lessons. The overall quality of teaching was very good. Inspectors judged that teaching was good or better in 78% of the lessons observed, satisfactory in 20%, and less than satisfactory in 2%. Teaching is best in science and mathematics, hospitality, sport and leisure and ESOL. There is a clear correlation between good teaching and effective learning. In most lessons, students work hard, participate fully in learning and are highly motivated by the opportunities they have to develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers are fully aware of the needs of the wide range of students that are enrolled on courses at the college. The opinions of all students are valued in lessons and there is an atmosphere throughout the college that is supportive and conducive to the learning process.

8. Teachers convey genuine interest and enthusiasm for their subjects. Most lessons are well planned, have clear objectives and follow suitably detailed schemes of work. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to help students to learn, and they manage learning effectively. Equal opportunities are embedded in teaching and learning. For example, in an access humanities lesson, there was a sensitive approach to a discussion about gender roles in the home with a group of adults which included single parents. Materials and learning aids are of a high quality, particularly in hospitality, sport and leisure. ILT is used effectively to improve learning in hospitality, sport and leisure and ICT. However, there is insufficient use of ILT in the business curriculum.

9. Teaching is focused on the needs of the students. For example, on ESOL courses, there is effective differentiation in lessons that allows the development of oral, written and ICT skills at a pace that is appropriate for the individual student. Effective use is made of questions during and at the end of lessons to check that students understand their work. Teachers are skilful in the use of questioning techniques and this enables students to form conclusions for themselves and encourages less confident students to persevere. Students learn how to be critical and analytical as

well as gaining good subject knowledge. Teachers in mathematics and science regularly introduce the technical language of their subject and then re-use it effectively during review exercises at the end of the lesson. The use of voice and humour to accentuate key learning points is used effectively in visual and performing arts.

10. In the few instances where aspects of teaching are unsuccessful, teachers fail to pay enough attention to the wide range of learning needs of the students and insufficient demands are made of the more able students. Questions in these lessons are often directed at the whole group and there are insufficient checks on the progress of individual students.

11. All full-time and part-time teachers are well qualified. Most have degrees or equivalent qualifications and possess appropriate specialist expertise. Induction procedures for new teachers are comprehensive. Teachers receive good support from the college to achieve teaching qualifications if they do not already possess them.

12. The overall standard of accommodation at the Pendleton centre is satisfactory. Rooms are well maintained and clean. There are attractive displays of students' work in classrooms and corridors. The site has satisfactory access and facilities for people with mobility difficulties. There are good facilities in media, but practical accommodation for science and performing arts is unsatisfactory. Students make good use of the refectory, but there are insufficient alternative social areas. The De la Salle campus is unattractive and provides poor accommodation. Much of the site is inaccessible to wheelchair users, and there are inadequate controls on heating and ventilation; some classrooms are damp. The poor and inflexible arrangement of classrooms makes space utilisation low and reduces the effectiveness of some teaching activities. However, the accommodation for hairdressing and beauty therapy has been developed with considerable ingenuity and provides six salons of a high quality. The college is seeking to transfer its provision at De la Salle to new purpose built accommodation at the Pendleton centre. At the time of the inspection, it was awaiting approval for its proposal. Accommodation at the college's community venues is of variable quality, but is mostly satisfactory. There are good facilities for equine studies at a local riding school.

13. The college's learning resource centre at Pendleton is small, but contains a satisfactory range of books, journals and online learning materials. Access to computers is satisfactory. However, the learning resource centre at De la Salle is poorly resourced and provides insufficient access for students who wish to study in the evening. The college's intranet is well designed and, in English, hospitality, sport and leisure, it provides access to an extensive range of course materials. The use of the intranet has yet to be fully exploited in other curriculum areas. The college has recently made a significant investment in ILT. There are sufficient up-to-date computers for students, with one computer for approximately every four full-time equivalent students. There is good technical support for ILT equipment. Few community venues provide sufficient access to computers.

14. The processes for moderation, standardisation and the internal verification of students' work are clear. Teachers are required to check assessment briefs prior to their use and to monitor the standards within a subject area to ensure fair and valid assessment. Teachers on vocational courses have been appropriately trained to assess and internally verify the work of students on their courses. Reports from validating bodies are routinely analysed by the quality manager and action plans are drawn up when required. Teachers with experience as examiners share their expertise with their colleagues. Senior managers analyse results by teacher, class and cohort to improve the effectiveness of assessment procedures.

15. There is effective use of initial assessment to identify students' learning difficulties and to plan their future learning. Minimum target grades are used to monitor students' progress and to motivate them to achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers are prompt in returning marked work and generally meet the college target of five working days, or three weeks for major assignments. The assessment and review of students' work and progress are integrated into course reviews. The quality of written feedback on marked work is variable. There is helpful and positive annotation of marked work on AS-level and GCE A-level programmes. The quality of assignment briefs on vocational courses is good. There are examples of detailed, systematic feedback. However, other comments are too brief to explain effectively how students can improve their work. Teachers keep mark books that record all the work set, including homework and tests. These are used by managers

during the appraisal process.

16. There are regular opportunities for students to discuss their progress with teachers. Tutors hold one-to-one reviews with their students to discuss progress compared to their minimum target grades. The interviews are purposeful and constructive and are informed by electronic reports detailing attendance and achievement. The student review board operates effectively. Students identified as 'at risk' are assessed within a few weeks of their enrolment to confirm their suitability to continue on their current programme. The college communicates effectively with parents and carers through parents' evenings, regular reports home and timely contact when students are in difficulties. Reports are checked for accuracy, depth and usefulness.

17. The college's development of provision for adults in the local community is outstanding. It currently uses some 60 community venues to provide a broad range of courses, including extensive provision in adult basic education, ESOL and IT. Courses in adult basic education have been targeted in areas where levels of adult basic literacy and numeracy are very low. These courses are proving highly effective in developing the social and employability skills of groups of students who are under-represented in FE, including asylum seekers, single parents and young offenders. Courses also provide for progression into employment as teaching assistants, in customer care and in IT. The number of students who have become engaged in learning through the college's community provision has increased significantly and progression to higher-level courses is good.

18. There is a broad range of provision for students aged 16 to 18. The college is unusual for a sixth form college in that it provides many courses at entry and foundation level, and in vocational areas of learning such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality and catering, equine studies and provision for IT practitioners. The college has implemented Curriculum 2000 effectively. Students are able to choose the combination of subjects they need from 35 AS-level and GCE A-level subjects offered. There are very good opportunities for students to participate and achieve additional qualifications in activities which are related to their main course. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students can choose from a wide range of additional qualifications including Afro-Caribbean hairdressing, ear piercing, advanced nail techniques, reflexology and first aid. Students on equine studies courses gain additional qualifications accredited by the British Horse Society (BHS). A wide range of more general enrichment activities is also offered. For example; Millennium volunteers; Duke of Edinburgh's Award; Islamic society; and a variety of performing arts, sport and recreational activities. Enrichment activities are well attended. There are also a large number of curriculum related trips and visits that enhance students' learning.

19. The college's arrangements for developing students' key skills are unsatisfactory. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, key skills are successfully employed to enhance the development of students' understanding of communication and IT. However, in the majority of programmes key skills are not integrated into the work in this way and students fail to appreciate their relevance. The college has recently revised its policy for key skills in order to adopt an approach that is consistent with the requirements of individual programmes. Data provided by the college indicate that attendance and retention rates have improved, and that the number of students who have successfully completed a key skills qualification has increased. However, overall pass rates in key skills tests are low, and the quality of teaching in key skills lessons is not as good as that in other lessons.

20. The college's good relationships with local schools have enabled it to respond successfully to demand for applied GCSE courses in manufacturing, travel and tourism, and in applied science. The college also provides good link courses for some 169 pupils aged 14 to 16 that lead to qualifications in catering, hairdressing and childcare. The college is responsive to the needs of local employers. Senior managers and governors have a good knowledge of the local employment market and use this knowledge to inform decisions on the development of new courses. Curriculum managers in vocational areas keep up to date with current industrial practice. Performing arts students value the contact they have with local artists. However, in health and social care, business, and in leisure and tourism, students do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their practical skills in an appropriate industrial or commercial environment.

21. The enrolment and induction of students are effectively managed. Comprehensive information about the college and the course provision is widely available to prospective students. Marketing

materials are well presented and convey the message that there is a course and an opportunity for all students. There are good links with the local high schools that include talks, visits to the college and taster sessions. Open evenings are widely advertised in the area. All full-time students have a pre-enrolment interview. Adult students have at least three opportunities to enrol for courses each year.

22. Additional learning support arrangements are well managed and effective. A diagnostic assessment of learning needs is undertaken for all full-time students and additional help is provided to those identified as having learning difficulties. The study support team meets regularly to discuss students' progress and share good practice. There is ongoing training for managing challenging behaviour and overcoming the barriers to learning. All the study support assistants have received training that includes an awareness of child protection issues and the principles of counselling. An educational psychologist conducts tests for dyslexia and to provide evidence of the need for special circumstances in examinations. Students with dyslexia have one-to-one support from qualified dyslexia tutors. Male tutors have been appointed to target areas of male underachievement.

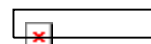
23. Curriculum areas are supported by learning mentors. Most are qualified to degree level and they have made a significant contribution to the quality of support within the curriculum. Students with numeracy difficulties have tutors from the basic skills area to support them. All level 1 courses and some at level 2 have classroom study support assistants assigned to work in the classroom, to support groups of students identified as having learning difficulties.

24. The quality of individual support for students is very good. Some 100 students receive one-to-one support in regularly timetabled appointments. Most students attend regularly and those who do not are contacted to enquire about the reason for absence. The quality of the recording of one-to-one tutorials is variable. The best records show clearly what work has been covered and the progress that is being made. However, others lack specific comments about the activity and the outcome. Adult students account for 10% of those receiving learning support. They make good use of the one-to-one support and the drop-in facilities. Support for those on courses in community venues is arranged to meet the needs of individuals.

25. The tutorial system is efficiently managed and ensures that those who attend college during the day have access to personal support. Students aged 16 to 18 meet their tutors formally twice a week for a group tutorial. The tutorials are imaginatively planned and effective. Discrete tutorial programmes are tailored to the needs of different cohorts of students. Advanced level students can take AS-level or GCE A-level general studies as part of their tutorial entitlement. Some of the administrative parts of group tutorials are too long. Adult students are allocated to a personal tutor who is also one of their teachers. Attendance is rigorously monitored and all unauthorised absence is investigated by the attendance officer. Personal tutors monitor the attendance of adult students.

26. Student services provide effective advice and guidance to students about career and HE opportunities. The college was awarded a quality mark for its student services provision, in February 2004. They also promote a wide range of initiatives to help vulnerable students stay on course. However, the interview rooms are too small and much of the space in the student services area is inappropriate for confidential conversations. There are some 600 students in receipt of educational maintenance allowances (EMAs). They receive effective advice and support for welfare and benefits issues. The college chaplain is one of three trained counsellors. The chaplain works closely with tutors to increase students' awareness and understanding of spiritual and ethical issues and there are a range of opportunities for students to learn about a variety of faiths. Providing opportunities for spiritual and moral development is a key feature of the college's mission. Opportunities for expressions of faith and the celebration of community are strongly encouraged. A senior member of staff is responsible for child protection issues.

## Leadership and management



27. Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal and senior managers provide inspiring and dynamic leadership in achieving continuous improvements in the quality of students' learning and achievements. Governors and staff are committed to the college's mission to widen participation and promote social inclusion amongst the local community. The college has worked successfully with a broad range of partners to develop sustainable provision for groups that are often excluded from FE. Since the last inspection in 1998, the range of provision below level 3 has expanded significantly and the number of students aged 16 to 18 studying at levels 1 and 2 has risen sharply. Provision for adults has also increased substantially, mainly as a result of a large increase in community provision of adult basic skills and ESOL. Strategies to improve pass and retention rates have been successful. The college has continued to build on its commitment to provide good support for students and has maintained a strong financial position. Weaknesses in quality assurance, which were identified in the previous inspection, have been addressed.

28. Governors and senior managers articulate a clear strategic direction for the college. Strategic planning is comprehensive, widely researched and closely linked to local and national education and skills agendas. Aims and objectives are detailed. Targets are realistic and challenging. Staff are consulted during the planning process and their contributions are valued and influential. The strategic review group monitors the implementation of college strategies and key performance indicators such as retention and pass rates, and attendance. Underperformance is checked and action plans are implemented and monitored.

29. There is an open, responsive and supportive management ethos. The management structure defines clear lines of responsibility. Communications are excellent and regular meetings take place at all levels in the organisation. Weekly bulletins and full staff meetings ensure regular and effective cross-college communications. Managers of most curriculum and pastoral areas provide very good and enthusiastic leadership. Attendance is closely monitored, and students at risk of underachieving are given effective support by their teachers.

30. The management information system provides up-to-date and reliable information which is accessible and easy to use. Information is used effectively to monitor attendance, achievement and the progress of individual students. It enables governors and senior managers to make well-grounded decisions about quality and about future provision.

31. Governors discharge their duties effectively and operate within a secure framework for governance. Members of the corporation are drawn from a variety of backgrounds. They are well informed by regular reports and understand their role well. Sub-committees effectively monitor all the key aspects of the college's operations, such as finance, academic performance and human resources. They report regularly to the full corporation. Individual governors are attached to different curriculum areas. This enables them to gain a fuller understanding of the progress being made towards the college's strategic objectives. It also improves communications between staff and governors. Attendance at governors' meetings is variable and has been identified as an issue by the college. The individual training needs of governors are assessed and action plans drawn up, but they are not systematically reviewed.

32. Quality assurance procedures are good. The arrangements for self-assessment are comprehensive, systematic and understood by all staff. There is a high level of accountability. Curriculum areas are reviewed thoroughly six times a year. Action plans are produced and progress is effectively monitored. The views of students, employers and other external agencies are sought and used to improve both the quality and range of courses on offer. Target setting and monitoring are thorough and the college makes good use of benchmarking data to measure performance in key areas. For example, value added data is used effectively to identify patterns in students' performance and enable teachers and managers to take swift action where a student is under performing. In most areas of the college, self-assessment is critical and thorough. However, in a minority of departments, it is insufficiently critical and development plans do not demonstrate clear actions for improvement. Day-to-day management of quality is enhanced by the effective use of a 'live' reference manual. It consists of reference sheets relating to various aspects of quality procedures which are updated regularly. The college's judgements about the quality of provision are broadly consistent with those of inspectors.

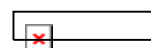
33. The quality of teaching and learning is closely monitored. The lesson observation programme is comprehensive, well established and effective. Observation grades are standardised rigorously. Teachers and managers discuss regularly aspects of good teaching and learning, such as differentiation, and the outcomes contribute to the very high quality of teaching and learning in the college. Peer mentors disseminate good practice and provide valuable support and advice to newly qualified, as well as more established, teaching staff. The profile of grades awarded by the college for teaching and learning in 2003/04 is closely aligned to those awarded by inspectors.

34. Staff development is very effective. All staff have an annual performance review. Performance reviews are thorough, well documented and contribute to the identification of staff professional development needs. Individual targets for improvement are set for all staff and they are closely monitored. There is a generous staff development budget and all staff are offered the opportunity to attend external courses. In-house training takes place regularly, and covers topics such as dealing with challenging behaviour, key skills and quality assurance. However, there is no overall training plan that links planned activities with the strategic priorities of the college.

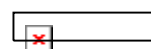
35. Equal opportunities are well promoted and embedded into all aspects of the college's work. The college meets its responsibilities with respect to current legislation. Students and parents are made aware of the college's policy through the college charters. Effective training has been undertaken to raise the awareness of staff, students and governors about race equality and disability discrimination issues. Materials displayed in the college promote cultural diversity. There are well-established systems for analysing students' pass rates by gender and ethnic background and the results are reported to the governors.

36. Financial management of the college is good. Over the past three years, the college has exceeded its recruitment targets and students' achievements have markedly improved. There are effective systems for internal resource allocation. The college is developing the Pendleton Business Centre to meet local commercial needs and to generate an alternative source of funding. The college utilizes resources effectively and provides very good value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Science and mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on most advanced courses
  
- very high value added for most level 3 students
  
- very good teaching that stimulates enquiry and motivates students in their learning

- highly effective academic and pastoral support for students
  
- outstanding leadership and management.

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient use of ILT by students in practical science lessons.

**Scope of provision**

37. The college offers GCE A-level and AS-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and further mathematics. At level 2, there are GCSE courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. There is a City and Guilds numeracy course at level 1. There are no adult courses provided in science and mathematics. There is a strong commitment to widen participation, particularly at levels 1 and 2, where enrolments from minority ethnic groups exceed the percentage in the local community. Some 470 students follow courses in the curriculum area. Most are aged 16 to 18 and attend full time.

**Achievement and standards**

38. Pass rates on most advanced courses are very high and exceed national averages. For example, in 2002/03, the pass rate for AS-level mathematics was 16% above the national average. The pass rate in physics was 96% which is 26% above the national average. Pass rates at GCE A level have exceeded national averages for the past three years. The proportion of students achieving high grades is particularly good in a number of AS-level subjects. For example, in mathematics, 25% of students gained grades A or B compared to a national average of 9%. The pass rate for GCSE mathematics is 35% above the national average. Retention rates on advanced courses are at or above the national average. Retention rates on GCSE courses leading up to 2003 have been below national averages. The college has implemented strategies to improve retention rates and in-year retention rates during 2003/04 have improved. Most students' achievements considerably exceed the grades which might be predicted based on their GCSE results. In biology, mathematics and chemistry, the value added scores are good and in physics they are excellent. Attendance is very good. In lessons observed by inspectors, attendance exceeded 90%.

39. Students' work is of a high standard and some is outstanding. Science students are able to carry out practical investigations accurately. They understand the need for reliability in collecting data and are able to design experiments that follow scientific methodology. They use pilot studies effectively to assess the effects of environmental changes on their practical investigations. More able students can make detailed adjustments to compensate for experimental error. In mathematics, students are able to carry out complex calculations using algebra and calculus. They work accurately and know when and how to use formulae. They use graphical calculators skilfully. High achieving students are creative in their mathematical thinking.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	76	103	86



		% retention	75	85	60
		% pass rate	93	73	88
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	33	30	40
		% retention	91	90	85
		% pass rate	100	100	91
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	19	18	30
		% retention	100	72	87
		% pass rate	89	69	96
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	43	33	73
		% retention	88	91	86
		% pass rate	91	86	67
GCE A-level chemistry*	3	No. of starts	20	8	6
		% retention	55	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level mathematics*	3	No. of starts	33	22	19
		% retention	58	100	100
		% pass rate	100	95	95

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one year course

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

40. The overall standard of teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and develop very good, professional relationships with their students. They use a wide variety of techniques in lessons including exposition, question and answer, group and pair activities and practical work. For example, in a GCE A-level mathematics lesson, students learned about different types of asymptotes by using graphical calculators to display graphs before plotting their own large-scale sketch curves. They worked with computer generated graphs which they used to give presentations about their work.

41. In science, practical work is effectively integrated with theory. For example, in an AS-level biology lesson, the students constructed their own apparatus to investigate the effects of different concentrations of hydrogen peroxide on the enzyme catalase in potatoes. Their knowledge of enzyme kinetics improved and also their ideas about the experimental design and sources of error. In a chemistry lesson, students analysed the iron content of iron tablets by titration. They improved both their dexterity with burettes and their skills with titration calculations. Students record experimental results accurately, but tabulation of results and graphs plotting are still being done manually. There is insufficient use of data loggers or computers to record and analyse data. This is failing to give students an adequate level of skill for higher level studies or employment in science in the modern world. Careful attention is paid to health and safety during practical lessons.

42. Students respond positively to the very good teaching they experience. They are exceptionally well motivated, interested in their studies and keen to extend their learning. In a GCE A-level physics lesson, students were investigating the movement of marbles which were dropped into damp sand. Many became deeply involved in the topic and asked questions of each other and of the teacher about other possible applications of the principles they were learning. The work stimulated one group of students to try to predict the possible effects of different gravitational fields.

43. The science laboratories are all located in one building. There are attractive wall displays in walkways and lively demonstrations in laboratories, linked to the topics being studied. However, much of the accommodation is outdated, particularly in chemistry. The college has recognised the issue and there are plans to improve the buildings. Teachers are particularly well qualified and committed to their students. Student's learning is well supported by a dedicated team of technicians. Most equipment for practical work is good. Students have access to a wide range of learning resources and reference material. There are good topic booklets with imaginative, structured handouts to aid learning and revision. The library has an adequate supply of books, but there are insufficient volumes to support further enquiry and deeper study by the most able students. Students make effective use of the Internet and the college intranet for private study.

44. Assessment is rigorous and well organised. Work is marked accurately and feedback to students is prompt and thorough. In some cases, chemistry exercises have insufficient developmental feedback to tell students how they can improve their work. Realistic and challenging targets are set for students.

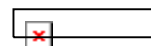
45. There is excellent support for individual students. Timetabled workshop sessions offer support on a drop-in basis. Students receive individual help from teachers that is highly effective. Teachers from the University of Salford attend mathematics tutorials to work with the more able students. Very effective pastoral support is also provided by staff in the area for individual students. Regular one-to-one appointments are arranged for students to discuss their progress, motivation, career planning and personal issues. There is also a 'science pals' scheme for students to give support to one another.

46. There is an impressive range of enrichment activities. Biology students attend a residential course at a specialist field study centre to support their work on environmental topics. Students attend the science week lectures at Manchester University to learn about current topical issues, such as quarks, cloning and chemotherapy. Some enter the Biology Olympiad and mathematics students have won prizes in the Leeds National Mathematics Challenge. There are also good links with partner schools where college staff provide extension classes for the pupils.

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

47. Leadership and management of the area are outstanding. There are good communications both at curriculum area and subject team level. There is an excellent team spirit amongst the staff. Schemes of work are well structured, give details of resources and suggested learning activities and are implemented consistently across course teams. Newly qualified teachers receive excellent support. Good practice in teaching and learning is shared and curriculum team leaders ensure that a strong emphasis is placed on improving the quality of teaching and learning and preparing students for examinations. Meetings are held regularly and agendas include the monitoring of student performance. The self-assessment report is well developed, detailed and appropriately self-critical.

### **Business**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- high value added on level 3 courses

- o well-planned lessons that stimulate learning
- o good standard of students' work.

**Weaknesses**

- o unsatisfactory retention rates on GNVQ intermediate business
- o insufficient use of ILT to enhance students' learning.

**Scope of provision**

48. The college offers a wide range of full-time courses in business. Provision includes AS-level and GCE A-level business studies and accounting, AVCE business and GNVQ intermediate business courses. Part-time provision includes Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) levels 2 and 3 accounting courses and the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) levels 2 and 3 teaching assistant courses. Some 210 full-time and 58 part-time students study business courses at the college, of which 203 are aged 16 to 18.

**Achievement and standards**

49. There are high pass rates on most courses. Pass rates are above the national average on all level 3 courses. The pass rates on the AS-level accounts course and the classroom assistants' course exceed the national averages by 15% and 23%, respectively. Retention rates are mostly around the national averages. However, the retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate business course was 30% below the national average in 2002/03 and the pass rate has declined over the past three years. Students on advanced courses achieve higher grades than are predicted based on their prior attainment at GCSE. Value added by students on GCE A-level accounting and the AVCE business double award are outstanding.

50. The standard of students' work is good. They are able to research topics thoroughly and produce well-presented and informative reports. They are also able to apply the knowledge they have acquired to the business world and make recommendations to the client or company. In the majority of lessons, students demonstrate a good level of knowledge, understanding and skills. They are able to complete practical tasks such as, cash flow forecasts, recruitment and selection plans, trading accounts, profit and loss accounts, the analysis of company balance sheets, and the development of promotional materials. Students have good IT skills, but their oral presentation skills are less well developed. Overall attendance is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	19	31	30
		% retention	58	61	53

		% pass rate	91	84	75
NCFE teaching assistants	2	No. of starts	**	106	53
		% retention	**	92	91
		% pass rate	**	67	94
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	25	24	52
		% retention	92	83	81
		% pass rate	91	85	90
GCE A-level business studies*	3	No. of starts	48	14	8
		% retention	50	93	100
		% pass rate	88	100	100
AS-level accounting	3	No. of starts	**	8	19
		% retention	**	75	79
		% pass rate	**	67	73
AVCE business	3	No. of starts	**	22	39
		% retention	**	64	72
		% pass rate	**	86	86

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one-year course

\*\* course not running

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

51. The overall standard of teaching is good. Most lessons are well planned and stimulate learning. In the better lessons, teachers begin the lesson briskly, clarify the objectives for the lesson and set challenging deadlines for the completion of students' work. Teachers plan a variety of learning activities to stimulate and maintain students' interest and develop their knowledge and understanding. Schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive, clear and professional. Handouts are structured effectively and easy for students to use. They are encouraged to contribute to lessons and they are praised for their inputs. In an accounting lesson, the teacher used questions skilfully to develop students' understanding of trading accounts for clubs and societies. Students were highly attentive and responded enthusiastically to the teacher's questions. They worked quietly, independently and confidently on the examples that were provided.

52. In the less successful lessons, the pace is slower and learning is often passive. There are few checks on the learning of these students. Some students take comprehensive notes; other students' notes are sparse. In some lessons, students interrupt each other and do not listen to the views of fellow students. In one lesson, students who had completed tasks quickly were not provided with any further work and they became restless and inattentive. There is no work experience for GNVQ intermediate business students to enable them to link their vocational course to the commercial world.

53. Students are attentive, enthusiastic and respond confidently to teachers' questions. They work effectively, both independently and collaboratively. However, there is insufficient use of ILT to enhance learning. Teachers have not placed learning materials on the college intranet. Data projectors and electronic whiteboards are rarely used to support the learning process.

54. The quality of accommodation is satisfactory. Two business classrooms are located in hatted

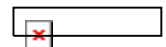
accommodation. The rooms are spacious and there are good displays of students' work, but they are sometimes cold. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced. All the teachers in the area have a degree and a teaching qualification. Two are working towards master's qualifications. Three teachers have recent industrial experience.

55. Assessment practice is satisfactory. The setting of minimum target grades for students aged 16 to 18 motivates them to improve their work. Students' work is marked and returned promptly. Most feedback is comprehensive and identifies what is good and what could be improved. A minority of feedback is less encouraging and does not clearly identify areas for improvement. There are good formative assessment practices for accounting students. The personal tutorial system identifies effectively students at risk and there is good communications between subject and personal tutors. Individual learning plans include an initial self-assessment, aims and goals for the year, interview notes, minimum target grades, current grades and grades for effort and attendance. However, there are no specific shorter-term targets for completion of work.

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

56. Leadership and management of the area are good. The management structure is effective and clearly understood by all staff. Meetings are minuted, involve all staff and focus on teaching and learning. However, minutes are brief and do not always record specific dates by which actions should be implemented. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. The self-assessment report identifies key action points. However, it is not sufficiently detailed and, in some instances, overestimates the quality of the provision.

### **Information and communications technology and computing**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates and value added on level 3 courses
  
- much good teaching
  
- good standard of students' work
  
- good use of ILT in lessons
  
- good range of courses to meet students' needs.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- o insufficient challenge in some lessons for students aged 16 to 18
  
- o insufficient sharing of good practice.

**Scope of provision**

57. The college offers a wide range of courses to meet the needs of students. Courses are offered from entry level to level 3 for both full-time and part-time students. Some courses focus on the use of office applications software and some have a more technical focus, such as practical computer maintenance. There is provision in the local community, including work with a centre that provides support for those recovering from mental health illnesses. Full-time provision includes an entry level qualification in ICT, GNVQ foundation and intermediate, AVCE ICT, and GCE A levels in ICT and computing. Part-time courses include the European computer driving licence (ECDL), 'E' qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3, the open college network (OCN) progression award in technology, computing and ICT and a course in computer maintenance. There are appropriate progression routes for both full-time and part-time students. Some 917 students are enrolled on courses in the area.

**Achievement and standards**

58. Pass rates for level 3 courses are high. In 2002/03, all AS-level and GCE A-level computing students were successful in their examination, as were 91% of AS-level ICT students. Students in AS-level computing and ICT achieve significantly above the grade that their GCSE results would predict. Retention rates are around the national averages for sixth form colleges. In-year retention rates for 2003/04 show significant improvements of between 5% and 18% compared to the previous year.

59. The standard of students' work is good. GCE A-level computing students use complex concepts confidently in data base design. Foundation GNVQ students work competently to produce well-presented documents to a professional standard. Students in community-based classes work to a high standard. In a class for those who are recovering from mental health illnesses, students have progressed from a basic introductory course to ECDL. They use software with a high level confidence. In other adult classes, older students learn new skills such as using e-mail and the Internet.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
START award in technology, computing and IT	1	No. of starts	**	74	34
		% retention	**	74	97
		% pass rate	**	82	88
Certificate in IT	2	No. of starts	**	12	18
		% retention	**	83	94
		% pass rate	**	100	79
Progression award in technology, computing and IT	2	No. of starts	**	15	42
		% retention	**	100	86
		% pass rate	**	100	90

ECDL	2	No. of starts	**	51	50
		% retention	**	100	82
		% pass rate	**	51	68
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	26	26	31
		% retention	96	85	87
		% pass rate	96	91	100
AS-level IT	3	No. of starts	18	29	40
		% retention	89	86	85
		% pass rate	38	72	91
GCE A-level computing*	3	No. of starts	31	11	15
		% retention	55	91	93
		% pass rate	94	100	100

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one year course

\*\* course not running

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

60. The overall standard of teaching is good. GCE A-level students enjoy work that is challenging and provides opportunities to explore new concepts and areas. Community-based classes are taught in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. In the better lessons, the individual needs of students are recognised and taken into account by teachers. For example, in a level 1 lesson, the teacher effectively addressed students' literacy needs. Teachers dealt with students recovering from mental health issues in a caring and sensitive way and ensured that each individual progressed at an appropriate speed. Some lessons for full-time students aged 16 to 18 are uninspiring and do not challenge them sufficiently. These lessons lack a variety of approaches and students spend too long listening without practising the skills they are being taught. Students have few opportunities to discuss the concepts and ideas they are learning.

61. Teachers use ILT effectively to improve the quality of lessons. They use interactive white boards in a well-planned way to improve learning and make demonstrations clearer and more interesting. Students have access to worksheets and assignments on the college intranet. Some of these are interactive. Many students submit their assignments electronically.

62. Resources within the area are generally satisfactory. Many classrooms have interactive whiteboards and most have a data projector. Students have access to a good range of materials on the college intranet to support their learning. They use up-to-date, industry-standard equipment and all students have a college e-mail account. However, in some classrooms, lessons are interrupted by members of staff walking through to get to an office.

63. Teachers are appropriately qualified. All teachers of full-time students have a degree in a relevant subject and a teaching qualification. Most also have higher qualifications. In the adult studies department, all staff have a teaching qualification and qualifications which are appropriate for the level of courses that they are teaching.

64. Assessment is thorough and meets the requirements of awarding bodies. Students have an initial assessment to determine their numeracy, literacy and language abilities. An assessment is also made of their ICT skills. Learning plans are agreed with students who understand the targets that are set. Progress is monitored and students understand how well they are doing. Students

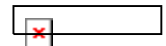
receive regular homework which is marked, returned promptly and includes feedback to help them to improve their work. Teachers record and monitor students' progress effectively.

65. Students receive effective support from teachers. Induction procedures are comprehensive. Students' individual needs are identified and recorded, and teachers ensure that they are addressed. Full-time students also benefit from the support of their tutor through one-to-one interviews. There is an effective system to deal with poor attendance and behaviour.

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

66. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. ICT provision is managed by two departments in the college. One has responsibility for the full-time courses and the other manages adults and the vocational provision. The two teaching teams do not meet to discuss teaching and learning issues and opportunities to share good practice are missed. Quality assurance arrangements are effective in improving standards. The performance of each subject area is monitored regularly and reviewed by the curriculum manager who ensures that appropriate action occurs. During 2002/03, the area identified significant problems with retention rates in one part of the provision. The team took action which has proved to be effective. The self-assessment process is good.

### **Hospitality, sport and leisure**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates and value added on level 3 courses
- confident, enthusiastic and exciting teaching that facilitates effective learning
- very high standards of students' work in catering
- strong and effective support for students
- strong leadership with effective strategies to improve retention rates at levels 1 and 2.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient opportunities for leisure and travel students to develop their skills in a



commercial environment.

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

67. The college offers a comprehensive range of full-time and part-time courses. There are certificate, first and national diploma courses in sports studies. GNVQ foundation and intermediate and AVCE courses are offered in the leisure and travel area. Hospitality courses are offered at NVQ levels 1 and 2, food preparation and service awards. There are a small number of additional qualifications including foundation hygiene and community sports leader award (CSLA). There are some 238 full-time and 36 part-time students studying in the area; 142 full-time students are following courses in sports studies. There are 60 full-time students following courses in leisure, travel and tourism. Hospitality is a new and developing part of the provision where 36 full-time and 27 part-time students are currently enrolled. There are clear and effective progression routes for all students, particularly into employment and HE.

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

68. Overall students' achievements are very high. Pass rates are high and students gain significantly better grades than their GCSE results would predict. All level 3 programmes have outstanding value added scores. Retention rates have been unsatisfactory on level 2 sports and leisure programmes up to 2003. There is strong evidence to indicate that strategies to address the issue are having an impact in the current year. In-year retention rates on programmes at levels 1 and 2 have improved significantly. Intermediate leisure and tourism and first diploma sports studies courses have improved in-year retention rates by 30% and 40%, respectively.

69. There are very high standards of work in catering. The students work effectively in the college training restaurant to produce a wide variety of menus. Students work productively at a professional industry pace. Their time management, organisational and culinary skills are excellent. The quality of the food produced and served is outstanding for level 2 students. During the past 12 months, the students have participated in 2 regional finals; for restaurant of the year and for consumer of the year.

70. Students in leisure and travel undertake effective research and problem solving, using IT skills to search the Internet. Sport studies students work productively together and develop critical evaluation skills. Diaries completed by level 2 students identify the weaknesses in their swimming strokes and explain how they can improve their swimming techniques.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
First diploma sport science	2	No. of starts	22	38	41
		% retention	77	76	63
		% pass rate	82	100	96
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	17	20	16
		% retention	88	70	50
		% pass rate	100	93	88
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	*	15	24
		% retention	*	87	75
		% pass rate	*	100	94
AS-level sport, games	3	No. of starts	17	21	18

and recreation		% retention	88	81	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma sports science	3	No. of starts	12	16	18
		% retention	50	81	94
		% pass rate	100	92	100

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

\* course not running

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

71. The overall standard of teaching is very good. It is well planned, stimulating, challenging and promotes effective learning. Teachers use up-to-date and industry-specific materials in their teaching. Students gain a clear insight into professional working practices. In a foundation leisure and tourism lesson on employment, students researched a variety of jobs linked to their areas of interest. The tutor had produced job applications for the students to work on critically in order to build a checklist of good practice. The students were well motivated and participated freely in a group discussion about salaries, terms and conditions and employer expectations. In a level 3 sports lesson, students were required to research local initiatives to widen participation in sport, for the disabled, ethnic minorities and girls. They were able to select the strengths and weaknesses of the initiatives and give recommendations for improvement.

72. Professionally designed resources are used effectively to engage and motivate students in their learning. First diploma sports students worked at a challenging pace to complete a variety of activities and worked effectively together labelling large diagrams of footballers with injuries specific to their sport. Extracts from newspaper sports pages were linked to the injuries and the lesson was consolidated with treatment on site for specific injuries. In a practical gym session for level 3 sport studies, the camcorder was used by students to capture good and poor basketball shots. Injured students acted as observers, to evaluate the delivery of the session and feedback at the end of the activity. In a small minority of lessons there are too few opportunities for students to apply their learning in context and insufficient checks on the progress of individual students.

73. Teachers are appropriately qualified and many work as external moderators for awarding bodies. In catering, there is a high-quality, purpose-built restaurant and kitchen. The catering base room provides access to computers and appropriate software is available to support students in their studies. There is also a small bistro. The sport facilities are extensive and include outside pitches, a gymnasium, a sports hall and a swimming pool. The gymnasium and changing rooms are in need of refurbishment. Library resources are adequate and teachers use ILT effectively to produce high-quality handouts and activities for students. The intranet is underdeveloped.

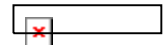
74. There is a wide variety of enrichment opportunities available for students. As well as sports activities, there is an extensive range of visits and trips, such as teambuilding in North Wales and trips to Barcelona and New York. However, there are insufficient opportunities for leisure and travel students to develop their practical skills in a commercial industrial environment.

75. Assessment is well organised and internal verification processes are effective. Assignment briefs are well planned and vocationally relevant. Tasks are clear and students are aware of the standards required to achieve a pass, merit or distinction. Most feedback is detailed and constructive. However, some marked work has insufficient comment to support short-term improvement. There is strong and effective support for students. Induction is comprehensive and there are student review boards in the first term to check students' suitability for their identified course. Learning mentors have been used effectively to support vulnerable students or those deemed to be at risk.

### **Leadership and management**

76. Leadership and management of the area are outstanding. Managers set a clear direction and ensure that the curriculum area is responsive to the needs of the local community. Challenging targets for retention and pass rates are set and monitored effectively. Good support is in place to support improvements in teaching and learning. Quality assurance procedures have been effective in improving the quality of the provision since the last inspection. The college mentoring system provides effective support for newly qualified teachers. Communications are good. Curriculum meetings focus on strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Course team meetings focus on retention rates and student progress. The self-assessment process is thorough and appropriately self-critical.

## Health and social care



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- very high value added for students on the AVCE double award in health and social care
  
- good teaching with a wide variety of learning activities
  
- detailed feedback to improve student performance
  
- good support for students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses
  
- insufficient opportunities for GNVQ students to experience current practices in the workplace.

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

77. The college offers full-time courses in GNVQ foundation, GNVQ intermediate and AVCE health and social care. In early years' education, there are full-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 and a small number of part-time courses in working with children and counselling skills. There are some 187 full-time students aged 16 to 18 enrolled in the area and 1,572 adults. There are approximately 1,500 students enrolled on short first aid courses.

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

78. Students are generally successful in achieving their learning goals. Pass and retention rates are high on most advanced courses. In 2002/03, all the students who started the diploma in childcare and education gained the qualification. There were 95% retention and pass rates on the AVCE double award in health and social care and a 100% pass rate on the counselling skills intermediate course. Students achieve significantly higher grades than their GCSE results would predict on the AVCE double award in health and social care. Retention rates have been significantly below national averages for the last three years on the foundation and intermediate courses in health and social care. In 2002/03, retention rates on the foundation course and the intermediate course were 11% and 35% below the national averages, respectively. There is a high proportion of merit and distinction grades on the GNVQ foundation and certificate in childcare courses.

79. The standard of students' work is good. Portfolios are well presented and generally of a high quality. Research projects at advanced level are prepared thoroughly and draw on relevant research sources. Students evaluate their findings and successfully apply conventional academic procedures to their work. Students' work at intermediate and foundation level is also of a high standard. In one lesson students were able to use a structured approach to risk assessment and present their findings confidently using an overhead projector. Full-time students can gain a number of additional qualifications, such as sign language, first aid and counselling skills. Overall attendance in lessons observed by inspectors was 86%.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	*	17	15
		% retention	*	65	60
		% pass rate	*	100	78
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	21	31	17
		% retention	86	65	41
		% pass rate	94	100	71
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	31	15	24
		% retention	81	60	71
		% pass rate	80	100	94
Counselling skills	2	No. of starts	*	33	18
		% retention	*	94	94
		% pass rate	*	55	100
AVCE single award in health and social care	3	No. of starts	*	25	50
		% retention	*	96	78
		% pass rate	*	100	79
AVCE double award in health and social care	3	No. of starts	17	29	20
		% retention	94	96	95
		% pass rate	75	100	95

Diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	15	10	18
		% retention	53	70	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

\* course not running

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

80. Teaching is effective and is clearly matched to students' needs. There is a good variety of well-planned learning activities which stimulate and engage the students. Knowledge and understanding are applied effectively in a practical context and there are good links between theory and practical work. Students make good progress on their courses. In one lesson, students were asked to devise a therapeutic game using a range of resource materials to enable clients to express feelings in an emotionally safe environment. The students worked productively and acquired a good understanding of the context which they later evaluated. On occasions, work is insufficiently demanding and fails to extend the students' knowledge or skills for the whole lesson. In some key skills lessons there is insufficient vocational context given to the learning and not all students see the relevance of key skills to their courses. The use of ILT is not always embedded fully in teaching and learning.

81. Good use is made of students' work experience in childcare lessons. Childcare placements are well organised and match employers' needs. However, there are insufficient opportunities for GNVQ students to experience current practices in the workplace. There are few opportunities to apply learning in a real working environment and to develop practical and wider personal development skills.

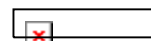
82. Accommodation is well maintained and decorated. Teaching rooms are adequately furnished, suitably equipped and have interesting and relevant wall displays. Most of the rooms at the De la Salle centre have poor access for students with mobility problems. There are no designated counselling practice rooms in which students can develop their skills in a realistic setting. Teachers are appropriately qualified and they all have a teaching qualification.

83. Assessment practices are good. Work is set regularly, marked rigorously and returned promptly. There is detailed feedback provided to improve students' performance. Assessment plans are effectively integrated into lessons and contribute to the effective monitoring of students' progress. There is strong guidance and support for students both in lessons and through the tutorial system. Students aged 16 to 18 are assessed at the beginning of the course to identify additional support needs. The outcomes inform lesson planning and enable teachers to meet the needs of individuals more effectively. Learning support assistants work with individual students in lessons. Individual support is also available through the learning mentor and study support arrangements.

### **Leadership and management**

84. Leadership and management of the area are good. Managers are committed to raising achievement and supporting students. Students' attendance, retention rates and progress are effectively monitored. Meetings are held regularly and focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Equality of opportunity is integrated into lessons in most of the provision. The self-assessment report is effective in identifying key strengths and weaknesses.

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



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on level 3 courses
  
- much good teaching
  
- good enrichment opportunities that enhance learning
  
- effective support for students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory retention rates on vocational courses at level 2
  
- insufficient consideration of the needs of more able students.

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

85. The college offers a wide range of courses for students in performing arts, visual arts and media. Most full-time courses are at level 3 and include AVCEs in performing arts, art and design and media, and AS level and GCE A levels in art and design, graphics, textiles, design technology, drama, media, film studies and music technology. At level 2, GNVQ intermediate is offered in performing arts, art and design, and media. There is also a GNVQ foundation course in art and design. There are currently 586 enrolments in the area; mostly students aged 16 to 18.

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

86. Retention and pass rates are high on level 3 courses. Pass rates in AS-level media, AS-level drama and AVCE art and design were all 100% in 2002/03. A good proportion of students in GCE A-level drama and AVCE art and design achieve high grades. However, on most other courses, fewer students achieve high grades than would be expected, based on their prior attainment at GCSE. At level 2, pass rates on GNVQ courses are mostly satisfactory, but the pass rate in performing arts is low. Retention rates on GNVQ courses were lower than the national average in 2002/03.

87. The standard of students' practical work is mostly good. In AS-level drama, students employ effective self-evaluation and peer-evaluation to develop character representation. Sketchbooks in art and design are good and contain appropriate references to the work of famous artists and designers. Students in graphic design and fine art produce good finished work, although they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in large-scale observational drawing. Media students use editing and publishing software effectively and are fluent in the use of media terminology. The

quality of written work is at least satisfactory on most courses. Most students progress to higher level programmes on the successful completion of their course, although few GNVQ intermediate students in media progressed to an advanced level course in 2003. Progression to HE is good, particularly in art and design where 83% of leavers progressed to degree courses in 2003.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GNVQ intermediate performing arts	2	No. of starts	20	15	34
		% retention	70	73	74
		% pass rate	100	82	44
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	9	28	22
		% retention	78	71	68
		% pass rate	100	95	87
AS-level drama	3	No. of starts	19	20	25
		% retention	95	85	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
AS-level art	3	No. of starts	16	20	65
		% retention	100	90	83
		% pass rate	94	78	91
AS-level media	3	No. of starts	40	52	75
		% retention	98	88	87
		% pass rate	100	87	100
AVCE media (double award)	3	No. of starts	*	20	22
		% retention	*	80	91
		% pass rate	*	100	90
AVCE art and design (double award)	3	No. of starts	*	24	14
		% retention	*	88	93
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

\* course not running

***Quality of education and training***

88. There is much good teaching. Relationships between staff and students are good and there is a productive working atmosphere in most lessons. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and use a good variety of techniques to make their lessons interesting. In a musical theatre lesson, the teacher demonstrated some basic dance ideas and gave students the opportunity to develop these whilst retaining the style of the dance period they were studying. As a result, the students produced some interesting choreographic sequences. In visual arts lessons, teachers prepare and use visual props very effectively. In a textiles lesson, the teacher had prepared beautiful reference sheets on the work of Alice Kettle, Susan Lord and other famous embroidery artists. In the few less successful lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for more able students to learn. Teachers do not ask sufficiently targeted or detailed questions, students spend too long waiting for the rest of the class to catch up and their interest wanes. Assessment is thorough and most feedback gives useful points

for development, although there is some inconsistency in the quality of assessment records. Assessment of key skills is unsatisfactory. Key skills are taught separately from students' main programmes and assignments are not always linked effectively to the work in visual and performing arts and media.

89. Students have good opportunities to broaden their studies through a well-designed programme of enrichment activities. There are four or five major productions every year that enable performing arts students to practice their skills. Workshops with professional artists and trips to the theatre also enrich the core programme and enhance the learning of students. Links with the community and external organisations are productive. Students perform in local schools as part of a 'Theatre in Education' initiative. Links with media organisations are well developed. The BBC Manchester studio has recently commissioned 15 students to broadcast radio slots focusing on people in the local community. Art and design students visit local galleries and participate in workshops run by professional artists. There is a developing relationship with a local university, providing workshops for students in fashion, photography and digital media.

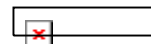
90. Teachers are well qualified, some with recent, or ongoing, industry experience. This greatly enhances the relevance of the lessons they teach. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. Art and design studios have adequate space and are clean and tidy. The walls are adorned with visually exciting references. Workshops for design technology and media are good. Computer suites are up to date with industry-standard software for three-dimensional modelling, editing, and image manipulation. There is a very well-equipped television and recording studio to support media students. However, in dance and drama the studios do not provide wheelchair access, the floors are not sprung, protruding columns in the middle of the floor inhibit practical work and the ventilation system is noisy and distracting. The learning resource centre has an adequate stock of books, periodicals and media materials. Students have good access to video and still cameras.

91. Support for students is good. Pre-entry guidance and induction are conducted by specialist staff and are effective. A student review procedure evaluates whether students are on the most suitable course. Tutors help students to develop their own learning plans and identify targets for improvement. Progress is monitored carefully. Subject teachers communicate effectively with tutors to update them on matters of concern or to alert them of good achievement on the course.

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

92. Leadership and management are good. There are weekly meetings at course team level and plenty of useful informal communication. Managers have adopted a variety of successful strategies to improve retention and pass rates. Self-assessment and course reviews have correctly identified the main strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice between teachers on different courses.

## **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most level 3 courses
  
- very high value added in GCE A-level law



- well-planned and effective teaching
- effective preparation for assessment and external examinations
- good enrichment opportunities that enhance learning.

**Weaknesses**

- low success rate in geography
- some teaching which does not extend or challenge more able students.

**Scope of provision**

93. The college offers a good range of full-time courses at AS level and GCE A level, including geography, history, law, psychology and sociology. There is also a GCSE course in psychology. The access to HE course covers social science and social work. At the time of inspection, there were 1,215 student enrolments, some 997 of whom were students aged 16 to 18.

**Achievement and standards**

94. Retention and pass rates are good on most level AS-level and GCE A-level courses. Most students in GCE A-level law achieve grades that are much higher than their prior attainment at GCSE would suggest. In geography, the success rate is low and declined between 2001 and 2003. Students who complete the access course do well and progression to HE is good.

95. The overall standard of students' written work is good. GCE A-level students demonstrate the ability to think critically and to make sound judgements. They display good powers of analysis and are fluent in oral work. In an AS-level sociology lesson, groups of students presented well-considered ideas for new education policies and engaged in a lively and productive discussion. Students use specialist terminology confidently. In an AS-level psychology lesson, a student cited the handclasp used by wrestlers in tag match changeovers as an interesting example of an 'appeasement ritual'. Students use ILT confidently to research tasks for written work. Attendance is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE A-level history*	3	No. of starts	24	17	24
		% retention	58	94	92
		% pass rate	43	100	100

GCE A-level law*	3	No. of starts	24	11	25
		% retention	58	100	96
		% pass rate	71	100	100
GCE A-level psychology*	3	No. of starts	59	32	29
		% retention	53	97	100
		% pass rate	90	90	97
AS-level geography	3	No. of starts	13	7	21
		% retention	100	86	81
		% pass rate	69	100	71
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	18	37	53
		% retention	78	89	89
		% pass rate	100	94	96
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	27	36	42
		% retention	89	69	81
		% pass rate	92	92	88

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one-year course

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

96. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and provide a good variety of learning activities. Most lessons capture and retain the interest of students. In a successful GCE A-level law lesson on consent as a legal defence, the students were intrigued by case study examples of injury caused by tattooing and bungee jumping. The study skills of research, note making and oral presentation, and examination techniques are covered well in lessons. Teachers relate lesson content to exam syllabuses and give effective guidance on exam techniques and marking. GCE A-level students understand how the subject knowledge they are acquiring matches the requirements of particular papers and topics. In a GCSE psychology lesson, students used mnemonics to remember the advantages and disadvantages of experimental method. Teachers take full account of equal opportunities in their lessons. In an access to HE sociology lesson, students' own experiences and diverse ethnic origins were effectively used to enliven a discussion on family roles and gender. In the few less successful lessons, the teachers do not allow for more able students to work to their potential. In these lessons, the teachers are over directive in discussion and do not recognise that, in their efforts to ensure that all students are involved, the more able students are finding the discussions insufficiently challenging.

97. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Assignments are clearly linked to assessment criteria. Most teachers return work promptly and write detailed, constructive comments identifying areas for further development. However, some teachers make brief comments and do not correct basic spelling and grammatical errors. Students receive regular guidance on how to improve and their progress is checked against their target grade. Initial assessment is effective and additional learning needs are identified quickly and accurately. Induction is thorough and enables students to settle comfortably into the routine of college life. Students receive good support in their individual tutorials, but group tutorials are less effective.

98. There are good opportunities for students to extend their learning through a wide range of enrichment activities. GCE A-level history students travel to New York. AS-level psychology students visit a zoo to study animal behaviour. Visiting speakers add interest and relevance to studies. They include a holocaust survivor talking to history students who are studying Nazi Germany, a solicitor

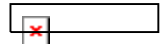
and barrister in law, and a criminology lecturer from a local university in sociology.

99. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Some are external markers or moderators for examination awarding bodies. Specialist rooms are spacious and attractive displays help to provide an interesting and pleasant learning environment. Well-designed handouts help students to organise notes and add structure to their learning. Students at the Pendleton centre have good access to textbooks and computers in the learning resource centre. However, there are insufficient resources in the learning centre at the De la Salle centre to meet the needs of advanced level students.

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

100. Leadership and management are good. Communication between managers and teachers is effective. There are comprehensive procedures in place to assess and monitor the quality of the provision in humanities. Curriculum reviews, lesson observations and self-assessment have been used to identify what needs to be done to improve students' retention and pass rates. Subsequent actions have been largely successful, although strategies to improve achievements in geography have yet to have any significant impact. Good use is made of the college's management information in GCE A-level subjects. However, data relating to the access course are inaccurate and prevents the setting of appropriate targets for improvement.

### **English and modern foreign languages**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high value added in GCE A-level English language and English literature
  
- good oral skills of students
  
- very good, stimulating teaching
  
- good, up-to-date shared learning resources
  
- good support for students' learning
  
- effective individual support and guidance for students.

## **Weaknesses**

- level 2 English provision that does not fully meet the needs of full-time students
- low value added in GCE A-level English language and literature.

## **Scope of provision**

101. The college offers full-time AS-level and GCE A-level courses in English language, English literature, English language and literature, French, German and Spanish. There are also GCSE courses in English and Spanish, a progression award in languages and the start award in languages. Spanish courses for adults have attracted new students from the local community. The English provision at level 2 is insufficiently varied. Many students have been enrolled on the GCSE course because no alternative courses are available. This has contributed to low retention and success rates in GCSE English. There are currently some 420 students enrolled on courses in the area, of which 354 are aged 16 to 18.

## **Achievement and standards**

102. Achievements are good in most AS-level and GCE A-level subjects. Pass rates are high in both English and modern languages. Students achieve grades that are significantly higher than their GCSE grades would predict in AS-level and GCE A-level English language and English literature. However, in AS-level and GCE A-level English language and literature, value added is low and high-grade passes are rare. Retention rates have been below national averages on many courses, but the in-year retention rate during 2003/04 indicates a significant improvement. The pass rate in GCSE English has been at or above the national average for the period 2001 to 2003, but retention rates have been unsatisfactory.

103. Students make good oral contributions to their lessons, and there is lively discussion and debate. Adult students in the level 1 Spanish improvers' class use the target language to a very good standard. The written work of students aged 16 to 18 is often good, although not always up to the standard achieved in lessons. The best written work is very accomplished. For example, students produced some very good GCE A-level English coursework. One detailed study of *A Streetcar Named Desire* gained full marks. The essay was assured, scholarly and sophisticated, combining cogent, stylish analysis and maturity of judgement. The progression of students to HE is good.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	64	65	92
		% retention	66	69	66
		% pass rate	62	76	48
Progression award in languages	2	No. of starts	8	38	35
		% retention	100	58	86
		% pass rate	88	95	73
AS-level English	3	No. of starts	32	46	72

language		% retention	94	72	90
		% pass rate	100	94	98
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	12	17	21
		% retention	100	82	81
		% pass rate	100	100	94
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	34	46	44
		% retention	82	76	86
		% pass rate	100	100	100
AS-level French	3	No. of starts	8	10	18
		% retention	88	60	89
		% pass rate	86	83	88
GCE A-level English language*	3	No. of starts	54	26	23
		% retention	61	100	83
		% pass rate	91	100	100

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

\* 2001 data relate to the former two-year course; 2002 and 2003 data relate to the one-year course

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

104. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are stimulating, varied, engaging and often entertaining. Teachers ensure that all students are fully engaged in their work, and succeed in capturing and maintaining their interest. An AS-level English language class used a diverse range of materials from *'It's a Man's Man's Man's World'* by James Brown to *'The North East Wife Trader'* to stimulate a lively discussion of language and gender issues. Students feel encouraged to learn in a positive and supportive environment. Teaching is well planned and is supported by a variety of high-quality learning resources. A City and Guilds adult literacy lesson successfully and imaginatively explored the poem *'Blessing'* by Imtiaz Dharker, using a flipchart and individual mind maps. The group work was excellent and students expressed their own ideas and appreciation enthusiastically.

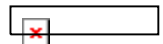
105. Assessment is rigorous and fair. Modern language teachers provide very detailed, systematic feedback to students. In English, the quality of written feedback is more variable and inaccuracies in written expression are not always corrected. Coursework is well managed, although some work is marked too generously. Students are encouraged to reflect upon and monitor their own learning and progress. Teachers provide very good support for students' learning. They stay in regular contact with adult students through e-mail, telephone, and by post. There are also strategies in place to support specific groups of students, including the very able. Students value the support they receive from their tutors. They receive effective support when considering their applications for HE.

106. Teachers are experienced, well qualified and committed to their students. Resources and active learning materials are up to date and shared amongst the team, so that all students benefit from them. There is considerable staff expertise in ILT which has been used effectively to develop electronic resources. For example, there are some excellent materials for English on the college's intranet which provide very good independent learning opportunities for students. The newly established 'English and modern languages resources and research room', although small, has high-quality VCR and DVD players, cassette recorders, videos, books, resource packs and six computers. Adult students have access to city learning centres which offer them sophisticated IT resources.

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

107. Leadership and management of the area are good. Communications are effective and there is a strong teamwork ethic. Part-time teachers are fully involved in course management and the college's quality assurance procedures. Course administration and planning are rigorous and thorough. Self-assessment is accurate, self-critical and well focused. Development plans are comprehensive and are clearly related to sustaining further improvements in retention and pass rates.

### **English for speakers of other languages**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- excellent achievements in oral tests
  
- very good teaching and learning
  
- rigorous monitoring of attendance and progress
  
- effective community provision promotes inclusion
  
- very good pastoral care and support
  
- effective management and teamwork.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory learning resources in the learning resource centre.

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

108. The college offers ESOL courses at seven different levels, including courses with vocational skills. The majority are externally accredited. Courses are provided at the college's De la Salle

campus and in numerous centres in the local community. Teachers work effectively in partnership with community groups to establish provision that meets the needs of the community. The provision is designed to support the needs of refugees and asylum seekers as well as speakers of English as an additional language. Some 211 students are enrolled on ESOL courses, most of whom are adults.

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

109. Students' achievement is very good. Increasing numbers of students, both in the college and in the community, are entering for external examinations and succeeding in the oral tests. In-year retention rates have improved significantly during 2003/04. Progression to higher-level courses is good. The standard of students' written work is good or better. In one community lesson of mainly Asian women with poor literacy skills, students demonstrated increasing levels of confidence and improving study skills. Students confidently complete all the listening and related reading and writing tasks. They enjoy their lessons and are keen to practise their rapidly developing language skills.

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

110. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good and some is outstanding. In the best lessons, students participate freely and enjoy themselves. Teachers are skilled at bringing tasks and challenges encountered in daily life into the classroom and using them as the focus for learning. In a successful lesson for students at entry level 1, the teacher produced a suitcase full of clothes, shoes and accessories. This elicited a lively response from the students who then used a discussion on clothing to develop their understanding of the past tense. Teachers make excellent use of real life examples and current events. One very good lesson had as its focus the celebration of Fair Trade Week. The teacher used pictures of people from other countries with matching reading texts taken from the Internet, a bunch of bananas, a jar of coffee and a bar of chocolate, to initiate a discussion on the origins of the products. The group then compared the differences in trade patterns between developing and developed countries.

111. Students work productively together in pairs and small groups, and learn effectively from opportunities to share, debate and correct each other. In an entry level 2 lesson, the teacher used a large bag of groceries as a stimulus to practise 'countables' and 'uncountables', and to discuss and debate which food was healthy and which was not. Students then used computers to produce well-considered drafts of questionnaires about food.

112. Teaching and learning are effectively planned and delivered to take into account the differing needs of individual students. Lessons are taught by two teachers when increased one-to-one support is required. Effective differentiation enables less able students to develop their language skills alongside the more able. More able students discuss topics such as, 'freedom of speech' and 'citizenship', whilst the less able are supported by techniques such as matching cards and the use of posters and handouts. Teachers are adept at regularly checking the progress of individuals.

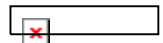
113. Assessment procedures are effective. All ESOL students have an interview and a diagnostic assessment before they start the course. Subsequent individual target setting enables students to feel ownership of their learning and to measure their own progress. Monitoring of attendance and progress is rigorous. Some written work is not marked promptly.

114. Students benefit from very good pastoral care and support. Teachers are well aware of the difficult circumstances faced by many students and give their time freely to help. Students receive excellent support on personal issues, such as housing and transport. All teachers are qualified to national standards and bring with them a rich variety of experience in teaching and work in many different contexts. Classroom accommodation at the college is good, but some of the accommodation in the community venues is basic. The college learning centre is poorly equipped with books and resources for ESOL students. Students have good access to computers in the college and use them effectively in language acquisition and the development of IT skills. Students studying in the community have less access to computers.

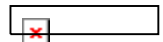
### **Leadership and management**

115. Leadership and management of the area are very good. There is a strong commitment from the college to develop ESOL courses as part of its strategic priority to widen the participation of minority ethnic groups and adults, in FE. Teamwork is excellent. Staff at the college and in the community venues meet regularly to share ideas and good practice. Teachers are members of local basic skills networks and work regularly with other agencies. There is good collaboration with support services and community partners to help meet the learning needs of the students. Quality assurance is effective. Self-assessment involves all teachers and takes careful account of the views of students. The college achieved a Beacon Award in recognition of the high quality of its ESOL provision in 2004.

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



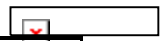
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



<b>Level</b>	<b>16-18 %</b>	<b>19+ %</b>
<b>1</b>	13	47
<b>2</b>	12	9
<b>3</b>	41	3
<b>4/5</b>	0	0
<b>Other</b>	34	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in spring 2004*

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



<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>16-18 No.</b>	<b>19+ No.</b>	<b>Total Enrolments (%)</b>
Science and mathematics	354	67	3
Land-based provision	23	2	0
Construction	9	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	16	27	0
Business administration, management and professional	156	171	3
Information and communication	283	241	4



technology			
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	168	44	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	130	284	3
Health, social care and public services	184	1,635	14
Visual and performing arts and media	494	64	4
Humanities	594	156	6
English, languages and communication	662	102	6
Foundation programmes	41	2,291	18
Other	1,783	2,678	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,897</b>	<b>7,762</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in spring 2004

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
		<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	124	170	186	134
	Retention rate %	70	56	56	62	50	73
	National average %	80	78	80	70	72	70
	Pass rate %	57	86	87	77	58	95
	National average %	66	71	76	70	75	80
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	403	592	548	218	312	330
	Retention rate %	74	71	62	61	71	67
	National average %	80	81	83	72	71	74
	Pass rate %	93	87	87	75	72	87
	National average %	85	84	86	68	71	74
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,318	1,356	1,751	152	136	142
	Retention rate %	76	84	84	59	67	81
	National average %	80	89	90	64	69	79

	Pass rate %	85	90	91	63	85	87
	National average %	86	88	84	67	75	80

*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 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England*, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

2. College rates for 2002/03 College ILR (validated).

**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)	77	21	2	91
Level 2 (intermediate)	75	22	3	32
Level 1 (foundation)	89	11	0	9
Other sessions	81	19	0	16
<b>Totals</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>148</b>

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