



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Loughborough College

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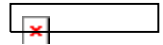
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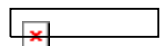
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Basic information about the college

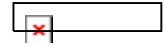


Name of college:	Loughborough College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Jim Mutton
Address of college:	Radmoor Road Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 3BT
Telephone number:	01509 215831
Fax number:	01509 618109
Chair of governors:	Tim Bacon
Unique reference number:	130748
Name of reporting inspector:	Jean Cook HMI
Dates of inspection:	1-12 March 2004

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

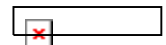


Loughborough College is a general further education (FE) college in the borough of Charnwood in north Leicestershire. The college moved to its present campus in 1966. This is shared with Loughborough University and the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) Vocational College. The college addresses its aim to widen participation through provision at community outreach centres, courses in the workplace and by distance learning. It attracts some 300 students from overseas each year and provides work-based learning for around 130 modern apprentices. It forms part of the Charnwood cluster with local schools which provides opportunities for some 400 students from the age of 14. The college operates in a competitive environment. There are three colleges, four local education authority (LEA) schools and three independent schools with sixth forms in the locality. Courses are offered in all 14 of the areas of learning as defined by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) from foundation level to higher education (HE). In 2002/03, a total of 9,740 students were enrolled, of whom 19% were aged 16 to 18 and 81% were adults. Most adults (95%) were enrolled on part-time courses; 62% of students aged 16 to 18 were enrolled on full-time courses. Two thirds of the enrolments are on courses at levels 1 and 2. In 2002/03, enrolments in business, information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport, leisure and travel and engineering made up 50% of the total; enrolments on construction and land-based courses comprised less than 1%.

The college recruits most of its students from the town of Loughborough, the surrounding rural area, and the northern outskirts of the city of Leicester. Unemployment reported in the 2001 census is low at 2.6% compared with 3.4% for England and Wales. There is substantial deprivation in three wards within Loughborough. The college recruits around 8% of its students from minority ethnic communities which mirrors the population of Charnwood as a whole. The local economy has traditionally been based on textile and engineering industries, but over the past 10 years has diversified to include high technology, pharmaceuticals and retail. The sports and leisure industries are growing and developments are in hand to accommodate national sporting bodies in Loughborough. The college has recently been awarded the status of centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in sport, exercise and fitness.

The college's mission is 'to partner individuals, communities and businesses to achieve outstanding education and training successes'.

How effective is the college?



The quality of education and training is good in seven of the eight curriculum areas inspected and satisfactory in one. The quality of work-based learning in engineering is unsatisfactory. Resources for sports and fitness are excellent. The college has developed effective partnerships which benefit students. Retention rates are above national averages on many courses. Pass rates have improved, but remain comparable with or below national figures at levels 2 and 3. Few modern apprentices achieve the full framework qualification. Leadership and management, social and education inclusion and support for students are good.

Key strengths

- strong leadership at all levels

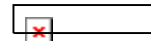
- good retention rates on many courses
- good teaching
- good support for learners
- accurate self-assessment
- wide range of enrichment opportunities
- excellent resources for sports and fitness
- good progression opportunities for students
- innovative staff development.

What should be improved

- pass rates on many courses
- the achievements of learners in work-based and franchised provision
- the co-ordination and evaluation of some cross college functions.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

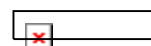


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Engineering	Good. Work-based learning contributory grade: unsatisfactory . Pass and retention rates are good on most college-based courses, but pass rates are unsatisfactory on courses leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQ). Teaching and learning are good where there is a practical component and students follow a broad curriculum offering many opportunities for enrichment. Individual action planning gives students responsibility for their own learning and rigorous internal review procedures ensure the high quality of students' assessment. Work-based learning is unsatisfactory and full-time students have insufficient work experience to set their learning in a vocational context.
Business, administration, management and professional	Good. Pass rates on most courses were above national averages in 2003 and are consistently high on the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) in business. Much good teaching develops students' higher level skills of analysis and critical thinking that improve the standards of their work. Curriculum leadership and management are good and effective tutorials monitor students' progress. Pass rates are low in NVQ accounting at level 2 and there is poor achievement on the franchised management certificate and in work-based learning.
Information and communications technology	Good. Students achieve well; retention and pass rates for courses in the community are very high and there is good development of students' skills. Good teaching challenges and inspires students and teachers make effective use of resources to improve learning. The pace is too slow in a minority of lessons and the management of punctuality and attendance is ineffective. Initial assessment is sound and students speak highly of the support they receive throughout their courses.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good. Hospitality, leisure and travel contributory grade: satisfactory . Retention rates on most courses are high and above national averages, but many have poor pass rates. There is much good teaching and learning in sport and effective partnerships improve students' experience and development of skills. Management is responsive to students' needs and there is a wide range of enrichment activities that promote and support learning. Resources in the CoVE for sport, exercise and fitness are excellent, but poor in the areas of hospitality and travel.
Health, social care and public services	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on many courses and good teaching on public services courses. Individual support for students in lessons is good and a wide enrichment programme broadens learning. There are low retention rates on the national diploma in public services and counselling courses. Poor resources restrict the development of students' practical skills and there are ineffective actions to improve provision.

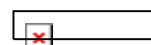
Humanities	Good. Retention and pass rates are good on most advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses, in particular law and sociology, but poor on access to humanities. There is much good teaching which encourages the development of students' personal skills and subject knowledge. Curriculum leadership and management are strong with a focus on quality improvement. Learning materials used in lessons are good, but the use of information and learning technology (ILT) is underdeveloped and offers students few opportunities for independent study.
English, English as a foreign language and modern foreign languages	Good. Many students of English obtain high grades in their examinations, and there is much good teaching and learning. There is a range of flexible opportunities to study English as a foreign language (EFL) at different levels. Teachers work well in subject teams. Feedback on marked work is inadequate and action plans for students lack clear targets and deadlines.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Good. The provision for literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is good with much good teaching. There are high pass rates in key skills and ESOL, and good strategies for widening participation. The delivery of learning support is good, but it is inadequately monitored. There is some poor use of individual learning plans.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. Senior managers and governors lead well and set a clear direction. Governors, managers and staff are committed to the new structure which devolves responsibility to teams. Communications are very good. Students' achievements are improving, although pass rates at levels 2 and 3 remain comparable with or below national averages. Equality, diversity and widening participation have a high profile in the college and are promoted effectively. Well-established quality assurance arrangements are thorough for all college-based courses and lead to improvements. However, they are less effective for franchised and work-based learning programmes. The quality of teaching and learning is good, although the grade profile remains similar to that reported by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in 2000. Good practice is shared and a detailed staff development plan helps achieve the strategic goals. Centrally held management information is accurate and used well by senior managers and many middle managers and team leaders. The evaluation and co-ordination of a number of cross-college functions remain weak. Effective governors make a good contribution to the college. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

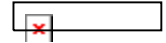
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. There is a strong commitment by managers and staff to equality, diversity and widening participation. This vision is carried out through effective arrangements across the college. There are good specialist support services for students in the college and strong links with outside agencies. The college is involved in a number of local and regional strategic partnerships that seek to widen participation and promote social inclusion. A range

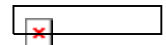
a well informed understanding of the needs of the community it serves and promotes equality of opportunity well. The success of this is reflected in the number of students with differing needs for support, and in the range of cultures, ethnic groups and languages in the student population. Most of the college is accessible for students with mobility difficulties. The college's response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 has been good and the requirements have been met in full.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. Students value the support they get. A range of high-quality support services are coherently managed and well resourced. The role of the progress tutor has a positive impact on students' progress across curriculum areas and is effectively managed. The college is involved in some innovative projects to further develop student support and has established a well deserved reputation nationally for its work in this area. Specialist teams work alongside teachers and tutors to provide a range of student support services, curriculum support and welfare. Students with a visual impairment benefit from the partnership with the RNIB Vocational College. An initial assessment of students' needs for support is carried out effectively and additional support is provided where required. Students who choose to take opportunities for additional support are well served. However, not all students who need support receive it. Students receive appropriate advice about courses and careers. Advice and guidance on personal matters and welfare are provided effectively.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- good support from staff and peers

- wide range of courses, additional practical classes and opportunities to progress

- approachable, welcoming and friendly environment

- enjoyable lessons

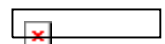
- excellent sports facilities, including organised football matches and practise

- good access to computers, the Internet and support staff
- facilities for students including the crèche, canteen, common room and stationery shop.

What they feel could be improved

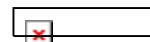
- car and cycle parking facilities
- some of the classrooms, which are cramped, poorly heated or need new blinds and furniture
- range, quality and price of food in the refectory
- more up-to-date and subject-relevant books in the library
- clearer explanation of course content and additional learning support
- the timetabling of courses, including the finish time each day.

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



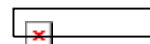
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	67	27	6
19+ and WBL*	71	26	3
Learning 16-18	66	28	6
19+ and WBL*	69	29	2

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

*work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. The college offers courses in all 14 areas of learning defined by the LSC. In 2002/03, enrolments in business, ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel and engineering made up 50% of the total; enrolments in construction and land-based subjects comprised 1%. There were 8,652 enrolments by students aged 16 to 18 and 10,816 enrolments by adults. Retention rates are high. They have generally remained at or above national figures and rose for students of all ages in 2002/03; significantly so for adult students. Pass rates have improved steadily over the past four years for courses at level 1. Pass rates at levels 2 and 3 have been comparable with or below national averages. In 2002/03, they improved at level 3, but fell at level 2. The pass rates for short courses have improved steadily to 81% or more. Achievement for the modern apprenticeship programme is very poor. Only 3 of the 254 students who entered modern apprenticeships since 1999/2000 have been successful.

2. For the past two years the college has carried out its own study of students' achievements on AS-level and GCE A-level courses in relation to their results in the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) at the start of their course. The college analysis shows that for AS-level subjects, for 8 out of the 17 measured, students achieved better results than those predicted from their entry qualifications. For GCE A level, the results are better than predicted in 14 subjects. On this measure, students achieve well in English, law, sociology and psychology. For GCE A-level subjects, the percentage pass rate in 2002/03 was 92%, although the average points score for each entry stands below national and local averages at 66.4. In GCSE mathematics, students on average improve their achievement by one grade. The proportion of students who are successful in their application for HE has risen from 80% in 2001, to 85% in 2003.

3. During the inspection, the attendance rate at lessons was 79%, slightly above the national average of 76% for all colleges. Attendance is low at 74% in ICT, English, EFL and modern foreign

languages (MFL). Attendance and punctuality are poor in GCSE mathematics. In business, humanities and health and social care attendance is good at 85%. Although there are clear procedures, teachers do not always address problems of punctuality and attendance consistently across the college. Students are not always clear about what is expected of them.

4. Students' achievements in key skills have been identified as a weakness by the college. Managers have introduced successful strategies to improve retention and pass rates. Pass rates are at least satisfactory and are at or above the national rate for one-year courses. However, pass rates at level 3 are unsatisfactory when key skills are delivered over two years. There is particularly poor achievement of key skills by work-based learners. Retention rates on all one-year level 1 key skills are satisfactory and at level 2 they are good. There are unsatisfactory retention rates for most two-year courses at level 3. The standard of students' work in key skills is satisfactory in the majority of curriculum areas and good in business and care.

16 to 18 year olds

5. Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 have remained at or above national rates. However, there has not been a steady improvement for all courses. In 2001/02, retention rates improved markedly from 77% to 100% for courses leading to general national vocational qualifications (GNVQ) and from 69% to 82% for NVQ courses at level 1, while the retention rate for other courses fell from 80% to 76%. In 2002/03, retention rates improved significantly at level 2 after a fall the previous year. Retention rates for GCSE courses were well above the national figures in 2001/02 in contrast to the figures for other courses at this level. At level 3, retention rates for AS level and GCE A level continue to rise. Retention rates are above national figures for most courses in engineering, ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, basic skills, AS-level and GCE A-level humanities, GCSE English and GCE A-level English literature. Courses with poor retention rates include the national diploma in public services, GCSE mathematics and work-based learning in engineering.

6. Overall, pass rates at level 1 have improved over the past four years. Pass rates at levels 2 and 3 have been at or below national figures. They fell from 72% to 67% at level 2 in 2002/03 and improved to 76% at level 3. Pass rates for GNVQ intermediate courses in 2003 were above the national average at 83%. For AS level and GCE A level, the pass rates are consistently 8% or 9% below the national average. Courses where pass rates are good include the AVCE in business, many engineering, health and social care courses, AS-level and GCE A-level sociology, law and English, key skills at levels 1 and 2 and ESOL. In GCSE mathematics, 64% of students who completed the courses achieved at least a grade C; well above the national average. The pass rate for high grades for AS-level English language and AS-level and GCE A-level English literature are above national figures. They are improving in humanities and in 2002/03 were above national figures in AS-level sociology and law and GCE A-level sociology and psychology. Pass rates are poor for many courses in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, NVQs in engineering and accounting.

7. The standard of students' work on business courses is good. Students in business, ICT and humanities demonstrate the skills of analysis, critical thinking and evaluation. In English, students develop the ability to express their ideas and construct coherent arguments. Students of all ages on sports and fitness programmes improve their performance and reach high standards. Hospitality students won several medals in a recent competition, demonstrating the high level of their practical skills. Students on literacy and numeracy courses improve their confidence and develop personal and learning skills which enable them to make good progress.

Adult learners

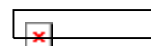
8. Retention rates for adult students have generally been above national averages. In 2002/03, they rose significantly at all levels after declining in line with national averages at levels 1 and 2 in the previous two years. At level 3, a sharp drop in 2001/02 took the retention rate to the bottom 10% compared with similar colleges. On short courses, retention rates have remained just above national figures over this period. At level 3, retention rates on AS-level and GCE A-level courses have remained above national figures. There are many examples of good retention rates. In 2003, these included 94% for computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), 97% for NVQ level 2 catering and 100% for the fitness instructor certificate. Retention rates are good on most

engineering, EFL, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel courses, but poor for access to humanities and counselling courses.

9. Pass rates at level 1 have remained above national figures and improved significantly to 85% in 2002/03. Pass rates at level 2 have remained below national averages and fell by 8% to 60% in 2002/03. Pass rates for GNVQ and NVQ courses showed a significant improvement in 2001/02. At level 3, pass rates improved sharply from 54% in 2000/01 to 74% in 2002/03. The pass rates were 100% in 2002/03 for access to nursing, the certificate in childcare and education and ESOL. The pass rates are good on many courses in health and care and EFL and most engineering and community based ICT courses. They are poor on courses such as access to humanities, work-based learning in engineering, franchised provision in management and care and NVQs in catering and hospitality.

10. Engineering students gain good levels of practical skills suited to the industry. On ICT courses, learners acquire a good range of knowledge and skills they can put into practise at home and in the workplace. Students on health and social care courses develop a broad range of skills and knowledge that meet their occupational needs and plans for career development. Care students demonstrate a good knowledge of legislation and policies for preventing the abuse of clients. In MFL, students make good use of the language they are studying. Students of ESOL achieve high standards in oral work.

Quality of education and training



11. Teaching and learning are good. Inspectors graded teaching, learning and attainment in 174 lessons. They found that teaching is good or better in 69% of lessons, satisfactory in 26% and less than satisfactory in 5%. Learning is good or better in 67% of lessons, satisfactory in 29% and less than satisfactory in 4%. The profile for students' attainment in lessons is lower. While the proportion of good or better teaching is slightly above the national average of 63% for colleges of a similar type, only 14% is very good or outstanding. The proportion of teaching judged to be good or better is lower for intermediate courses than for courses at other levels. The proportion of good or better teaching is higher than the national figure in ICT; humanities; English, EFL and MFL; and literacy, numeracy and ESOL. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in English, EFL, MFL and humanities. The college has formed an accurate view of the quality of its teaching and learning through a programme of externally moderated lesson observations.

12. In the best lessons, knowledgeable, skilful and enthusiastic teachers motivate students and stimulate their interest. Activities are planned well to suit the students' different levels of knowledge and skills and take into account their preferred learning styles. Teachers check that students are learning and help them to improve their understanding and expertise. Teachers use a good variety of learning methods which involve students and promote their understanding. Good use is made of role play, case studies, group work. Teaching materials are of a high standard and learning resources are used effectively. Theory and practice are well linked in ICT, business and engineering.

13. Good use is made of students' industrial and commercial experience to enrich learning in professional business courses and sport. In English and humanities, students test their ideas thoroughly through discussion. In language classes, students make good use of the language they are learning. In ESOL and basic skills lessons, teachers are skilled in questioning students to check their learning and maintain their involvement. Teachers inspire and challenge students in most ICT lessons and carefully monitor their learning. In sport, well-motivated students are given the opportunity to take a lead in classroom activities and play an active part in lessons.

14. In the weaker lessons, teachers are not sufficiently responsive to the needs of individual students, the pace is too slow and opportunities to involve and motivate students are missed. In engineering theory lessons and GCSE mathematics, a teacher-centred approach means that the

students remain passive to the detriment of their learning. In a minority of ICT lessons, students are left to work at their own pace and make slow progress in learning and acquiring new skills. In hospitality, learning outcomes are not always sufficiently specific to guide practice. In basic skills and ESOL, students' individual learning plans do not sufficiently inform teaching and learning.

15. Teaching of key skills is effective. Teachers successfully integrate key skills with vocational subjects. They are well supported by staff in a central unit. Most students have a positive approach towards their key skills learning. Assignment briefs are highly relevant to the students' main programme of study. However, when students are identified as having additional support needs, there is insufficient co-ordination of the key skills teaching and learning with literacy, language and numeracy support. The results of the initial assessment of students' key skills are not always used to inform teaching and learning strategies or address sufficiently the differing needs of individuals.

16. The quality of learning resources and specialist equipment is good. Community outreach centres are particularly well resourced and two of them have been refurbished to a high standard. There is a good range of machines and new equipment in engineering practical workshops. Resources for sports and fitness are excellent. Students use a wide range of facilities within the college and at Loughborough University. Students of languages and ESOL learn in a newly installed multimedia language laboratory. The Links Centre provides a flexible and high-quality environment for individual learning support. However, in business administration, hospitality, travel and care, there are limited arrangements for students to practise their skills. Practical areas do not reflect industry standards. Classrooms are generally decorated and furnished well, but their use is inefficient. Accommodation in a few lessons is cramped with insufficient room for students to work and use learning materials. The college has good additional resources to meet students' needs, including a crèche and a residential accommodation block. Over 93% of the college is accessible for students with mobility difficulties. The top floor of two teaching blocks and the students' union common room are not accessible. The college's extensive plans for new buildings have been approved and work to improve the quality of the accommodation begins later in 2004.

17. The college has a well-stocked library containing up-to-date books, journals, newspapers, videos and CD-ROMs. However, there are insufficient up-to-date books for students of English. Students have access to computers in the library and some classrooms and workshops. The number of computers available for students is low compared with similar colleges. Often there are insufficient printers in computer classrooms for the number of students in the class, causing disruption to students' learning. There are few colour printing facilities. There are three very good mobile computer facilities which provide students with laptop computers on a trolley to use in the classroom. Good use is made of these to access the Internet. The college has invested in interactive white boards in some classrooms, but teachers do not always make good use of them. The use of ILT is underdeveloped. Handouts and learning materials are generally good. Learning materials are adapted appropriately to meet individual students' needs, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Course teams are developing their own intranet sites where students can access handouts from each lesson and teachers can share resources.

18. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in the subjects that they teach. Many have relevant and recent industrial experience. However a small number of staff teaching on vocational courses have not had recent, industrial updating. In health, care and public services and numeracy, a few teachers have insufficient, relevant teaching qualifications. The college has recognised these training needs in their staff development plan. The college has good arrangements for staff induction, mentoring and appraisal and provides innovative professional development.

19. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory or better in all curriculum areas. Assessment methods meet the standards required by awarding bodies and is carried out fairly on all courses. Students' work is marked regularly, but on a small number of courses written feedback on students' work is insufficient to help them improve. Internal verification is carried out effectively, in particular in engineering. Good leadership ensures that standards are maintained and good practice is shared. Procedures for the initial assessment of students' needs for learning support are clear and carried out appropriately in most cases. However, only 80% of full-time students in the current year took part in an initial assessment. This is 10% more than the previous year. The needs identified are included in students' individual learning plans. Some information about students' achievements in key skills is

not translated effectively into individual plans. In some cases, the information does not sufficiently inform lesson planning.

20. Suitable induction is provided for students and they receive appropriate information about the assessment arrangements for their courses and qualifications. Staff plan assessment well and review students' work and progress effectively. The college has clear guidelines for the review procedures and the role of progress tutors. Quality standards for this role have been set and are applied. Regular reviews of the implementation of the system has led to continuous improvement. Students benefit from the progress reviews. They value the opportunity for individual feedback and to take part in planning their own learning and setting targets. Other than in work-based learning in engineering and literacy, numeracy and ESOL, individual learning plans are used effectively. In English, EFL and MFL, targets set for students are not sufficiently specific and lack deadlines for review.

21. The college provides a good range of programmes and courses that meet the needs and interests of students, the community and local industry. Courses are available at a time, place and level to meet the needs of students. Provision for 131 work-based learners is offered in engineering, business administration, accounts, sport and hospitality and health, social care and public services. The college recognises that it has little provision in construction, and art and design. However, a local college and the university offer courses in these areas. There are good progression routes that allow students to enter their programme at an appropriate level and subsequently move on to a more demanding level of study. The college is making good use of a series of case studies to encourage students to continue in education, particularly those students who attend community-based courses. Opportunities to achieve qualifications at level 1 are insufficient for students in business administration, travel and tourism and care. Some students following care and travel programmes struggle to keep up with their studies at level 2. There are insufficient progression routes for students in basic skills. The college has recognised this as part of a recent curriculum audit.

22. There are good links with local schools, colleges and industry. The college works in partnership with local schools to provide a wide range of progression opportunities for approximately 400 young people through the Increased Flexibility (IF) programme for students aged 14 to 16. Links with industry are good throughout the college and in particular in the enterprise and workforce development unit. Close links with local and national organisations provide staff with nationally recognised qualifications and offer a broad qualification structure for internal training. There are also good links with local colleges and the university which provide students with access to their facilities.

23. There is a flexible programme of enrichment activities and additional courses. Cross-college enrichment activities include educational and social visits which are often residential, sporting and recreational activities through the sports academies and the opportunity to extend skills through short courses. There has been little take up of some activities by students and the college is increasing the marketing of the current offer and introducing new choices. This has yet to have an impact. Most course teams provide additional qualifications that allow students to enhance their existing skills or gain new ones, and to improve their employability. Course teams also arrange their own programmes of enrichment activities including visits to local, national and international organisations.

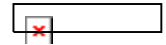
24. Support and guidance offered to students are good. Students have ready access to a range of well-managed services and make good use of them. Students value the support they get. Course leaflets and information about the college are of a high standard and are available in a suitable variety of languages. The support services are publicised well and students are introduced to them during their induction programme. However, in a few cases, students are not sufficiently aware of the support that is available to them.

25. Learning support is well co-ordinated and integrated. There is good communication across the different specialist teams and with curriculum teams. Initial assessment of students' needs for learning support is carried out effectively for most students and quickly followed up. Individual programmes are planned and agreed. Increasingly, staff visit students with specific learning difficulties before they begin their courses to understand better their particular needs. Good learning support is provided by specialist teams. However, only 40% of those identified as needing support

choose to take part. While students may be receiving support from their subject and vocational tutors, this is not yet systematically monitored and evaluated.

26. Students value the advice, guidance, welfare and counselling services offered by the college and make good use of them. Mentors provide support outside of the classroom to a number of students. The college has good partnerships with a range of external agencies which further strengthens the support it offers students. Students with a visual impairment benefit from the partnership with the RNIB Vocational College. The students' council and students' union are active in representing their members' views. Students are regularly involved in discussions and surveys providing feedback on the college's services. Resources and facilities have been improved in response to students' suggestions. Students receive effective support for learning and personal development through individual and group tutorials. They are encouraged to take part in a broad range of learning activities which contribute to their social and personal development. Although some of these activities are not well subscribed, staff work flexibly with students to meet their needs and expectations.

Leadership and management



27. Leadership and management are good. The principal and senior managers have been skilful in introducing new management arrangements designed to improve the quality of provision and fulfil the college's mission. Of the 12 targets set for 2002/03, 10 were achieved. Students and staff report high levels of satisfaction. Students' achievements are improving. Retention and pass rates at level 1 are above national averages for FE colleges. Retention rates at levels 2 and 3 are generally above national averages. Pass rates at levels 2 and 3 are comparable with, or below, the national average. Equality, diversity and widening participation have a high profile in the college. There are many developments and activities that promote these effectively.

28. The principal and senior managers provide clear direction and good leadership. The mission of the college has been rewritten following extensive consultation. The strategic aims and objectives for the college are expressed clearly and are understood by all. A document for monitoring the progress towards achieving the outcomes called 'the balanced scorecard' is used effectively. It takes into account the views of staff and students and identifies personnel, quality, and financial aspects for the college as a whole with targets and outcomes that are easily assimilated. A re-organisation of the structure has brought about greater devolved responsibility and authority to teams. This has been done effectively and quickly through strong leadership. Team leaders operate within a clear framework determined by senior managers and supported by governors. Governors, managers and staff are committed to the structure.

29. Curriculum management is good. There is much enthusiasm from teachers and business support staff for the new structure. Many of the middle managers have flourished under the new system. Link managers have responsibility for a number of teams. They intervene when necessary and advise senior managers on the progress of particular components of the three-year plan. In addition, there are 14 specific task groups that have responsibility for cross-college functions. These groups advise upon and implement plans in these areas. Targets are determined carefully and used effectively to improve the provision in many areas. A balanced scorecard is used by each curriculum delivery team to measure the progress made in achieving their targets. The business support teams have service statements that are used in a similar way. However, the implementation of these is less well developed. Action planning within college teams is generally good. However, a number of individual learning plans for students have insufficiently precise targets. A few cross-college functions are less well managed. For example, although the delivery of additional learning support is good, its impact is not sufficiently evaluated. A number of areas such as work experience arrangements in engineering and business studies, and the delivery of basic and key skills lack co-ordination.

30. Work-based learning and franchised provision are generally managed less well than the provision delivered within the college. The achievement of foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships is low. The review process for students in engineering is unsatisfactory with insufficiently demanding targets. On-the-job and off-the job training are not well integrated.

31. Quality assurance arrangements are thorough and well established for all college-based courses. They are less effective for franchised and work-based learning programmes. The quality assurance framework is well understood by all staff. Procedures are systematic and lead to improvements. A quality check each term allows team leaders to share strengths and weaknesses with the quality manager. Each autumn a panel reviews with each curriculum team leader their retention and pass rate data from the previous year against the targets set. In addition, there is a formal internal review of every team once every two years. The evidence gathered through all these processes is used well to construct accurate self-assessment reports for each team and for the college as a whole. Feedback from students and staff is obtained through questionnaires and focus groups. The issues identified are followed-up and acted upon quickly. Cross-college networks have been set up to share good practice. A team of five well-trained observers carries out lesson observations. The judgements made by this team correspond well to the judgements made by the inspectorate. A teacher development co-ordinator ensures that actions follow where weaknesses have been identified and that good practice is shared amongst teams. The quality of teaching and learning is good, although the grade profile remains similar to that reported by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in 2000.

32. Communications are very good. A college intranet is effective in keeping all informed of policies and procedures. E-mail is used extensively by staff and students. Staff, students and other interested parties are able to comment on the quality of the provision through a system called 'listening to you'. Complaints and commendations received are responded to within reasonable timescales. Students and staff report high levels of satisfaction. Management information, held centrally, is generally accurate and used well by senior managers. Many middle managers and team leaders also use the data well. However, there are a few teams where students' performance data are not used effectively to monitor progress and ensure improvements.

33. The appraisal system identifies the staff development needs of individuals. The needs of teams and of the college as a whole are identified through a number of procedures. This has resulted in a very comprehensive staff development plan that helps to achieve the strategic goals of the institution. A high priority has been the development of middle managers and team leaders. Staff speak highly of the good development activities and the support they receive from the team responsible for the work. They value the newly established programme to help them achieve a good work and life balance. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the staff development activity are carried out mainly through questionnaires, the appraisal system and the use of the balanced scorecard. None of these allows for an in depth analysis.

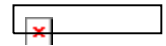
34. The college's response to widening participation and social inclusion is good. The requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act have been acted upon in full. Data are analysed by gender, minority ethnic group, disability and postcode to increase understanding and inform actions. Enrolments by students from minority ethnic groups improved by 5% in 2002/03. A two-year staff development programme on race equality and the implications of the SENDA has been implemented. A development worker has been appointed to identify the needs and develop access programmes for the Bangladeshi community. Managing diversity within curriculum delivery has also had a high priority. This has resulted in curriculum audits, piloting and developing training materials and a number of well-chosen external partnerships. The learning support team provides a wide range of support services for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, specialist staff are responsible for assisting students with visual impairment, mobility difficulties, mental health problems and autistic spectrum disorders.

35. Governors set a clear direction for the college through their involvement in determining the mission and preparing the strategic plan. Monitoring of the achievement of the strategic objectives is thorough and regular. Reports from managers with frequent and careful consideration of the balanced scorecard help them to achieve this. The standards committee of the governing body scrutinises student data carefully and has a good understanding of the main strengths and

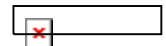
weaknesses of the provision. The inspection report by the FEFC in 2000 identified that governors did not have sufficient links with college staff and the local community. Governors are aware that this issue still remains, but have not found a satisfactory answer to the problem.

36. Financial management is sound. The college has been judged as finance category A for many years. Substantial reserves have been achieved mainly from the sale of land. A capital project for new buildings may slightly destabilise the college's financial position. All projections are based on growth, but there is likely to be a small shortfall in 2003/04 in the recruitment of students funded by the LSC. This contributes about 55% towards the total income. Budget control is good. A budget officer meets team leaders regularly to give support and to monitor expenditure against the budget allocated. Fortnightly meetings and a six-monthly performance review allow senior managers to have an accurate overview of the position. The average class size during the inspection is comparable with the national average for FE colleges. Retention rates are high and pass rates compare with the national figures. As a consequence value for money is satisfactory.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Engineering



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- good or better pass and retention rates on most courses

- good teaching and development of students' practical skills

- rigorous internal verification

- broad curriculum opportunities for full-time students

- individual action planning gives full-time students responsibility for their studies

- strong partnerships with other educational institutions offer progression for students.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates on NVQ courses

- unsatisfactory provision of work-based learning in engineering

- insufficient work experience for full-time students to set their learning in a vocational context.

Scope of provision

37. The college provides a broad range of courses in engineering and motor vehicle technology. There are 80 full-time and around 1,000 part-time students enrolled on courses from foundation to advanced levels. A flexible programme is provided for students from local schools who can study GCSE engineering, City and Guilds motor vehicle engineering at level 1 and sample a range of taster courses. Off-the job training is delivered for 60 modern apprentices by college staff for external and college-based managing agents.

Achievement and standards

38. Most courses have good or better pass and retention rates. Pass rates for the City and Guilds 4351 computer-aided design course at levels 2 and 3 were well above national averages in 2002 and 2003. All students who completed their course at level 2 were successful. Students on the motor vehicle repair and maintenance courses at levels 1 and 2 show good achievement in examinations. However, pass rates are poor for NVQ courses at level 2. Retention and pass rates are unsatisfactory for work-based learning.

39. The standard of students' practical work is good. Students on motor vehicle and welding courses demonstrate skills comparable with those seen in industry. Mature students in a lesson on welding achieved high levels of competence in various welding techniques in a relatively short time. Students in a motor vehicle lesson were able to inspect complex components, replace gaskets and time engines effectively and quickly. In work-based provision, learners carry out an extensive range of activities and make good progress in developing their skills at a level suited to the industry.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair and maintenance	1	No. of starts	49	32	34
		% retention	51	72	82
		% pass rate	44	80	96
City and Guilds 3830 part 2 motor vehicle repair and service	2	No. of starts	12	9	11
		% retention	83	78	82
		% pass rate	30	71	89
City and Guilds 4351 03	2	No. of starts	*	12	11

CAD AutoCAD 3D design		% retention	*	92	82
		% pass rate	*	100	100
NVQ engineering manufacture (foundation)	2	No. of starts	11	12	14
		% retention	91	92	86
		% pass rate	50	64	25
City and Guilds 4351 01 CAD AutoCAD design	3	No. of starts	45	*	25
		% retention	84	*	80
		% pass rate	87	*	85
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	*	20	82
		% retention	*	80	85
		% pass rate	*	88	80

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

40. Teaching is good in practical situations and in those theory lessons where students are involved in some related practical tasks. Workshop lessons are well planned. Students working on individual practical assignments have clear instructions. There is very good tracking of individual students' progress. In one theory lesson, students of lower mathematical ability used the measurement of current and voltage in electrical components to improve their mathematical skills. In a few theory lessons where a teacher-centred approach is used, students' learning and attainment are unsatisfactory as they remain passive and lack motivation. Work-based staff work closely with learners and their employers, but students' individual learning plans are not used effectively.

41. Teaching staff have good academic qualifications and relevant industrial experience. Specialist resources are good. Large engineering machine shops are equipped with a good variety of machine tools. Many are old, but appropriate for their work. Recently acquired equipment includes a state-of-the-art computerised multi-head milling machine and computerised tensile testing apparatus. There are good light-vehicle workshops and excellent resources at the heavy vehicle training centre. In this centre learners have opportunities for training and assessment using the latest fleet of trucks.

42. Students' abilities are assessed on entry to their courses. Additional support is available for those who need it. This may be provided on an individual basis or within vocational lessons. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are very good. A rigorous internal verification process assures the quality of assessment. The NVQ co-ordinator acts as a lead internal verifier keeping other tutors updated and ensuring good and rigorous practice. A comprehensive system of monitoring learners' progress is implemented at the heavy vehicle training centre. This system provides good tracking of trainees. However, this good practice is not found in the work-based provision at the college. Poor monitoring of work-based learning has resulted in students not making significant progress.

43. A broad curriculum meets the needs of students well. Students on engineering and motor vehicle technician courses gain practical skills and can take part in academic studies leading to GCSE or AS-level and GCE A-level qualifications. There are rich enhancement opportunities. For example, students study relevant engineering concepts at a theme park and make good use of this experience in the classroom and workshop. There is a good variety of educational visits to facilities such as the Nottingham East Midlands airport and to multinational companies.

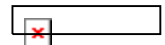
44. Individual action planning for full-time students gives them personal responsibility for their learning. Students meet with their personal tutor once every two weeks to discuss their progress.

Over the past two years this has improved students' attendance and retention rates on courses. Strong partnerships exist with industry and with other educational providers which provide good opportunities for students' progression. The college runs two skills-based courses for graduate engineers from Loughborough University. Strong and successful links exist with local schools through the programme to increase choices for students aged 14 to 16. In work-based provision, there is inadequate attention to outstanding units of study to enable students to complete the advanced modern apprenticeship framework. Reviews of learners' progress lack detail and plans for improvement are inadequate.

Leadership and management

45. Management of the curriculum is good for college courses, but the management of work-based learning in engineering is poor. Communications are good. Regular course team and curriculum area meetings deal effectively with a suitable range of business. Access to the college intranet and to the management information system (MIS) keeps all staff fully informed. There is a thorough internal verification process. There is a good delegation of operational tasks within the area and good a team spirit. Teachers are fully involved in the development of action plans and management issues such as the design of new workshops as part of the building programme. Since the last self-assessment report, managers and staff have been successful in addressing the weaknesses identified. However, full-time students have insufficient work experience to set their studies in a vocational context; a weakness identified by FEFC inspectors in 2000. Poor co-ordination of work-based learning results in weak support for trainees. Equality issues are not sufficiently monitored and reinforced in the workplace.

Business, administration, management and professional



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on AVCE business

- much good teaching

- development of students' higher level skills that improves the standards of their work

- effective tutorials that monitor students' progress

- good curriculum leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ level 2 accounting

- poor achievement on the franchised management certificate courses

- no framework achievement of modern apprenticeships.

Scope of provision

46. The college offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses and provision for work-based learning. Full-time and part-time day and evening courses are available in business, administration, accounting, professional and management studies. At the time of the inspection, there were 900 students including 94 full time and 782 part time students. There were 111 students aged 16 to 18 and 765 adult students. There were 24 learners on work-based programmes. Courses include GNVQ intermediate business, AVCE business AS level and GCE A level in economics and business. Courses are offered in accounting from levels 1 to 4. Some management and professional courses are delivered on employers' premises. Modern apprenticeship programmes are provided.

Achievement and standards

47. High pass rates on AVCE business are consistently well above the national average. In 2003, the pass rate was 85% compared to the average of 67%. The pass rate for GCE A-level business was 82% compared to the national average of 72%. Retention and pass rates on some professional courses have been consistently above the national average. There have been good pass and retention rates in audio typing and text processing. In 2003, pass rates were low on NVQ level 2 accounting courses at 58% compared to the national average of 74%. Pass and retention rates on management courses are satisfactory. There are poor pass rates on franchised management certificate courses. In 2003, the pass rate was 34% compared to the national average of 65%. The completion rates for work-based learning are very poor. The standard of students' work is good. Students are making good progress towards achieving their learning aims. Younger students demonstrate that they have developed the skills of analysis and evaluation.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Word processing part 2	2	No. of starts	20	15	15
		% retention	80	80	73
		% pass rate	69	83	82
** NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	43	35	34**
		% retention	98	89	91
		% pass rate	74	71	58
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	55	70	70
		% retention	87	86	84
		% pass rate	79	55	85
AVCE business*	3	No. of starts	19*	17	20

		% retention	84	65	65
		% pass rate	100	100	85
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	22	2	31
		% retention	82	100	90
		% pass rate	61	50	82
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	34	35	29
		% retention	94	100	90
		% pass rate	94	94	92

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

* 2000/01 GNVQ advanced business studies

** college data

Quality of education and training

48. There is much good teaching. Teachers use a variety of methods which challenge and stimulate students. Good use is made of role play and case studies. Theory is related well to practice. The quality of learning materials is high. The development of students' higher-level skills of analysis and critical evaluation in many lessons improves the standards of their work. In an AS-level economics lesson, the teacher recognised the differing needs of students and made excellent links between micro and macro economic impacts on the housing market. Students made reasoned, evaluative judgements of the effect of interest rate changes on house prices. In a less successful business lesson, inappropriate study skills were used. The tasks and activities were too slow, with insufficient variety to maintain students' concentration. Role play was used effectively in a lesson on redundancy regulation guidelines and employment tribunals. Students enthusiastically took part in a 'mock' tribunal and were able to explore the issues and processes involved. Decisions reached showed a good understanding of the legislation and the ability to analyse information. Good use is made of students' experience in professional courses and students value the opportunities to share ideas. Innovative teaching methods are used effectively to promote students' learning in management courses. Poor attendance and punctuality by students on the junior secretary and fast track office skills courses affects students' progress and often leads to disruption. Teaching, training and learning for work-based learners are satisfactory.

49. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in the subjects that they teach. They attend subject-specific training days to update their knowledge. Part-time specialists who have relevant industrial experience are employed on most professional courses. Learning resources for business and economics students are good. The library contains a good stock of up-to-date books, journals, newspapers, videos and CD-ROMs. Good guides are provided to enable students to make best use of the facilities. There are comprehensive links to business and company websites. Clean and tidy classrooms are decorated to a good standard and have topical business displays that promote learning. Workplaces are suitably equipped and accommodation is generally fit for purpose. Learning resources are available for students to use, but there are insufficient computers available during the day. Accommodation is generally good, but rooms in the Foden building are cramped for some classes, have poor temperature control and are often noisy.

50. Assessment is thorough. Assessment criteria and marked work are moderated according to a published plan. Homework is set regularly. Assignments and homework are marked promptly. Clear, constructive feedback helps students to improve their work. Tutors monitor students' progress, punctuality and attendance effectively during tutorials and regular reviews. Students' progress is recorded and actions for improvement identified. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory in work-based learning and on management courses. The tracking of students' progress is unsatisfactory on a few management courses. The feedback to students' on

the certificate in personnel practice has insufficient detail to help them to develop their skills and knowledge.

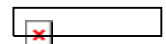
51. Courses and the curriculum meet local requirements in business administration and management programmes. There is an effective response to employers' needs in management provision. There are good links with industry. Educational visits take place to local businesses. A recent visit to a pottery manufacturer provided students on the GNVQ intermediate business studies course with useful information to complete their coursework. Junior administration and secretarial students are offered work experience placements. They benefit from visits to local companies and contributions to their courses by guest speakers. Many students progress from the certificate in marketing to the diploma course, but there is no clear progression route for students on office skills courses. There has been a decline in enrolments on full-time administration and secretarial courses. Insufficient work experience for students aged 16 to 18 on vocational business courses impoverishes their learning. The opportunity is missed to increase their awareness of the commercial world.

52. Students receive comprehensive advice before they enrol. Business students find this particularly helpful in confirming their choices. Comprehensive careers education is included as part of the tutorial scheme of work. Induction is effective and all students receive a useful handbook. However, students who enrol after the start of modular programmes do not benefit from a formal induction. Full-time students have an assessment of their needs for learning support at the start of the course, although the majority of students are not sure how to obtain additional help if they need it. Full-time students have weekly tutorials with their personal tutor. Part-time students are allocated a tutorial period, but very few take advantage of this. Students speak highly of the support given by tutors during and outside of lessons. They receive good advice about careers and HE which is effective in guiding them towards the range of opportunities available. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory on work-based courses. Work-based learners value the regular visits by training officers to the workplace.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are good. The recent changes in the management structure have been fully established. Managers and team leaders are clear about their roles. Course teams meet regularly and, although part-time teachers are encouraged to attend team meetings, few do so. The area's self-assessment report is thorough and identifies issues to be addressed. Strategies for improvement are beginning to have a positive effect. Leadership and management of training for work-based learners and most management programmes are now effective. The provision for the development and assessment of key skills for vocational and work-based learners has improved. There are now innovative teaching methods in management programmes and students' achievements on management courses have improved. However, the management of the franchised certificate in management programmes has not led to an improvement in achievement. Equality of opportunity is promoted well within the department. The department provides satisfactory value for money.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- students achieve well

- good teaching challenges and inspires students

- good use of resources to improve learning

- good development of students' skills in community courses.

Weaknesses

- ineffective management of punctuality and attendance

- pace too slow in a minority of lessons.

Scope of provision

54. Full-time courses for adults and young people are provided on the main college campus. Part-time courses for adults are offered at the college and at outreach centres in Ashby de la Zouche, Loughborough, north Leicester, and in community and workplace venues across the area. Provision for key skills in information technology (IT) is the responsibility of all curriculum teams, with support from the central curriculum support team. There are 1,062 enrolments on part-time courses ranging from 'computing for the terrified', through to level 2 European computer driving licence (ECDL) courses. Online learning accounts for 64 part-time enrolments which range from the British computer society certificate in IT at levels 1 and 2, through to advanced ECDL modules at level 3. Of the 183 full-time students aged 16 to 18, 57% are studying for AS-level and GCE A-level examinations, 18% are on GNVQ foundation and intermediate programmes, and the rest are enrolled on the AVCE ICT.

Achievement and standards

55. Most courses have very good retention rates. The CLAIT course had retention rates of 94% and 96% in the last two years. Retention rates on the AVCE ICT course are significantly higher than the national average. Pass rates are excellent on community courses and in line with the national average on most full-time courses. Achievement of high grades is good on vocational courses, about the same as the national average for AS-level courses and below the national average on GCE A-level courses. Pass rates on the ICT key skills programme are good. Level 2 students achieve pass rates well above the national average.

56. The standard of students' work in lessons and in students' files is good, although there are examples of unsatisfactory attainment. Some students on the GCE A-level computing course had an inadequate knowledge of the visual basic programming language which prevented them completing their project work effectively. Students in community courses demonstrate good skills' development. Most students have a positive attitude to their work. However, a significant number of students do not attend as regularly as they should and arrive late in some lessons. Teachers do not employ consistent strategies for dealing with this problem.

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

2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
CLAIT/New CLAIT	1	No. of starts	811	377	99
		% retention	96	96	94
		% pass rate	77	75	84
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	14	16	16
		% retention	79	94	81
		% pass rate	100	73	69
Computing for the terrified	1	No. of starts	716	587	482
		% retention	98	97	92
		% pass rate	83	87	91
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	33	35	33
		% retention	91	94	82
		% pass rate	80	67	70
ECDL	2	No. of starts	57	150	68
		% retention	95	87	96
		% pass rate	74	67	98
AVCE ICT double award	3	No. of starts	**	34	27
		% retention	**	88	96
		% pass rate	**	93	73
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	24	53	45
		% retention	92	94	84
		% pass rate	68	66	58

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

** course not running

Quality of education and training

57. Teaching is good. Teaching is well planned and responsive to the needs of individual students. However, in some lessons, the rate of learning is dictated more by the students than by outcomes planned by the teacher. The best lessons are planned and structured well. Teachers use a variety of methods to maintain students' interest and ensure that all students understand the topics introduced. For example, in one AVCE lesson, the teacher set unambiguous objectives for the group, dealt with late arrivals effectively, revised previous work and introduced the new topic clearly. Students were required to discuss the work in small groups and responded well to the challenge.

58. In some lessons, the pace is too slow when students work independently. These lessons often start well with a clear explanation of the topic, but the rate of learning slows once students start individual work on the computers. Teachers become engrossed in the work of an individual student and pay too little attention to what is happening in the rest of the group. The weakest teaching and learning takes place when the teacher lacks class management skills. In these lessons, students are given too much freedom. Learning is unsatisfactory and attainment low.

59. Students acquire a good range of new knowledge and skills. They develop their understanding of

the subject often from a starting point of no knowledge at all and regularly return to the college to continue their training. They understand what they are doing and are able to put their skills into practice at home and at work. The confidence of students in using ICT applications increases significantly. They are encouraged to participate fully, and make good use of their time in the classroom.

60. Arrangements for initial assessment and induction are satisfactory. In the college, initial assessment includes an interview, online diagnostic assessment for literacy and numeracy skills along with an assessment of learning styles. In community learning the assessment of learning styles takes place as part of the first lesson. This has little impact on the direct delivery of the courses. Students' prior achievement and learning are not well used in the planning their individual learning.

61. Assignments are used well in building on the skills of students. The level and extent to which progress is recorded varies between teachers. Assignments are at a suitable level and contain the appropriate assessment criteria specified by the course schedule and awarding bodies. Assessments are marked quickly, although some of the comments do not assist students in correcting their errors.

62. The range of programmes available matches the potential of the students. Progression routes are available from entry level to level 3. Educational visits allow observation of IT applications such as the use of automated processes for weighing and measuring and the role of IT in design and manufacture. Guest speakers from external organisations attend the college to speak on a range of subjects. Students receive certificates and awards for attainment throughout the year as well as attending an annual formal celebration ceremony.

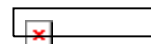
63. The arrangements for guidance and support are satisfactory. In community learning all students receive a brief summary of information on the programmes they wish to follow, including whether the course contains an end of course test or is assignment based. In college, students receive information on progression routes along with an indication of their suitability. Additional support is provided for students who need it in the classroom and through the college's dedicated support centre. Teachers offer a good level of support for learners in the classroom that students value.

64. There is a good range of resources in community centres and these are used well to improve learning. Teachers use data projectors and interactive screens effectively both for class exposition and for work with small groups of students. All staff have an appropriate level of skill and experience in their subject area. Teaching accommodation is generally good. In a few classrooms, workstations are too close together and students have insufficient space for instruction manuals, notebooks and other learning materials.

Leadership and management

65. Management of ICT and computing is satisfactory. Courses are evaluated well. The use of self-assessment to improve provision is sound, but management information is not used effectively to the benefit of students. There has been an evaluation of students' progress in relation to their entry qualifications, but only on the AS-level and GCE A-level courses. Staff appraisal is effective. Teachers are observed teaching on a regular basis. There are satisfactory arrangements for sharing good practice, including formal meetings of cross-college networks three to five times each year. The management of punctuality and attendance is ineffective. Teachers do not use consistently the policies that exist. Teachers and students have an insufficient understanding of the standards required.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel



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

Contributory grade for hospitality, leisure and travel is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good retention rates on most courses

- effective partnerships which improve students' sporting experience and skills

- much good teaching and learning in sport

- excellent resources in sport which improve students' learning and performance

- wide range of enrichment activities that promote and support learning

- responsive management to meet students' needs.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on many courses

- poor resources in hospitality and travel.

Scope of provision

66. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time programmes in hospitality, catering, sport, leisure and travel. It is a CoVE in sport, exercise and fitness and offers courses from entry level to level 3. There are 1,387 students. Of these, 1,016 are enrolled on sports, exercise and fitness courses, 277 on hospitality and 94 on leisure and travel programmes. The majority of students are adults. There are more male than female students. Pupils from local schools attend sport and hospitality courses. The wide range of courses lead to a variety of qualifications which include: first and national diplomas; NVQs; AVCEs; AS-level and GCE A-level studies and open college national awards. There are distance learning programmes in sport, exercise and fitness. There are good progression routes into HE.

Achievement and standards

67. Retention rates are good. They have been above national averages for the past three years for most courses. Retention rates for adult students are high. Excellent pass rates were achieved on NVQ level 2 travel services and the national diploma in sports science at 100% and 98% respectively in 2003. Pass rates on air fares and ticketing level 1, AVCE travel and tourism and community sports leaders' awards have improved and are now satisfactory or better. However, pass rates are poor on many courses. Figures for NVQ level 1 and level 2 food preparation and cooking and food service are below national averages. The resort representatives, first diploma in sports science and the higher sports leaders' awards have declined and are now below national averages. Students' achievement of high grades is at or below the national average. Key skills achievement at 36% in 2003 has again been poor. Progression from the national diploma to foundation degrees and degrees in sports science or into employment is good.

68. Students within the CoVE improve their sports and training performance and reach a high level of skill. Partnerships with premier league football clubs allow students to gain qualifications whilst training for and playing professional football. There is good progression in sport. Many students play or compete professionally. Hospitality students develop good practical and social skills. These were recognised in recent competitions where students won several gold and silver medals. The standard of written work is good and indicates that students have developed good research skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ in catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking)	1	No. of starts	18	20	20
		% retention	89	90	80
		% pass rate	69	83	69
Air fares and ticketing level 1	2	No. of starts	32	48	54
		% retention	94	94	91
		% pass rate	57	29	51
NVQ in catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking) - 1 year	2	No. of starts	12	14	33
		% retention	92	93	97
		% pass rate	73	92	69
Fitness instructor (gym) certificate	2	No. of starts	*	33	23
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	91	87
National diploma in sports science - 2 year	3	No. of starts	65	53	65
		% retention	91	81	82
		% pass rate	95	93	98
Personal trainer	3	No. of starts	63	25	28
		% retention	97	88	96
		% pass rate	74	100	78

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

69. There is much good teaching and learning in sport. Students are challenged and well motivated. Their interest in the subject material is sustained and developed. Many sessions meet the needs of

students well and include a good variety of teaching and learning methods such as research, group work, practical applications and peer teaching. Tutors have very good subject knowledge and relevant experience which enriches their teaching. Students are able to draw on their own sporting and fitness experiences in lessons. Many tutors use question and answering techniques well to involve students and instil confidence.

70. Teaching and learning in hospitality and catering and travel and tourism are satisfactory. Most schemes of work are thoroughly planned and correspond to well-developed lesson plans. However, learning outcomes are not always sufficiently specific. Whilst there are good profiles which identify students' learning abilities and learning styles, these are not fully taken into account in planning or during teaching and learning. Teachers use good examples from industry and suggest useful techniques students can use in their research work.

71. There are excellent resources within the CoVE for sport, exercise and fitness courses. These include outdoor pitches, a gymnasium, psychology and physiology laboratories, well-equipped fitness and massage classrooms and a good range of fitness testing and exercise resources. Students also use some of the facilities at Loughborough University. Two mobile classrooms offer a wide range of ICT equipment well used by students in sport, exercise and fitness classes. High-quality learning materials categorised by level of course and learning style are available on the intranet. The practical areas for food preparation and service are limited in quality and range and do not fully reflect the facilities students will meet in the industry. The inadequate resources for NVQ travel services prevent students gaining the evidence they need to achieve their qualification. They are unable to deal with client bookings in the travel office. The six-week work experience period for travel students is insufficient for them to gain the required evidence. All staff in hospitality, sport and travel have good, relevant industrial experience. Part-time teachers make good use in the classroom of their expertise and knowledge of current practices. In the CoVE, many full-time staff have a broad range of expertise and continue to work in industry or update their vocational skills regularly.

72. Assessment is satisfactory. There are good examples of effective monitoring, tracking and recording of students' progress. Most students understand the assessment process for their course and are aware of how they will be assessed. Students are not always given sufficient notice of assessment. Students receive useful information as a result of assessment and are aware of how they can improve their performance. Internal verification is inconsistent and in some areas is left to the end of the course. Assignment work is well organised and occupationally relevant, but errors in spelling and grammar are overlooked in the marking of some students' work.

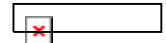
73. There is a wide range of courses from level 1 to HE which provide good opportunities for progression. However, there are insufficient level 1 courses in travel and tourism. Some students encounter difficulties in coping with the work on level 2 courses. A wide range of enrichment activities is available to students. Educational visits to Cyprus and Italy improve hospitality and travel students' understanding of the importance of assessing the quality of customer services. Travel students appreciate the role of resort representatives. Hospitality students represent their college at events such as local and national competitions. A wide range of additional short courses lead to qualifications in coaching, exercise and fitness. Competitive teams and sports' academies provide training for talented performers. Students from local schools attend courses in sports and hospitality.

74. Students receive appropriate advice and guidance to help them choose their courses. Initial induction includes a suitable range of activities to help students settle into their courses. Students can work towards additional qualifications such as basic food hygiene and customer care units during this period. However, some students fail to gain a full understanding of their course including the procedures for assessment. Tutors make good use of the tutorial process to monitor students' progress and to involve students in setting targets for improvement. The teachers and learning mentors closely monitor students' attendance and punctuality. Students' needs for learning support are assessed and met well. There is effective support for students in academic and personal matters. In hospitality and sport, students who need a high level of support to help them complete their studies work closely with a support worker.

Leadership and management

75. The management of hospitality, sport, leisure and travel is good. Communications are good at all levels. Course reviews are thorough and are followed-up with clear action plans noting timescales and who is responsible. Self-assessment is accurate and recognises most of the major strengths and weaknesses of the provision. There is good involvement of students in meetings through elected representatives. Students are listened to and their views are taken into account. External partners have been involved in the development of the CoVE and steps are being taken to improve links with employers.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses
- good teaching on public services courses
- good individual support for students in lessons
- wide enrichment programme broadens learning.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on national diploma in public services and counselling courses
- poor facilities for the development of practical skills
- ineffective actions to improve provision.

Scope of provision

76. The college offers courses for 804 students at levels 2 and 3 in health and social care, early years and public services. Health and social care courses are also available at level 1. There are 189 full-time students and 615 enrolments on part-time courses. More than half the full-time students are enrolled on health and social care courses. More than 90% of students on part-time courses are

adults. Part-time courses offered include NVQs in care and early years, courses for classroom assistants and counselling courses. There are 57 students enrolled in college-based NVQ programmes. There are a further 174 enrolments in NVQ courses in care and 243 enrolments on short courses as part of franchised provision with a local National Health Service trust. There are 58 students on part-time counselling courses.

Achievement and standards

77. Pass rates on many full-time and part-time courses are high. There are outstanding pass rates on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE), AVCE health and social care, the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma in public uniformed services, the NVQ level 3 in early years care and education and the CACHE NVQ level 3 teaching assistants' course. No modern apprentices have achieved the full qualification framework in the last three years. In 2002/03, none of the 31 students on the advanced diploma in counselling skills obtained the qualification. Retention rates are generally satisfactory. They have been consistently good on the GNVQ intermediate health and social care, but the pass rate for this course has been consistently below the national average. Retention rates have been poor for two years on the BTEC national diploma in public uniformed services and the advanced diploma in counselling.

78. On most courses, students gain a broad range of skills and knowledge that meet their occupational needs and career development plans. NVQ level 2 care students demonstrate a good knowledge of legislation and policies for preventing the abuse of clients. They are able to relate key principles of the legislation and policies to ways in which they could develop their professional practices. On many courses, students develop good skills of analysis and evaluation. Public uniformed services students worked in pairs to analyse the law and order manifestos of the Conservative and Labour parties to understand ideological approaches to law and order. They were skilful in identifying significant similarities in the manifestos then raised questions about the implications of the proposals for the police and prison services.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	17	22	25
		% retention	100	82	92
		% pass rate	29	67	48
Certificate in child care and education	2	No. of starts	15	17	16
		% retention	100	88	81
		% pass rate	80	100	100
First diploma in public services	2	No. of starts	28	18	19
		% retention	100	56	79
		% pass rate	86	100	93
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	30	33	16
		% retention	47	42	75
		% pass rate	86	100	92
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	42	39	48
		% retention	74	77	67
		% pass rate	87	100	75
NVQ care (2 year)	3	No. of starts	*	32	58
		% retention	*	3	69

		% pass rate	*	0	43
NVQ early years care and education	3	No. of starts	27	29	27
		% retention	78	90	70
		% pass rate	0	88	84

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

79. There is much good teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18. Teachers make learning objectives clear and regularly check students' understanding and progress in lessons. Many lessons include well-planned and thoughtful activities to help students develop their understanding and practise their skills. Students in an intermediate health and social care lesson demonstrated a good understanding of barriers to communication and the relevance of eye contact through practising communicating without making eye contact. They were also able to identify ways in which a person with impaired sight could be helped to communicate more effectively. They better understood and appreciated lip reading skills through practising silent vocalising in pairs.

80. Weaker teaching is not planned to meet the needs of all students. Teachers use a limited range of strategies to motivate and interest all students and spend too much time talking. In a few lessons, students are not given extension activities and faster workers become bored easily as they wait for others to complete the tasks. Some teaching is poorly organised and staff have low expectations of students. Some teachers lack confidence or knowledge in the subjects they teach. All classes have a completed student profile with details of individual learning needs and preferred learning styles. However, the ways in which this information is used by teachers to plan lessons is not always explicit.

81. Most staff are well qualified and have suitable experience. Many have, or are working towards initial teacher training qualifications. Most NVQ assessors have relevant qualifications. Childcare, care and public services classrooms have bright wall displays and a satisfactory range of resources and equipment to support student learning. However many classrooms are too small for the number of students using them and inadequate for practical activities. Childcare students making bottle feeds and practising sterilising of feeding equipment have to wait for water to be brought from an adjoining room. In another lesson, there were too many students for the size of the kitchen when making play dough. There were potential risks to health and safety when several students crowded around a cooker to heat liquid as part of their practical work. Students on a care programme used a classroom for practical work when mixing alcohol with other liquids to prepare samples of homoeopathic remedies.

82. Teachers use tracking and monitoring systems effectively to inform students of their overall progress. Students understand what they are required to do to complete assignments. Unit guidelines, assignment details and assessment guidance are routinely available in class and referred to by teachers throughout lessons. Teachers continually reinforce the links between class work and assignments. In public services and on a few care courses, students are encouraged to use a range of media such as camcorders, web cameras, and audio tapes as well as websites for their assignments. Internal verification systems are well managed.

83. The range of courses at levels 2 and 3 is adequate and the college responds effectively to the needs of local employers. Lack of provision at level 1 results in inappropriate placement of a few students on level 2 courses. A well-managed enrichment programme broadens learning. AVCE, diploma in childcare and education and public services courses include a comprehensive programme of external speakers and visits. All public services students participate in residential activities with the army and the navy. Students' learning is enhanced by these experiences. Students on the first and national diplomas in public services complete courses in sports' leader awards and

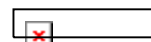
first aid as additional qualifications. Childcare and care students complete paediatric and emergency first aid and basic food hygiene courses. Success rates on these courses are very high.

84. There is good academic and personal support for full-time, part-time and work-based learners. All students are assigned progress tutors and attendance at weekly tutorials is good. Tutorial programmes are planned and managed well. Tutors provide sensitive individual support and encouragement that is highly regarded by students.

Leadership and management

85. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff have a very good understanding of equal opportunities, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice which informs all aspects of their work. Course teams meet regularly and deal with an appropriate range of business. They follow college procedures to review and evaluate their courses. Systems are in place to identify and monitor all aspects of performance and provision, but these have not been effective in improving pass and retention rates. Steps taken to secure the improvement of college-based and franchised provision are unsatisfactory. There are no effective strategies to support part-time staff to improve and develop their teaching and classroom management skills.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good retention rates in most AS-level and GCE A-level subjects

- students achieve well in law and sociology

- well-planned teaching resulting in effective learning

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates in access to humanities

- insufficient use of ILT to develop students' study skills.

Scope of provision

86. The college offers a broad AS-level and GCE A-level programme for full-time students. At the time of the inspection, the programme included 23 subjects at AS level and 22 at GCE A level. Some 255 students were enrolled on five humanities subjects. In some subjects, a significant proportion of students do not progress from AS level to GCE A level. GCSE sociology is offered as part of a small full-time GCSE programme. The access to HE programme offers students a choice of five pathways. There are 23 part-time and full-time students on the access to humanities course.

Achievement and standards

87. Retention rates in most AS-level and GCE A-level subjects are above national averages, significantly so in the case of AS-level and GCE A-level law and GCE A-level psychology. The pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level subjects continued to improve between 2001 and 2003. In 2002/03, they were above national averages in AS-level sociology, AS-level and GCE A-level law and AS-level and GCE A-level psychology. The number of high grade passes is increasing in most subjects and were above national averages in 2002/03 in AS-level and GCE A-level sociology, AS-level law and GCE A-level psychology. The pass rate for AS-level general studies in 2002/03 was well below the national average. The grades achieved by students in AS-level and GCE A-level examinations compared with those predicted for them on the basis of their GCSE results are improving, in particular in AS-level sociology, and GCE A-level law, psychology and sociology. The retention rate for the access to humanities course has declined and was below national averages in 2001/02 and 2002/03. The pass rates are well below national averages.

88. Many students achieve high standards of work in lessons and in their written work. In AS-level and GCE A-level lessons students are encouraged to use their skills of analysis and evaluation and to contribute actively to lessons. On the access to humanities course students develop study skills and the confidence needed to take an active part in lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	28	59	39
		% retention	86	88	77
		% pass rate	71	77	90
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	*22	19	33
		% retention	*77	100	88
		% pass rate	*76	84	86
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	40	52	59
		% retention	90	92	92
		% pass rate	61	71	72
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	*34	26	15
		% retention	*71	92	100
		% pass rate	*54	79	87
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	54	88	91
		% retention	59	80	79
		% pass rate	53	61	74
GCE A-level	3	No. of starts	*54	18	28

psychology	% retention	*57	89	96
	% pass rate	*77	75	89

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

* previous GCE A-level syllabus not directly comparable

Quality of education and training

89. There is much good teaching which is well planned. Lesson plans and schemes of work are well structured and detailed. Teachers maintain detailed records of individual students including their learning styles. Differentiation is achieved through the skilful and varied use of question and answer techniques, gapped handouts and the careful planning of group membership when undertaking small group work. In many lessons, group activities are used effectively. In a GCE A-level sociology lesson, students worked in groups on a task requiring them to make links between crime and the sociological theories they had applied previously to other aspects of the curriculum. They worked collaboratively using written materials and Internet sites for their work. In most lessons, students are attentive and interested in their work. Teachers encourage them to be actively involved in the development of the topic being studied, and expect them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. In many lessons group presentations are used to encourage students to share knowledge and understanding. Some weaker lessons lack variety. Opportunities to involve students in practical tasks or discussions are missed, and limited use is made of questioning to check and promote students' learning.

90. High-quality learning materials are used in lessons to support learning. The use of ILT is underdeveloped and has been identified by the humanities team as an area for improvement. No material from humanities is currently available on the students' intranet site. Good practice is developing in the use of Internet sites to access information, but there is little material to support independent study. The library book stock for humanities is good for most subjects. Classrooms are well equipped and furnished with furniture that can be moved easily to suit different teaching activities. While classrooms do not have computers, staff are able to book 'mobile classrooms', trolleys of laptop computers which can be used to access the college's network through a wireless link. Staff are well qualified and undertake regular professional development.

91. Varied and appropriate assessment methods are used. On the access to humanities programme, internal verification procedures are thorough and records are detailed. In most subjects, teachers provide extensive feedback to students on their assessed work and clearly indicate how marks are awarded.

92. The number of subjects available on the GCE A-level programme provides students with substantial choice. The access to humanities programme is flexible, offering full-time or part-time attendance and a choice of units. In GCSE and GCE A-level subjects, schemes of work and lesson plans identify where key skills in communication and IT will be developed. This is supported in the tutorial programme by well-planned project work. Workshops are available in IT skills. Students are encouraged, but not required, to seek key skills accreditation. Many students aspire to progress to HE and most are successful. In 2002/03, 87% of access students who successfully completed their course progressed to HE or further studies and 65% of GCE A-level students obtained a place to study in HE.

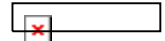
93. Students have thorough and detailed induction programmes. These include an initial assessment to identify additional support needs. Where additional support is provided, this is valued by staff and students. Subject tutors are advised about strategies to support students within the class. All students have progress tutors and a structured tutorial programme. Students have a high regard for the support provided by tutors. Tutorial schemes of work include regular opportunities for one-to-one meetings which students value. Communication between tutors and subject teachers is good. On entry to the college, GCE A-level students are set a minimum expected grade based on their achievements in GCSE examinations. This is reviewed four times a year by subject teams and

students' records are updated with a working grade based on their performance in their studies.

Leadership and management

94. Curriculum leadership and management are good. There is a focus on quality improvement based upon a clear structure of planning and target setting. Course reviews result in detailed development plans. The actions and targets in these plans are understood and accepted by team members who feel part of the review and planning process. Action points are monitored regularly and followed through to completion. Students' views are sought, but do not contribute significantly to course reviews. Communication between staff is good. They are aware of their responsibilities and those of others. There is a focus on teaching and learning. Lessons are observed regularly as part of a programme of internal reviews. There is also a programme of peer observations which focuses on sharing good practice. Cross-college networks are effective in developing and sharing good practice.

English, English as a foreign language and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- many students of English achieve well.
- good retention rates in GCSE English and GCE A-level English literature
- much good teaching and learning
- effective provision for students of English as foreign language
- well-motivated, cohesive and productive teams.

Weaknesses

- inadequate and outdated library stock for English
- insufficient written feedback on marked work

- o much action planning for students' progress is insufficiently rigorous.

Scope of provision

95. There are 189 students taking a variety of English courses, including GCSE English, AS-level and GCE A-level English language and English literature. The largest numbers are enrolled for GCSE English and AS-level English language. A total of 252 adult students attend evening courses in French, German, Spanish and Italian at levels 1 and 2 at the main campus and local community venues. A small but increasing number of full-time vocational students study a modern foreign language as part of their programme. There is flexible provision in EFL, where 129 students are enrolled on full-time and part-time programmes at seven levels. The access programme includes English modules and provides progression to HE for adult students.

Achievement and standards

96. Retention rates are high for GCSE English and GCE A-level English literature. Students achieve well on many English courses. There is a high pass rate on GCE A-level English literature. At least a third of the students on AS-level English language, AS English literature and GCE A-level English literature gain high grades. This compares well with the national average of around 25% for similar colleges. Students on these courses achieve better grades than those predicted for them on the basis of their results in GCSE examinations. The pass rate in GCE A-level English language was low in 2002/03, and the proportion of high grades achieved was also low. Increasing numbers of students on EFL courses take external examinations, including Cambridge Certificates in English Language Skills (CELS) at preliminary and vantage levels, first certificate in English (FCE) and the certificate in advanced English (CAE). Pass rates in these subjects are consistently high and always above national averages. In summer 2003, 91% of candidates passed FCE, almost 40% above the national average. However, the percentage of high grades is low. Retention rates are high for EFL courses. Retention rates are satisfactory or better on MFL courses, and pass rates for courses at levels 1 and 2 are improving.

97. Students' attainment in lessons is satisfactory or better. In English, most essays show students can express themselves well. They have the ability to construct coherent arguments, but their ideas are not always developed in sufficient depth and detail. Students of English literature on AS-level and GCSE courses are perceptive about characters in Shakespeare and their motives. Many students contribute enthusiastically to discussion, but some lack confidence. In EFL the standard of most students' work is in line with their intended qualification. Attainment in lessons amongst adult students is much better than for students aged 16 to 18.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, English as a foreign language and modern foreign languages, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Modern languages intermediate	2	No. of starts	*	53	43
		% retention	*	74	84
		% pass rate	*	28	79
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	149	147	134
		% retention	79	84	83
		% pass rate	49	64	48
AS-level English language	3	No. of starts	33	44	20
		% retention	91	86	80

		% pass rate	70	79	75
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	19	41	33
		% retention	84	88	79
		% pass rate	69	83	88
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	**	17	15
		% retention	**	100	73
		% pass rate	**	93	64
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	**	15	21
		% retention	**	93	95
		% pass rate	**	86	95

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

* course not comparable

** previous GCE A-level syllabus not directly comparable

Quality of education and training

98. Teaching is good. In the most successful lessons, the teacher's enthusiasm stimulates and sustains students' interest. Careful planning leads to effective learning and classroom activities cater well for different abilities and learning styles. In English lessons, there are friendly and productive relationships between students and their teachers. Group work is successful in encouraging students to explore issues collaboratively through discussion. In the best discussions, students learn by testing their ideas against each other. In both AS-level English literature and GCSE lessons, there are illuminating discussions about Shakespeare's plays. In AS-level and GCE A-level English language, students' learning is enhanced by their sharing of experiences of language features such as male and female speech styles. Although teaching is good, there are few examples of imaginative or inspirational practice.

99. Teachers and students make good use of the foreign language being studied. Teachers often produce their own resources. These are attractive and up to date and motivate students to learn. Students of EFL work well in small groups. They used coloured cue cards to match clauses of contrast and addition to printed statements generated by the students themselves in a previous lesson. As they completed the task, the teacher challenged them to explain and justify their choices. In less effective lessons, students rely too heavily on the teacher for support and do not achieve independence in their learning. There are poor punctuality and attendance in a few lessons.

100. Teachers are skilled and knowledgeable. MFL are taught by a team of native and non-native speakers with good language skills. The languages teaching teams have access to a newly installed multimedia language laboratory and smart-board facilities. A popular language centre houses a good range of resources for EFL and is used effectively by students for timetabled and independent guided study. Use of the centre by students of MFL is underdeveloped. English teachers are well qualified and very experienced. Library resources to support students of English are inadequate, and teaching accommodation often permits little exploitation of computer-based resources. Use of ILT is limited and is rarely embedded in schemes of work.

101. In English, MFL and EFL the marking of students' work is generally accurate, but lacks sufficient comment to help students to improve their work. Action planning for improvement is inadequate because targets are not specific enough and lack deadlines for completion and review. The assessment of English coursework is consistent and meets examination board standards and criteria. In EFL, the college has developed effective systems for placing students in groups to monitor their progress. Learning in English lessons, however, is not monitored consistently enough.

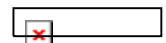
102. A good range of courses is offered on a full-time and part-time basis in English, EFL and four European languages. There is a very popular access course with English modules which gives adult students the opportunity to qualify for university entrance. A small but increasing number of full-time vocational students study a modern foreign language as part of their hospitality and catering, travel and tourism and business programmes. Students from the RNIB Vocational College benefit from access to English, GCSE and AS-level literature classes. The provision in EFL is flexible and offers students opportunities to study full-time or part-time at seven different levels. Students can choose core and optional modules to assemble their own customised course to meet their individual needs and interests. A popular social programme enhances their learning experience and encourages students to develop new friendships and practise their language skills.

103. Students receive good guidance to help them choose their course. Suitable initial assessment ensures that students are placed on the right course and identifies their needs for support. Students receive an impressive level of personal and academic support from their teachers through formal tutorials and teachers' availability outside of lesson times. Great efforts are made to accommodate those with learning difficulties, disabilities or health problems. One GCE A-level literature student in hospital with long-term health problems is receiving distance learning materials and regular individual sessions with her teacher. Students from the RNIB Vocational College have Braille versions of literary texts. They receive assistance with note-taking from support workers, and the notes are then typed into a Braille machine.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management are good. There is energetic and effective management of English, MFL and EFL teams. Managers and their staff are motivated by the devolved responsibilities and budgets. Teachers are involved in decision-making. The teams are enthusiastic and cohesive. They demonstrate good working procedures, which underpin responsive, high-quality provision. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. English, EFL and MFL teachers share good practice through successful mentoring arrangements for new and inexperienced staff, regular peer observation and opportunities for staff development. Formal and informal communications are good. Development plans are in place for under performing courses, and they are regularly reviewed. Self-assessment is extensive and realistic. There have been problems with the availability and accuracy of data. Statistics are under used in some course reviews and evaluations.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in key skills and ESOL

- much good teaching

- good provision of key skills, ESOL and learning support

- o strong partnerships leading to widening participation.

Weaknesses

- o individual learning plans do not sufficiently inform teaching and learning
- o inadequate monitoring of learning support.

Scope of provision

105. The inspection covered literacy and numeracy courses including GCSE mathematics, the provision of the key skills of communication and application of number at levels 1 or 2, learning support and ESOL. All full-time students aged 16 to 18 study key skills. Approximately 590 are studying application of number and 690 are studying communication skills. There are 400 students on literacy and numeracy courses working towards external accreditation or college certificates. Approximately 200 students are studying ESOL and 66 students are studying GCSE mathematics. Courses are provided at the main college site, venues in the community and on employers premises. Some 160 students receive individual learning support.

106. Key skills are delivered within curriculum areas by staff teaching on vocational subjects with support from a specialised key skills delivery team of three staff. Learning support is managed centrally and provides discrete one-to-one tuition. There is a wide range of provision for adult students. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL are provided as discrete courses for adults at the main site, at community venues and at employers' premises. There are five GCSE mathematics groups based at the college, including one evening class for adults.

Achievement and standards

107. Pass rates in key skills are very good. At level 2, pass rates are twice the national average and at level 1 they are 20% above the national average. All students who completed ESOL courses in 2002/03 passed their examinations. Literacy and numeracy courses have high retention rates of 85%. In GCSE mathematics, results are good. College data show that 64% of the students completing their course in 2003 achieved at least grade C. This is well above the low national average of 39% for similar colleges. Students on average improved by one grade on their previous examination results. Retention rates are low in mathematics and were 62% in 2002/03.

108. Standards of work are satisfactory or better for the majority of students. On literacy and numeracy courses, students improve their confidence and develop personal and learning skills which enable them to progress. ESOL students achieve high standards in oral work. Attendance overall during the inspection was 76%, but attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory in GCSE mathematics lessons. Action to address this weakness has been ineffective.

A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
ESOL basic certificate	Entry	No. of starts	91	87	101
		% retention	75	71	65

		% pass rate	96	85	100
ESOL intermediate certificate	Entry	No. of starts	38	34	6
		% retention	79	76	67
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Key skills communications	1	No. of starts	40	30	79
		% retention	75	77	80
		% pass rate	60	35	62
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	145	148	167
		% retention	75	74	83
		% pass rate	32	29	48
Key skills communications	2	No. of starts	480	474	590
		% retention	38	83	75
		% pass rate	31	35	60
Key skills application of number	2	No. of starts	285	423	425
		% retention	88	74	82
		% pass rate	25	22	50

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

Quality of education and training

109. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In ESOL and basic skills lessons, teachers are skilled in questioning students to check learning and to maintain the engagement of all students in the lessons. In some basic skills lessons, there is an over-reliance on paper-based materials. In key skills lessons, students work on vocationally relevant assignments and are taught by teachers from within their own department. For example, beauty therapy students are involved in developing business plans that extend their communication, application of number and IT skills. Students work enthusiastically on these tasks. There is effective use of ILT in key skills lessons.

110. The majority of full-time students undertake an initial screening which identifies their needs for support in literacy and numeracy. On ESOL and basic skills courses, this information is used to agree the students' individual learning plans. Identified targets often lack focus and some reviews do not contain sufficient detail to enable students' progress to be accurately monitored. In key skills lessons, initial assessment is rarely used to inform teaching and learning strategies. The differing needs of individuals in these lessons are not addressed sufficiently.

111. A team of 20 specialist staff provide good learning support to students with identified needs. Students who are referred to the learning support team by teachers, or identify themselves as needing support are assessed within two weeks. Staff liaise effectively with teachers so that learning is relevant to the students' main programme of study. Students find this support very helpful. One student on a sports course who was having difficulty producing work to the standard required has been given help with note-taking and assignment writing. He is now achieving at a level comparable with his peers.

112. Resources are satisfactory. Most staff are well qualified and experienced though few staff are qualified to deliver numeracy skills. Most key skills staff have not yet undertaken training in literacy and numeracy. There is a large workshop area dedicated to the delivery and support of literacy, numeracy and key skills. It is a good resource which can be used flexibly for whole class, small group or individual work. Some of the basic skills learning resources have not been updated to national curriculum standards.

113. There are strong partnerships with community groups and employers which have led to widening participation. Useful links have been established with organisations and hostels dealing with homeless people. There are growing contacts with employers to deliver learning in the workplace. For example, successful ESOL classes for employees are held in a commercial laundry.

Leadership and management

114. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong focus on teaching and learning. Peer observations take place within curriculum teams and there is effective mentoring support for new staff. There have been successful strategies to raise achievement in key skills and widen participation in basic skills. The self-assessment report is accurate. Areas for development have appropriate action plans. Progress towards these action points is monitored. Communications within teams and between managers and teams are good. Team meetings take place regularly. Part-time staff receive payment for attendance at these meetings. Staff feel fully informed regarding strategic and operational developments.

115. There is inadequate monitoring of learning support. The pass rates for students receiving support are unknown. Students who choose not to take up the support offered are not monitored. There is insufficient co-ordination between staff teams delivering basic skills, key skills and GCSE mathematics. For example, there is no systematic sharing of good practice. Monitoring of equal opportunities and diversity is satisfactory, although this does not take place at team level.

Part D: College data

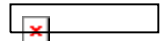
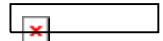


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2002/03



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	18	37
2	34	30
3	31	17
4/5	1	6
Other	16	10
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2002/03



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)

Science and mathematics	1,382	471	10
Land-based provision	0	19	0
Construction	45	142	1
Engineering, technology and manufacture	785	1,463	12
Business administration, management and professional	591	1,070	9
Information and communication technology	1,177	1,935	16
Retailing, customer service and transportation	65	225	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	1,096	1,457	13
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	204	344	3
Health, social care and public services	568	976	8
Visual and performing arts and media	172	138	2
Humanities	509	125	3
English, languages and communication	1,349	641	10
Foundation programmes	299	377	3
Unknown AOL	410	1,433	9
Total	8,652	10,816	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
		1	Starters excluding transfers	565	728	910	730
	Retention rate %	79	77	80	80	77	89
	National average %	75	76	**	69	70	**
	Pass rate %	62	74	76	80	81	85
	National average %	69	70	**	68	71	**
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,110	1,090	1,226	1,114	1,210	1,359
	Retention rate %	83	78	81	80	72	78

	National average %	71	72	**	68	68	**
	Pass rate %	62	72	67	58	68	60
	National average %	69	71	**	68	72	**
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,752	1,602	1,797	1,165	1,672	1,161
	Retention rate %	74	82	79	76	59	70
	National average %	71	77	**	68	70	**
	Pass rate %	72	73	76	54	69	74
	National average %	77	79	**	69	72	**
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	82	85	165
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	72	72	73
	National average %	73	71	**	67	67	**
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	48	48	53
	National average %	54	53	**	55	56	**

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

2. College rates for 1999/2000 to 2002/03: College ISR.

* numbers too low to provide a valid calculation

**data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	71	25	4	77
Level 2 (intermediate)	61	32	7	57
Level 1 (foundation)	68	27	5	22
Other sessions	83	17	0	18
Totals	69	27	4	174

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