



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

King Edward VI College, Stourbridge

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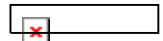
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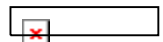
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Basic information about the college

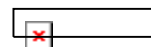


Name of college:	King Edward VI College, Stourbridge
Type of college:	Sixth form college
Principal:	Dr John Glazier
Address of college:	Stourbridge West Midlands DY8 1TD
Telephone number:	01384 398100
Fax number:	01384 398123
Chair of governors:	Mr David Johnson
Unique reference number:	130478
Name of reporting inspector:	Alex Falconer
Dates of inspection:	19-23 January 2004

Part A: Summary

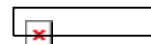


Information about the college



King Edward VI College, Stourbridge is a single-site sixth form college in Stourbridge in the West Midlands. In 2003/04, there are 1,348 full-time students, all taking general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A-level) or advanced subsidiary level (AS-level) courses. The college offers 42 GCE A-level courses and 45 AS-level courses in sciences, mathematics, business and economics, information communication technology, visual and performing arts, humanities, English and modern foreign languages. There are no vocational courses or courses at level 1. Level 2 courses consist of very small numbers of general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) resits in English and mathematics, along with GCSE Spanish and GCSE general studies. Students attend the college from a wide range of communities in the West Midlands. There are two general further education colleges and a tertiary college nearby, along with three secondary schools with sixth forms. Around 50% of young people aged 16 in Stourbridge gain five GCSE passes at grades A* to C each year. This is slightly higher than the average for the Dudley Metropolitan Borough but is very close to the national average for comprehensive schools in England. In 2003/04, around 59% of the students are female. About 14% of the students are from black or minority ethnic communities. This proportion is greater than that in the surrounding area, which is 11%. Each year the college receives around 1,200 applications for the approximately 680 places that are available. It is a popular college and competition for places is intense. The mission of the college is to 'provide the highest quality education in a supportive, purposeful environment'.

How effective is the college?



The quality of teaching and the achievements of students are outstanding in biology, physical education, social sciences and humanities. Teaching and achievements are good in physical sciences, mathematics, business and information and communications technology (ICT), visual and performing arts and English and modern foreign languages. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- governors

- high pass rates and retention rates

- standards of students' work

- careers advice

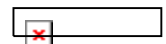
- progression to higher education (HE)
- subject support for students
- financial management.

What should be improved

- consistency of curriculum management
- lesson observation system
- accommodation
- access for students with physical disabilities.

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

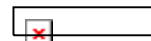


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Biology	Outstanding. Retention and pass rates are consistently very high and attendance and punctuality are very good. Teaching and learning are outstanding and engage students' interest. Whilst assessment and curriculum leadership are very effective, there is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) in laboratories to promote learning.

Physical sciences	Good. There are very high retention and pass rates on all courses. Resources for teaching and learning are good, and students' progress is well monitored. There is insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching to enhance learning.
Mathematics	Good. There is a flexible level 3 curriculum incorporating a wide range of options. Students achieve very high pass rates on all courses. ICT resources are used well to enhance learning and standards of work. Students learn well but there are insufficient opportunities in lessons for problem solving and discussion.
Business and information and communications technology	Good. There are very high retention and pass rates. Students' progress is well monitored and good support is provided. Assessment is rigorous and constructive feedback is given. In some lessons, teachers do not always provide opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning or to demonstrate their understanding.
Sport	Outstanding. Retention and pass rates for AS-level and GCE A-level physical education are very high. Teaching is very good in both theory and practical lessons. Students' progress is tracked well and there are good specialist resources for sport. Pass rates on the community sports leader award are low.
Visual and performing arts	Good. There are high pass rates for all courses. The standard of work is good, particularly in music performance. There is much good teaching, but there is insufficient challenge in a significant minority of lessons. There is poor accommodation in music and drama.
Humanities	Outstanding. Retention rates, pass rates and the standard of students' work are high. Learning is enhanced by good resources and a diverse range of trips, fieldwork and societies. Most teaching is good, but in a significant minority of lessons there is insufficient focus on engaging students in challenging learning. Students are very well supported, particularly in their progression to HE.
Social sciences	Outstanding. Students' work is of a very high standard and they achieve very high pass rates at AS level and GCE A level. Teaching is consistently good and is enriched by ILT. There is a strong focus on helping students to prepare for examinations. Exceptionally able students are insufficiently challenged in class.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. Pass rates are high on all courses, and retention rates are high on AS-level and GCE A-level English courses. Students are well supported by their subject teachers and many produce very high-quality work. There is much stimulating teaching, which encourages good learning. There is insufficient emphasis on ensuring that good teaching and learning occur in all lessons.

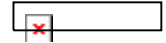
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. The principal and governors provide clear leadership and strategic direction for the college. The central mission to maintain high standards is shared by all who work in or govern the college. AS-level and GCE A-level pass rates are very high, and the proportion of students obtaining A and B grades is large. Students on many courses perform better than their prior attainment would predict. Senior managers work well as a team. Whilst a culture of co-operation and mutual support exists across the college, in some areas there are inconsistent

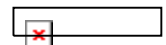
scheme lacks rigour. Management information systems have improved and now provide effective data for course management. Financial management is good and the college gives good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



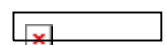
The college's response to education and social inclusion is satisfactory. The mission statement indicates that the college aims to cater exclusively for the needs of full-time students aged 16 to 18 who take AS-level and GCE A-level courses and wish to go on to HE. There is no provision for adult students. Overall, around 14% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. This proportion is higher than that of the Dudley metropolitan area. The ethnic profile of students in the college in 2002/03 was 7% of Indian origin, 3% from Pakistani backgrounds and 0.7% of African-Caribbean origin. The college analyses the achievement, retention rates and added value of students by gender and ethnicity each year, both at subject-team and whole-college level. Screening for additional learning needs such as dyslexia is part of the recruitment process. An equal opportunities committee has been established but does not have governor membership. The equal opportunities policy has recently been reviewed in light of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Wide consultation with students, staff and governors informed the review. As yet, not all staff have been trained in the implications of Race Relations (Amendment) Act legislation, but staff training regarding SENDA has been completed. Most of the college is accessible to those with restricted mobility, but around 20% of the accommodation remains inaccessible to wheelchair users.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. Demand for places at the college is high. There are clear and effective procedures for advice and guidance and for enrolling students. The college does not systematically screen all students for additional support needs in literacy or numeracy. Support for students with dyslexia is effective. Academic support is good. Subject workshops are well attended and students use these to further develop their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are studying. Attendance and punctuality are very well monitored. Progress is tracked through subject reviews and tutorials. Targets resulting from these reviews are not specific. Careers guidance is very effective and has a high profile within the college. Support and advice on applying to HE are particularly strong. Students have access to specialist support services and the college has close links with many agencies providing support services. The college's student support services were accredited by the Guidance Accreditation Board in November 2003. Student services staff and teachers in the academic departments work well together to create a caring and supportive learning environment.

Students' views of the college



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

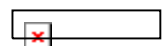
What students like about the college

- supportive and approachable teachers
- high expectations
- the enrichment programme
- friendly and adult atmosphere
- lunchtime workshops
- careers and HE advice
- information technology (IT) facilities.

What they feel could be improved

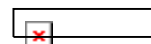
- cramped social facilities
- key skills
- general studies
- co-ordination of assignment deadlines.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole

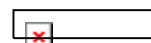


Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	75	23	2
Learning 16-18	76	22	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).

Achievement and standards



1. The standards of students' achievements are very high. All students at the college are aged 16 to 19 and are enrolled on AS-level and GCE A level courses. Pass rates and retention rates have consistently been well above national averages over the past four years. The proportion of students awarded grades A or B at GCE A level has increased significantly over the past three years. Around 85% of the students progress to HE each year.

16 to 18 year olds

2. Pass rates for both AS-level and GCE A-level courses have improved over the past three years and were very high for courses ending in 2003. The overall pass rate at GCE A level was 99% and the pass rate for AS level was 98%. Some 24 GCE A-level and 13 AS-level courses had 100% pass rates in 2003. The proportion of students awarded grades A and B has improved over the past three years. On courses ending in 2001, around 36% were awarded grades A and B at GCE A level and in 2003 this rose to 56%. On courses ending in 2001, about 55% of students were awarded grades A and B at AS level and this improved to 57% in 2003. Retention rates have been well above the national average for four years. The in-year retention rate is very high and was 97% in 2003.

3. Students work hard in lessons and show considerable application to their studies. They achieve high standards in written and oral work and demonstrate depth of understanding for the topics they cover. Good practical technique is demonstrated by physical education and music students.

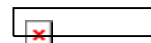
Inspectors judged that students' attainment was good or better in three-quarters of lessons observed. Students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment at GCSE have improved over the past three years. Both at GCE A level and at AS level in 2003, the overall attainment of students was better than that predicted from their GCSE results on entry to the college. Students are also successful in a range of other activities, such as competitive sports, music, the senior mathematics challenge and public speaking.

4. The college is committed to key skills and was successful in obtaining development funding from the Learning and Skills Development Agency in 2003. In their first year, all students attend classes in ICT at level 2 unless they already have an equivalent level 2 qualification. In 2002/03, around 600 students passed the examination at level 2. However, only 74 students completed their portfolios. All students are also expected to complete one key skill at level 3. In 2002/03, assessment was separated out from the curriculum and few portfolio completions took place by the end of the first year of study. Currently, first-year students cover key skills specifications through one or more of their AS-level subjects. The college aims for portfolio completion by the end of the first year and examination entry in the second year. It is too early to identify whether this will be successful, but early indications are that it is working well on geography, physical education and religious studies courses.

Adult learners

5. There are no adult students enrolled at the college.

Quality of education and training



6. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and attainment in 143 graded lessons, 7 tutorials and a small number of one-to-one meetings and coaching sessions. Teaching was good or better in 75% of lessons, satisfactory in 23% and less than satisfactory in 2%. This represents a small decline in good or better teaching since the last inspection in February, 1999. Teaching is best in biology and social sciences. Teaching and learning are best in those lessons with a mixture of theory and practical activities. Lessons taught by full-time staff are slightly better than those taught by part-time staff.

7. In the best lessons, a variety of appropriate activities engage the interest of students and topics are explored in depth. Question and answer techniques are used effectively to confirm students' understanding and learning is checked rigorously. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher posed searching open questions that provoked lively discussion but also allowed time for students to think and to respond after reflection. Learning materials such as study guides and departmental intranet sites encourage independent learning and enable students to make good progress with their studies. ILT is used well to stimulate learning on mathematics, business studies, geography and English courses. For example, geography students made very good use of satellite images and weather maps from the British Broadcasting Commission to deepen their understanding of air masses and the formation of depressions. In the best practical lessons, students carry out activities with confidence. In a successful AS-level physical education lesson, students worked hard to produce high-quality choreographed movement sequences.

8. Learning was good or better in 76% of the lessons observed and less than satisfactory in 2%.

9. In the least satisfactory sessions, lesson plans are vague and insufficient attention is given to students' learning. Teachers talk for too long and students are not actively involved in their learning. Little checking of students' learning and understanding takes place. The learning of the most able is not extended and there is no differentiation of learning activities to cater for students' differing learning styles and abilities. There are too few activities that allow students to discuss their ideas and to apply their learning in different contexts. There is insufficient use of ILT to stimulate learning

in physics, electronics, classical civilization, religious studies and modern foreign languages. In some lessons where the students are completing project work, individual targets are not always set and students do not always make the best use of their time.

10. The college is well maintained with a high standard of cleanliness. There is some good accommodation; for example, the sports hall and some of the laboratories and general teaching rooms. Most classrooms are well equipped and contain subject-specific displays. The college has recently invested in improving its ILT resources and many rooms now have fixed data projectors. A major building programme is planned, but has yet to be approved. The college is currently leasing space in an adjacent building to help to overcome its shortage of accommodation. However, this has not resolved all of the college's accommodation difficulties and some specialist and general teaching spaces are cramped. Some accommodation for visual and performing arts subjects is unsatisfactory. Approximately 20% of the college is inaccessible to wheelchair users. However, the college has been successful in ensuring that students with disabilities can access their chosen programme of study. There is a shortage of private study space at certain times. The library, though cramped, is well resourced with an extensive book stock and good ILT provision, including software and adaptations for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The only social space available to students is the refectory. The dedicated quiet room is too small for the number of students wishing to use it for worship.

11. Teaching staff are generally well qualified and experienced. All full-time staff are qualified teachers, and the eight part-time staff who are not teacher-trained are either undertaking training or are planning to do so in the near future. Although the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is higher than in the local community, staff from these groups are under-represented. The college has committed 1% of its budget to staff development, which includes both departmental and cross-college activities. There has been considerable emphasis on training in key skills, the use of ILT and on developing the intranet. However, there is insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

12. Assessment of students' work is carried out frequently to a high standard. Teachers generally have high expectations to which students respond positively. Appropriate assignments are set and used effectively to develop further learning as well as for assessment purposes. Practical work is assessed rigorously and appropriately in science and in physical education and assignments in music are challenging and wide ranging. This has a very positive effect on student's learning and motivation. The outcomes of assessment are well used to inform future planning of work. Students have minimum target grades for each subject. These are based on their GCSE qualifications and students receive frequent feedback on how they are performing in relation to their target grades. In modern foreign languages and social sciences, students feel that the process of setting minimum target grades is confusing. In a small number of cases, minimum target grades are renegotiated as a result of a formal review process. The consistency and rigour of moderation procedures for coursework are good. For example, there were no adjustments made by moderators in mathematics in 2003 and the internal moderation of GCE A-level history is particularly rigorous.

13. Records of assessment and students' performance are detailed and up to date. They are used well to provide frequent feedback to students about their progress. Students receive good support in preparing for examinations and completing coursework. Subject workshops are well attended and provide students with opportunities to develop examination techniques and to improve their knowledge and understanding. Formal tests are used effectively for examination preparation. Feedback to parents on students' progress is detailed and timely and parents' consultation evenings are well attended.

14. Students' work is marked carefully and students receive helpful and constructive feedback, often in great detail. Written comments on students' work are invariably encouraging. In many cases, there is advice to students on how to improve the standard of their work. This is a particularly strong feature of assessment in physical education, English and physical science. Departmental assessment policies vary in quality and are inconsistently applied. Informal feedback to students on the quality of their work is frequent and effective but many of the formal targets for improvement are vague and are written as goals rather than as specific targets.

15. There is no formal system of initial assessment of additional needs in literacy or numeracy and the consideration of students' learning styles is underdeveloped. The subject workshops are effective in providing additional support for students who are having difficulty.

16. The college has a very specific mission to provide AS-level and GCE A-level programmes to full-time students. Courses in 45 subjects are currently available. The college offers the opportunity to take GCSE English, mathematics, Spanish and general studies. There is some advanced extension provision; for example, in English, history and mathematics. The college also offers opportunities to gain additional accreditation in, for example, Young Enterprise, the Duke of Edinburgh award and sports coaching qualifications. The college has a strong commitment to broadening students' experience and to developing their academic skills. All students are expected to take general studies and key skills qualifications.

17. The college has a well-established and broad enrichment programme which students value. It includes activities as diverse as scuba diving, the debating society, the Christian Union, the film club and the Islamic Society. Some 240 students participate in sporting activities. The college has a strong tradition of musical activity. Further enrichment is provided by the work-related curriculum to develop vocational skills, and the successful school placement programme has 140 students placed in a variety of schools in the area. In addition, extensive subject-related enrichment opportunities are organised in, for example, history, law, psychology, sociology, biology and English and modern languages.

18. All students take the GCSE general studies examination at the end of their first year, unless they already have the qualification. Pass rates are high. In their second year, students are timetabled for two classes a week in preparation for taking the AS-level examination in January and the GCE A2 in June. Those students who are taking four GCE A-level subjects or performing arts subjects are exempt from attending these classes, but are still expected to sit the examinations. Attendance at classes is variable. Over 600 students take the examinations each year and pass rates are high. Students do not perceive the programme as being well planned and well implemented.

19. Around 40 Year 10 and Year 11 pupils from three local schools are attending AS-level critical thinking lessons at the college on Wednesday afternoons. Study days in citizenship were organised by the college in 2002/03 and attracted pupils from eight local schools. The college has also been responsive in providing support for vocational GCSE applied business and AS-level biology to a local school.

20. Arrangements for admissions and enrolment are clear, and are understood by prospective students. There are open days throughout the year at which potential students and parents gain detailed and helpful information about the college. In addition, the college has designated liaison tutors for each of its partner schools. These links are very effective in providing advice and guidance to prospective students. There is a high demand for places at the college. In 2003, the college received 1,153 applications for 680 places. The college arranges selection interviews for applicants where advice and guidance on subject choices is thorough. Induction to college life is well managed and students receive well-planned inductions to the subjects they have chosen.

21. Diagnosis for dyslexia is in place and the college is successful in identifying students with dyslexia. The college currently supports 19 students with dyslexia. A helpful information booklet for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is produced by the college. There is insufficient attention given to the identification of students' individual learning needs and the college does not systematically screen all students for additional support needs in literacy, language or numeracy. This was identified in the previous inspection.

22. Students value the support they receive from the college. Academic support is particularly strong. Workshop sessions provide support for coursework and examination preparation in all curriculum areas. These are well attended and are effective in enabling students to develop study skills and to improve their subject knowledge and understanding. Students who are experiencing difficulty with a subject are encouraged to attend. Students have weekly group tutorials and a cross-college programme of lectures on topics such as equal opportunities, personal development and careers is in place. Attendance and punctuality are very well monitored through the tutorial system

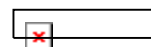
and timely and appropriate action is taken to follow up absences and lateness. Formal reviews of progress are carried out termly. The targets resulting from these reviews are not specific and many lack measurable outcomes. Students do not have detailed individual learning plans.

23. Careers guidance is very effective. A cross college careers programme gives careers a high profile within the college and students speak enthusiastically of the help and support they receive, particularly with applications to HE. The careers library is well resourced and is staffed by well-qualified advisors. A Connexions personal advisor visits the college on a weekly basis to support the work of the college staff. The careers library is well used by students but access is difficult for wheelchair users. The college holds an annual HE conference for students attended by over 30 universities, enabling students to get first-hand advice on options and opportunities within HE. In addition, a careers convention is held annually covering some 45 careers and professions. This is attended by a large number of well-known companies and professional bodies. Students take full advantage of this opportunity to gain a detailed insight into working in a wide range of professions. The college has very good links with HE and operates a successful compact arrangement with 12 universities; 60 students entered HE through this route in 2003 who might otherwise have had difficulty in securing an appropriate place.

24. Students have access to effective and relevant specialist support services. The procedures for students to access specialist support are clear and are understood by staff and students. There is a clear policy and detailed procedures for child protection which have been adopted by the governors. The policy reflects the need for inter-agency working, in particular with the Dudley area Child Protection Committee. The college has good links with a range of organisations concerned with student support and welfare. For example, specialist counselling services are provided at the nearby 'What?' centre which operates a drop-in and an appointment service, and the college enables students to access support for visual and hearing impairment above and beyond that provided by college staff through its links with specialist agencies. The college's student support services were accredited by the Guidance Accreditation Board in November 2003. Students' satisfaction levels with support services are high and the college uses this information well in identifying areas for improvement. It has not formally evaluated the impact of the support services on retention and pass rates.

25. Student services staff and staff in academic departments work well together to create a caring and supportive learning environment for students. Student support services are well led and managed and teachers see senior staff within the team as very accessible and supportive.

Leadership and management



26. Leadership and management are good. The principal and governors provide clear leadership and strategic direction to the college. The college is concerned to preserve its established character but to develop in a way that responds to the needs of students in the 21st century. The focus of the college's provision is exclusively on students aged 16-18 and on AS-level and GCE A-level courses. Its central mission to maintain high standards in terms of students' achievement is shared by all who govern or work in the college. Retention and pass rates are very high and pass rates at grades A and B are very high on AS-level and GCE A-level courses in most subjects. Overall, students achieved examination grades in 2003 that were at or above those that were predicted from their GCSE attainment.

27. Governors participate actively in the development of the strategic plan and effectively monitor its progress. The current strategic plan is focussed on the improvement and enlargement of the college's facilities so as to increase student numbers by around 400 over the next decade. Governors are determined that the planned expansion of college places will be accompanied by the preservation of high academic standards. Members of the board's quality and standards committee systematically monitor and evaluate students' performance and achievement by a thorough review of

the self-assessment report. The committee monitors the setting of recruitment, retention rates and examination performance targets and reviews their progress. It receives reports of the teaching observation scheme and student surveys. It regularly reports its findings to the main board.

28. Senior managers work well as a team. Each member of the team, including the principal, manages a group of heads of department with whom they meet regularly. In these meetings, senior managers give close attention to the performance of students in terms of attendance, retention and achievement. Communication in the college is good, and staff value the open and consultative management style. Strong leadership is particularly evident in the mathematics, physical education, biology and history departments and in student support services. Management at course level is satisfactory. Many departments work well as teams. Most team meetings are well documented and are focussed on students' progress and performance, but they are not often enough concerned with the improvement of teaching. For example, in humanities, there is evidence of good teamwork in organising the curriculum and managing students' programmes, but little attention is given to improving teaching. Teaching strengths and weaknesses identified in observations sometimes fail to inform staff development. Good practice is readily shared within some teams, particularly so in biology and physical education, but not so effectively in others, like geography, sociology, English and psychology. Physics, biology, and chemistry teachers are overseen by different senior managers and only rarely formally discuss the teaching of science as a group. This weakness was identified in the last inspection report. There is little formal sharing of good practice across history, religious studies and geography. In most areas, schemes of work are well developed and lessons are generally well prepared, but the college has no overall guidance or policy on schemes of work or lesson plans. This results in weak lesson planning in some areas. Assessment policies differ between and within departments and do not always include all appropriate standards. While a culture of co-operation and mutual support exists across the college, subject autonomy leads to inconsistent standards of curriculum management and organisation.

29. Arrangements for assuring the quality of the provision are well established. The majority of course reviews are thorough in their analysis of retention rates and achievement data. Appropriate action plans are developed and realistic targets are set for attendance, retention rates and pass rates. Self-assessment at course level is systematic and usually involves all team members. While most key areas are dealt with in detail in the report, the analysis of the quality of teaching and learning is often not sufficiently thorough or rigorous. The teaching observation programme is well established. Each member of staff is observed annually by one of the college's trained observers. The profile of grades awarded by the college is significantly higher than those awarded by inspectors. Weaknesses in teaching identified by inspectors have been overlooked and have therefore not informed teaching improvement schemes. Data on students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment is well analysed at departmental level and effectively used in assessment reports. Individual students are set minimum target grades based on their prior performance and their success forms part of departmental subject reviews. However, targets for students arising from the reviews are vague and difficult to measure.

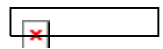
30. An effective staff development plan is produced annually. This relates well to the strategic plan as well as to departmental concerns. The college provides a full range of training opportunities to all staff. Four staff development days take place each year and a week or more is set aside for training in the summer term. The two-year appraisal cycle currently in use, which includes its own discrete teaching observation, is viewed by senior managers as unnecessarily time consuming. Indeed, this has resulted in only 80% completion of teaching staff appraisals in the present cycle. The replacement of this scheme by an annual professional review is under consideration.

31. The college's equal opportunities committee has recently reviewed its policy. This process has been managed by the equal opportunities co-ordinator and involved consultation with staff, students and governors. The committee comprises voluntary staff and student members. There is no governor member. The college has responded appropriately to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. A policy has been developed with wide consultation and its impact on the college been reviewed. Appropriate analysis of racial groups takes place at recruitment and admission. Achievement by ethnic group is closely monitored. As yet, all staff have not been trained in the implications of Race Relations (Amendment) Act legislation. All students in their first year attend tutorial sessions on equality issues. Appropriate measures in response to the requirements of

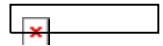
SENDAs are underway. The equal opportunities policy has been amended to take into account the requirements of the Act. Staff training in the requirements of the Act has taken place.

32. Access to management information has improved since the last inspection. This is much valued by tutors. Most heads of department and teachers make effective use of high-quality attendance, retention and performance data to manage students' learning. Attendance is particularly well monitored. Senior managers use data effectively to carry out reviews of departmental performance. Financial management is good. The college has met its funding targets annually and is in good financial health; it received a rating of 'excellent' in the local LSC performance review. The college sets and meets recruitment, retention and examination performance targets. Students' completion and pass rates are very high. Average class sizes ensure viability and students are offered a wide choice of subjects and enrichment activities. The college provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Biology



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

Strengths

- outstanding teaching and learning

- very high retention and pass rates

- very rigorous and effective assessment

- dynamic and enthusiastic approach to learning

- very effective curriculum leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunity for students to use ILT in laboratories.

Scope of provision

33. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in biology and human biology. There are 402 students studying in this curriculum area, all of whom are aged 16 to 19. The college successfully recruits students to the department and is recognised locally and nationally for the high-quality provision offered. The proportion of students taking human biology has increased over the past three years.

Achievement and standards

34. Pass rates for GCE A-level biology are excellent, and have been consistently above national averages. In 2002 and 2003, the pass rate was 99%, with 64% of students achieving grades A or B. Human biology students have achieved equally high pass rates in the last two years, but with fewer high grades awarded. Pass rates for AS-level human biology and biology are excellent. In 2003, the human biology pass rate was 96%, compared with a national average of 79%, and in biology, the pass rate was 98%, which is 17% above the national average. Retention rates on all courses are excellent. In 2003, all students completed GCE A-level biology and human biology. Attendance and punctuality are excellent. During the week of the inspection, attendance was 93%.

35. The majority of students have clear targets, and progression to HE and professional training is excellent. The standard of students' work is very good. For example, students' written explanations of speciation, the causes of variation and the consequences of deforestation were clear. Students' coursework files are very well organised and include good evidence of increasing knowledge and understanding. GCE A-level students display independent thinking skills and are well prepared for examinations.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	128	90	87
		% retention	91	97	98
		% pass rate	98	99	98
AS-level human biology	3	No. of starts	85	150	164
		% retention	92	89	95
		% pass rate	99	94	96
GCE A-level biology *	3	No. of starts	125	98	69
		% retention	86	99	100
		% pass rate	91	99	99
GCE A-level human biology *	3	No. of starts	70	70	103
		% retention	83	100	100
		% pass rate	90	99	99

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

* GCE A-level and GCE A2

Quality of education and training

36. Teachers are very well qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. Lessons are very well planned and learning outcomes are identified clearly. Teachers consider and make appropriate

provision for the range of abilities and different learning styles of the students they teach. They ensure there is a balance of practical and theory work and opportunities to discuss findings. Staff have developed consistently good working relationships with students in the laboratories. Teachers use a variety of techniques and strategies including good use of questions and answers, practical work, group presentation, task sheets and model making. AS-level human biology students applied their knowledge of pathogens well and built models of the HIV virus using craft materials. In another lesson, students effectively applied their knowledge of nucleotides and bonding to make models of DNA from pipe cleaners and pasta shapes. Good links are made between theory and practice in lessons, and the variety of teaching styles used enhances learning effectively. The appropriate range of activities used by teachers ensures that students sustain interest in the topic. The purposeful approach by teachers results in students making very good progress. Practical work is very well organised. In one lesson, students worked conscientiously and showed consideration for each other as they applied their knowledge of sterile procedures and prepared bacterial cultures. Students use the space available safely and willingly share resources with each other.

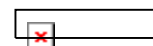
37. Students are very clear about the progress they make and staff are rigorous in their assessment of students' work. Verbal and written feedback inform students on the quality of their work and homework is used very effectively to review knowledge and understanding at the start of lessons. Subject profile reviews are well used to engage students in target setting and review. Revision is thorough. Each module is taught methodically, and then teachers exchange student groups to revise topics. This ensures that students gain a broader perspective on biological issues. Progress reviews are followed up by written reports and students contribute by setting their own targets for improvement. There is very good support provided at lunchtime workshops where students are given additional tuition to extend their knowledge or to support areas of weakness.

38. Teaching resources are good but the laboratories are, in some cases, too small for larger groups. There are too few occasions when staff provide students with opportunities to use their ILT skills as they work in laboratories. For example, data tables and graphs are not routinely collated using ILT. Data on progression to HE by former students are prominently displayed. There are also good poster displays and excellent photographs of study trips on the walls.

Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are very good. Meetings are held regularly and recorded minutes identify action points. Staff work well together and communicate effectively with each other. The curriculum manager supports teachers well and there is strong consistency and efficiency throughout the department. The self-assessment report is used effectively to identify future developments in the department. Critical analysis of the data is used effectively to identify targets for retention and achievement. The manager ensures that staff are up to date and attend appropriate national conferences and staff development activities.

Physical sciences



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates

- high retention rates

- good progression to science-related HE and medical schools
- high-quality teaching resources that enhance learning
- rigorous monitoring of students' progress.

Weaknesses

- insufficient challenge for a minority of students
- cramped accommodation in geology and some physics rooms
- insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching to enhance learning.

Scope of provision

40. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in chemistry, physics and geology and an AS-level course in electronics. There are currently 498 students on these programmes. There are no level 1 or level 2 programmes in science-related subjects and no vocational courses.

Achievement and standards

41. Attendance is good, at 89%. Retention rates are high and have been well above the national average for sixth form colleges on all courses over the past four years. Pass rates on all courses are very high, and have been well above the national average over the last two years. For example, GCE A-level pass rates for chemistry and geology in 2003 were 100%. The AS-level pass rates were 96% or better, and were at least 10% above the national average. The proportion of GCE A-level students achieving grades A to B is greater than the national averages for chemistry, physics and geology. For example, 71% of GCE A-level chemistry students and 61% of AS-level chemistry students achieved grades A to B compared with the national averages of 49% and 36%, respectively. However, only on chemistry courses are students' achievements better than might be expected from their qualifications on entry. In 2003, a high proportion of students progressed to science-related HE courses.

42. Students are attentive in lessons and work at a high level. Students' notes are clear and demonstrate attainment of learning objectives. They have good academic knowledge and understanding. Some students produce outstanding work. Most students achieve high standards and develop a wide range of skills through research, critical thinking and sound evaluation.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	138	148	145
		% retention	93	91	94
		% pass rate	98	97	96
AS-level geology	3	No. of starts	29	32	37
		% retention	97	97	93
		% pass rate	96	97	96
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	133	97	108
		% retention	92	97	93
		% pass rate	96	99	97
GCE A-level chemistry *	3	No. of starts	144	102	103
		% retention	86	99	98
		% pass rate	94	99	100
GCE A-level geology *	3	No. of starts	16	20	26
		% retention	88	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level physics *	3	No. of starts	115	92	69
		% retention	95	98	100
		% pass rate	97	97	99

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

* GCE A-level and GCE A2

Quality of education and training

43. Most teaching is good or better. In all lessons, good relationships between students and teachers contribute positively to their learning and motivate students to work productively. Teaching is enthusiastic, but many lessons do not have clear learning objectives. Effective questioning helps students to extend their understanding. In the best lessons, students are given opportunities to successfully apply their knowledge. For example, AS-level chemistry students enthusiastically used balloons to illustrate how electron configuration influences the shape of molecules. By consecutively bursting balloons, the teacher effectively demonstrated how the bond angles and the complexity of molecules reduce as the number of electron pairs decreases. The lesson concluded with a powerpoint presentation that introduced students to a number of real examples of the structures they had modelled.

44. In a minority of lessons, the teaching lacks variety. Teachers rely too much on exposition and the most able students are not challenged sufficiently. Students are passive and have little opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned.

45. Practical work is well organised. Very careful attention is paid to health and safety practice, with all students wearing laboratory coats, goggles and gloves, as appropriate. Risk assessments are good. In practical lessons, teachers relate theory to practice clearly and physics teachers make good use of demonstrations. For example, in an AS-level physics lesson, the students first predicted the factors on which resistance of a wire may depend. The teacher then tested out their suggestions with simple demonstrations. The lesson then concluded with the students confidently measuring how resistance of a conductor is dependent on its length and cross-sectional area, and determining the resistivity graphically.

46. Laboratories each contain data projectors and at least one networked computer. Some teachers make good use of these resources for powerpoint presentations or to access the Internet. For example, in an AS-level geology lesson on carbon14 dating, a student was quickly able to establish from an appropriate website that materials used by the Pharaohs would be about 5,500 years old. The class then used this information to determine the number of half-lives that had elapsed in the intervening period. In an AS-level physics lesson, students made good use of computers to demonstrate their skills in data logging and in the production of drawings and formulae as part of their project work.

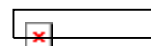
47. Most students' work is marked carefully, with constructive comments and helpful feedback. Students' progress is rigorously monitored through regular tests. Assessed work is tracked centrally and contributes to the effective monitoring of the students' performance relative to their target grades. Assignments are well planned and lead to productive learning. Students speak highly of the individual support they receive. In addition to support from their personal tutor, they are offered informal subject-specific careers guidance and help in preparing for university interviews. Subject tutorials give students valuable opportunities to gain deeper understanding of topics or to receive additional mathematics support.

48. Teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable. A wide range of high-quality and stimulating teaching resources enhances students' learning. The laboratories are well equipped, with a good combination of fixed benches and matching tables that enables the rooms to be used flexibly. The walls lack stimulating displays. The geology classroom is too small for practical lessons and some of the physics rooms are overcrowded for current numbers of students. There is a wide range of modern textbooks in the library, but some volumes are outdated.

Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Chemistry, physics and electronics are managed as separate departments and geology is part of the geography department. Within each team, there is an excellent team spirit, communications are good and staff share ideas and resources. Teachers plan the curriculum well, and retention and pass rates are carefully monitored. However, there is little collaboration or sharing of good practice across these departments. There is insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching to enhance learning. Self-assessment acknowledges some weaknesses but does not give enough priority to continuous improvement in teaching and learning. The college lesson observation scheme produced a profile of grades which was higher than that awarded by inspectors. There are no formal meetings with students' groups to receive comments about the standards of teaching.

Mathematics



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates

- good resources enhancing learning and standards of work

- flexible, wide range of advanced level courses

- good support for students

- strong curriculum leadership.

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on learning and problem solving in many lessons

- inadequate focus on improving teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

50. Around 95 students are currently studying AS-level mathematics, with coursework and options in mechanics and discrete mathematics. These students complete the course after four terms. A further 150 students are undertaking AS-level courses in pure mathematics and pure mathematics with statistics, which are completed in three terms. There are currently 167 students studying pure mathematics and/or statistics at GCE A level. Students in their first and second years may take an additional further mathematics qualification at AS level or GCE A level, and this currently includes about 40 students. Small numbers of students, currently 11, study GCSE mathematics. From 2003, students no longer have the opportunity to achieve key skills qualifications through their mathematics courses.

Achievement and standards

51. Students achieve high standards in their work. They have sound algebraic and graphical skills and apply their knowledge with confidence. They use computer software routinely and to good effect. Pass rates are very high on all courses and students gain very good grades. In 2003, the overall GCE A-level pass rate was 99%, with 67% of passes at grade A or B. Students achieve better than would be predicted from their GCSE results. Many mathematics students, about one-third of the cohort in 2003, go on to study mathematics-related degree courses at university. Four students in 2004 have been offered places to read mathematics at Oxford or Cambridge. GCSE retake results are outstanding. In 2003, all the students passed GCSE mathematics at grade C or above in the November exams after only three months.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level pure mathematics with statistics	3	No. of starts	167	122	150
		% retention	88	84	85
		% pass rate	90	89	98

AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	**	118	121
		% retention	**	91	92
		% pass rate	**	94	98
AS-level statistics	3	No. of starts	22	21	25
		% retention	91	76	84
		% pass rate	100	100	75
GCE A-level mathematics*	3	No. of starts	87	96	93
		% retention	92	100	97
		% pass rate	100	95	98
GCE A-level pure mathematics with statistics*	3	No. of starts	105	62	49
		% retention	95	100	98
		% pass rate	88	98	100
GCE A-level statistics*	3	No. of starts	28	33	26
		% retention	96	100	96
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

*** GCE A-level and GCE A2**

**** course did not run**

Quality of education and training

52. Much teaching is good and focuses on the techniques required to succeed in examination questions. In the best lessons, teachers pose searching, open questions which provoke discussion. Teachers give students time to think before answering, which fosters deeper responses and greater participation. One teacher challenged students, when solving complex multi-stage equations, to think ahead like a chess player anticipating possible moves. In another activity, students effectively discussed a series of statistical experiments on laminated cards and debated whether they could fit a Poisson model. In a significant number of lessons, however, teachers spend too long talking with inadequate checking of understanding during the unfolding of theory. In one lesson, students were inactive whilst the teacher talked for 45 minutes. Some teachers ask only simple, closed questions and set repetitive tasks to practise basic techniques. In such lessons, students are denied the opportunity to discuss and articulate their understanding and to develop transferable problem-solving skills.

53. Students are well motivated. They work hard, concentrate and make good use of their time. They support each other well during class work. When given the opportunity, they are capable of demonstrating insightful and logical mathematical thinking. In one lesson, students used computers to investigate transformations of graphs, changing from one mathematical function to another. They were able to distinguish between general and specific results and learned about mathematical rigour as well as transformation geometry.

54. Resources are good, and they are used effectively to enhance learning and standards. Projection equipment is available in all classrooms and is used in conjunction with various software packages to demonstrate concepts to very good effect. In one lesson, the teacher used graphical software to show how combinations of sine and cosine graphs form a new stretched and shifted sine graph. Students use a range of software applications effectively in their coursework. Teachers are experienced, well qualified and with very good subject expertise. They provide effective lunchtime workshop support for students. Recent targeted staff development has successfully updated teachers' ICT skills, with the result that they are better able to make use of the resources available to them. Assessment practices are sound and support high standards. Teachers have high

expectations of students, who respond conscientiously. Work is marked rigorously and with helpful comments. Assessments inform periodic review interviews with students. In some classes, students discuss and mark their own work before handing it in for checking. This succeeds in clarifying mark-scheme principles, addressing areas of poor understanding and indicating where further work is needed both individually and collectively.

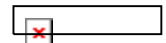
55. Through the wide range of options available, students are able to specialise in areas that interest them or that complement their ambitions. They may transfer from one option to another and add extra units of further mathematics. Extra tuition for advanced extension awards and Oxford and Cambridge entrance papers successfully supports several students each year in their applications to read mathematics at university. Over 100 students each year enter for the UK senior mathematics challenge, and a significant number of students gain certificates.

56. Support for students is good. Effective induction includes careful advice and guidance to help students select appropriate options. Teachers are friendly and approachable, and students have access to sufficient individual support to help them reach their potential. Workshops are well used and much valued by students. Rigorous monitoring of students' progress includes careful analysis of exam results and informs departmental progress reviews.

Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are good. There is strong curriculum leadership, which has led to improvements. The department has taken purposeful action to develop ICT in teaching and learning through investment in resources and training. Self-assessment and development planning are robust and are supported by rigorous analysis of achievement data. Success rates are carefully examined to detect any differing patterns of achievement by gender or ethnicity. Recent action plans have resulted in improvements in students' attendance and in the quality of schemes of work. Systems for addressing weaknesses in teaching are, however, insufficiently developed. Internal lesson observations, whilst accurately identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, have not led to improvement.

Business and information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- very high pass and retention rates

- good high grade achievement

- very good use of ILT

- good support for students

- o high quality of students' work.

Weaknesses

- o undemanding teaching in a minority of lessons
- o insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

58. The college provides AS-level and GCE A-level courses in business studies, economics and accounting along with computing and ICT. There are 104 students studying accounts, 50 economics and 238 business studies. In addition, there are 68 students on ICT and 140 on computing courses.

Achievement and standards

59. Retention and pass rates are high and have been consistently above the national average on all courses for the last three years. Pass rates for GCE A-level business and GCE A2 computing were 100% in 2002/03. On the majority of courses, over 50% of students achieve high grades and over 40% achieve above their predicted grade. The pass rate for AS-level economics rose by 10% in 2002/03, to 15% above the national average. Attendance is good and students are punctual.

60. Students' work is of a high standard. Computing projects show a very high level of technical expertise and students are able to tackle challenging problems with confidence. Written assignments on business studies courses show clear evidence of analytical skills. Students' oral work in lessons demonstrates a thorough understanding of topics under discussion.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	125	152	145
		% retention	95	92	97
		% pass rate	100	99	99
AS-level accounting	3	No. of starts	42	60	62
		% retention	81	90	92
		% pass rate	100	98	95
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	133	148	117
		% retention	96	90	95
		% pass rate	98	95	99
GCE A-level business studies *	3	No. of starts	102	95	106
		% retention	86	99	99

		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level computing *	3	No. of starts	92	100	93
		% retention	91	97	98
		% pass rate	98	94	100

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

* GCE A-level and GCE A2

Quality of education and training

61. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare their lessons well. Good use is made of direct questions to check students' learning. Revision classes are effective and students are encouraged to discuss topics thoroughly. In a business studies lesson, a lively activity to create booklets was introduced which enabled students to grasp the concept of productivity effectively.

62. In the best lessons, students are encouraged to think for themselves, and they use good evaluation skills to consider alternatives before proposing a solution. Students develop good research skills and they use a variety of learning resources, including ICT, to reinforce and support their learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers spend too long dictating notes or students waste time copying information, and there is little opportunity for students to show that they have understood the topics being covered. Effective group and paired work is underdeveloped. Schemes of work vary in detail across and within the departments, and students do not have individual learning objectives in computer project lessons.

63. Many teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date knowledge. Good examination technique is strongly emphasised and well supported by use of examiners' comments and exemplar answers.

64. ILT is effectively implemented in a variety of ways. Computing classes regularly use the virtual learning environment to provide background information and worked examples. Students can access this from home and regard this as an important part of their learning. The business intranet resources won a Beacon Award, and structured topic notes and many other linked resources are used effectively to support learning. All computing and some business subjects are taught in rooms with up-to-date computer hardware and software. All machines have access to the Internet, the college intranet and appropriate software.

65. Assessment is thorough and students' progress is closely monitored. Students receive regular feedback on their progress towards their predicted grades. Assignments contain detailed assessment criteria. Feedback on assignments is constructive and indicates how grades can be improved. Where weaknesses are identified, students attend workshops to improve their skills and knowledge. There are no formal procedures for moderating the quality of assessment on coursework, although work carried out by new members of staff is checked by the curriculum manager.

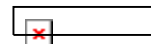
66. A wide range of additional programmes is offered as part of the enrichment provision. Many business students take part in the Young Enterprise scheme, which provides good links with businesses. The value and importance of key skills and general studies are not recognised by students, who are concerned that these distract from their main studies. Good links are being established with a local school to enrich the teaching of applied GCSEs.

67. Teachers provide good academic support to all students. Students comment very favourably about the help and support they receive from staff. There is very good monitoring of progress and achievement against predicted grades, and parents receive detailed reports. Good tutorial support is given to support university applications and to prepare for interviews.

Leadership and management

68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff benefit from a wide range of development opportunities. Some staff have not had an appraisal for the last three years. Mentoring procedures support new staff effectively. Regular monthly meetings ensure that members of the department are kept informed of college-wide issues. The quality of course programmes and teaching is also monitored at these meetings. All staff contribute to the self-assessment report, but there is insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The internal observation grades for teaching are over-generous and are significantly higher than those awarded during inspection.

Sport



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

Strengths

- very high pass and retention rates on AS-level and GCE A-level physical education courses

- good proportion of A and B grades on advanced courses

- stimulating teaching

- good specialist resources

- rigorous assessment and tracking of students' progress

- highly effective subject management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for the community sports leaders award in 2002 and 2003.

Scope of provision

69. The college offers a range of full-time courses in physical education and sports. There are 131 students studying AS-level and GCE A-level physical education. In addition, there are 77 students enrolled on community sports leaders awards and 44 completing other short qualifications.

Achievement and standards

70. Pass rates for AS-level and GCE A-level physical education are consistently very high. In 2003, the AS-level pass rate was 100% and the GCE A-level pass rate was 98%; both well above the national average. The proportion of students awarded grades A or B in 2003, both at AS level and GCE A level, was over 60%; around 30% above the national average for physical education. Pass rates have been low on the community sports leaders award over the past two years, due to students' failure to complete the voluntary service component of the course. Retention rates have improved on life support short courses over the past two years, but the pass rate declined in 2003. Analysis of students' achievements in relation to their prior attainment indicates that students achieve grades above those predicted by their GCSE results. Attendance during the inspection was good, at 93%. In 2003, around 83% of students progressed to HE, with 53% studying sports science or physical education degrees.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level physical education	3	No. of starts	53	74	87
		% retention	92	95	95
		% pass rate	100	99	100
GCE A-level physical education *	3	No. of starts	58	40	60
		% retention	91	100	98
		% pass rate	100	100	98
Community sports leader award	2	No. of starts	59	69	77
		% retention	95	97	94
		% pass rate	100	25	43
Life support	1, 2 and 3	No. of starts	**	75	44
		% retention	**	51	98
		% pass rate	**	97	70

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

* GCE A level and GCE A2

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

71. Teaching on physical education courses is very good. Schemes of work are detailed and focus on relevant and varied activities to further develop students' learning. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are shared with students to ensure that they understand what is expected of them. The best lessons have a good balance of discussion, theory and practical exercises to stimulate learning. There are good links from theory to practice. For example, students were quickly able to recall relevant motor skills theories and apply them to practical activity in a lesson on golf swings. IT is also used well to enhance learning. Animation and video clips were effectively used as learning aids in a very good exercise physiology lesson. Students critically analyse information and data and apply their knowledge successfully. Practical work is also of a high standard. In an AS-level lesson, students successfully created choreographed movement sequences and performed them with confidence. In a small minority of lessons, students are not actively engaged in their learning and spend too long listening to the teacher talking.

72. A wide range of resources is used effectively to enhance learning. The sports hall is an excellent resource and combines a multi-sport space with a fitness area. The teaching rooms have been

made welcoming with attractive posters and newspaper articles relating to physical education. Off-site facilities are good. These comprise four grass pitches and changing rooms. The library has a broad range of textbooks, CD-ROMs and general interest sport books. The departmental intranet site has a very well-developed exercise physiology section. However, the need to develop other areas of the intranet was identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching staff are well qualified and the standard of coaching from part-time staff is high. Teachers regularly take part in staff development activities to update their skills and knowledge.

73. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress is thorough, and has a positive impact on students' motivation and performance. Criteria for assessment are clear and are shared with students. Targets set for students are clear and reviewed regularly. Written feedback on assignment work gives detailed guidance that allows students to measure and improve their performance. Teachers make encouraging comments and these are valued by the students. Teachers set frequent tests and provide regular homework for students. Homework is returned promptly, with useful comments on how to improve. Regular reviews are used to set targets for students and to monitor their achievements. Additional study support sessions at lunch times are well attended, and are viewed by the students as very useful parts of their programme. Students feel that informal support from teachers is good and that staff are approachable and friendly.

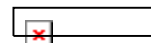
74. College sports teams play and train regularly and show good results. The teams are part of an extensive sporting enrichment programme with which over 240 students are involved. A number of students currently represent the college at county and national competitions.

75. Initial advice and guidance are good, and course marketing materials are of a high standard. Induction sessions both in July and September enable students to make a smooth transition from school to college. Detailed careers and HE information is displayed in the sports areas.

Leadership and management

76. Leadership and management are very good. Staff work very effectively together. The department has high expectations, both of staff and students. Staff development has high priority and teachers regularly update their subject knowledge. Data about students' achievements and from student satisfaction surveys are rigorously analysed and result in realistic action plans. Team meetings are well documented and focus on improvements. Teachers from the physical education department are active in cross-college initiatives and were responsible for trialling the internal review profiles. They also took part in piloting the integration of key skills into the curriculum.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on all courses

- high retention rates

- good teaching

- very good performance skills in music

- high standard of students' work.

Weaknesses

- curriculum management of drama

- poor accommodation for music and drama

- insufficient challenge for a significant minority of students.

Scope of provision

77. The college provides a wide range of full-time advanced level provision in the visual arts and performing arts. AS-level and GCE A-level courses in art and design, music, drama, textiles and art history are offered. AS-level music technology has recently been added to the provision. There are 296 students aged 16 to 18 studying visual and performing arts as part of their full-time programme. Students access a range of related enrichment activities and many perform as members of various music groups and choirs.

Achievement and standards

78. Achievements and standards are high. There are consistently high retention and pass rates for art, music and drama. In 2003, pass rates for AS-level and GCE A-level art and drama were 100%. Pass rates for AS-level music were 97%, and 100% for GCE A level. Value added is satisfactory overall, although some students do not achieve their potential. The standard of practical work on art and design courses is good, particularly in sketchbooks where the design process is well understood and good use is made of primary source material. Final pieces are the product of careful development, but there are few examples of spontaneity in the two-dimensional or three-dimensional compositions. Students regularly visit galleries and museums and this provides opportunities for objective study and subsequent development of compositions. On music courses, the standard of performance work in lessons and workshops is very high. Students in a choir rehearsal performed confidently to a high standard. In a workshop session, a string quartet tackled a difficult piece by Shostakovich with skill and confidence. This would have prepared them well for their practical performance in their future music examinations.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level music	3	No. of starts	41	37	33
		% retention	93	95	100

		% pass rate	100	97	97
AS-level drama	3	No. of starts	69	52	42
		% retention	91	88	93
		% pass rate	98	100	100
AS-level art and design	3	No. of starts	61	76	60
		% retention	87	92	92
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level art and design *	3	No. of starts	54	33	66
		% retention	91	94	97
		% pass rate	100	90	100
GCE A-level music *	3	No. of starts	36	29	28
		% retention	89	100	96
		% pass rate	97	100	100
GCE A-level drama *	3	No. of starts	38	44	32
		% retention	87	95	100
		% pass rate	100	98	100

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

* GCE A level and GCE A2

Quality of education and training

79. There is much good teaching. Students are highly motivated and committed to their courses. They talk confidently about their work and make informed choices about the development of ideas and the selection of media. The quality of music performance is very good and students have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of practical performance through the jazz band, orchestra, choir and wind bands. Practical work on drama courses is good. In one lesson, students presented their rationale for the choice of the Edwardian period in which to set their performance of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, making the comparison between the period leading up to the French revolution and that leading up to World War 1. The radical impact that each conflict had on society was well articulated in supporting the students' decisions. Art and design students explore other media through the enrichment programme but the absence of life drawing classes restricts opportunities for extending their experiences further. Although there is a range of printmaking opportunities for art and design students and good facilities for computer graphics, there are limited opportunities to explore a range of materials in three dimensions. Good use is made in music of appropriate technology to explore students' compositions and to identify key points to be addressed in future learning. Where teaching is only satisfactory, lessons are uninspiring, lack pace and do not employ a range of teaching strategies that challenge students sufficiently. Relationships between staff and students are good, and students feel well supported. Students are articulate and perceptive and develop confidence in their skills.

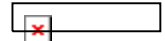
80. There is an extensive range of public performances in the performing arts and music. This provides opportunities for students to perform to large audiences. Accommodation for performing arts is of poor quality and has limited access for students to rehearse. The equipment for drama courses is outdated, and there is difficulty in supporting the range and scope of performances required for examinations. There are three music practice rooms, of which only two are adequately soundproofed. These are inadequate for the number of students taking music and requiring rehearsal space. Information on courses within the performing arts is clear and informative. There is a good process for assessing the skills of music students prior to attending the college. Students are well supported and receive additional subject support through the weekly workshops. There is

limited wheelchair access for students with restricted mobility to any of the visual and performing arts areas.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management on music and art and design courses are good. Curriculum management of drama is poor. The scheme of work is not adhered to and assessments are inconsistent, poorly planned and lack rigour. In drama, there is too much reliance on discussion of issues without formal recording of actions or outcomes. There are good systems in place to record students' progress on most courses and staff use the information effectively to inform planning. Staff feel well supported and contribute to curriculum development. Staff appraisal is poorly understood by staff and is not effectively used to inform staff development planning. Sharing of good practice across the visual and performing arts is limited.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates

- very high standard of students' written and oral work

- varied and effectively used resources for teaching and learning

- successful development of key skills on geography and religious studies courses

- high level of support for students

- good use of data on students' achievements to bring about improvements.

Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on improving teaching to enhance learning.

Scope of provision

82. The inspection covered AS-level and GCE A-level courses in history, geography, religious studies, politics, classical civilisation and, at AS-level only, critical thinking. There are over 600 enrolments by students aged 16 to 18, all of them for full-time courses. Approximately 45% of enrolments are for history, 25% for geography, 10% each for religious studies and politics, and 5% for classical civilisation and critical thinking. Good liaison with local schools has resulted in Year 10 pupils attending college for AS-level critical thinking. Politics and history teachers from the college are currently supporting eight local schools in the development of citizenship at Key Stage 4 of the national curriculum.

Achievement and standards

83. Students consistently achieve very well in their examinations. In 2002 and 2003, pass rates at AS level and GCE A level reached or came close to 100%, and the proportion of students obtaining high grades was well above average for most courses. In 2003, students achieved higher grades than predicted from their GCSE performance on GCE A-level courses and on AS-level history, politics and classical civilisation. Retention rates are also high. Attendance and punctuality are good. A significant number of students continue to study history, geography or related courses at university.

84. The standard of students' work is very high. In lessons, students sustain concentration and make good progress as they work independently or in small groups. Where teaching is effective, students show a secure grasp of concepts and principles. Their answers to questions often demonstrate clarity of understanding and fluency in communication. Students on critical thinking courses are able to identify flawed reasoning and AS-level history students are able to present conclusions after analysing a range of evidence and balancing conflicting arguments. The quality of students' coursework is particularly impressive. The vast majority of recent fieldwork reports produced by GCE A-level geography students scored full marks. Most students who develop key skills through their work on religious studies or geography courses produce evidence of very high standards in their portfolios. For example, a religious studies student was able to discuss literal and critical approaches to the interpretation of New Testament parables. In presentation and expression, the writing illustrated sophisticated communication skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	142	153	163
		% retention	96	98	94
		% pass rate	99	99	99
AS-level religious studies	3	No. of starts	42	53	43
		% retention	90	92	93
		% pass rate	87	98	93
AS-level politics	3	No. of starts	42	31	36
		% retention	90	97	97
		% pass rate	89	97	100
AS-level geography	3	No. of starts	118	116	119
		% retention	94	92	96
		% pass rate	100	99	97
GCE A-level history *	3	No. of starts	119	116	122

		% retention	89	100	98
		% pass rate	94	99	100
GCE A-level geography	3	No. of starts	94	74	79
		% retention	88	97	94
		% pass rate	93	100	100

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

* GCE A level and GCE A2

Quality of education and training

85. The quality of teaching and learning varies from very good or outstanding in one-third of lessons to good or satisfactory in the remainder. Teaching and learning are at their best when stimulating resources are combined with a variety of appropriate learning activities. In these lessons, the pace is brisk and students enjoyed the challenge of applying their knowledge. In a geography lesson, students enjoyed using mapping software to explain changes in types of industry and housing from features in urban landscapes. Politics students drew on their reading and experience of a recent visit to the House of Commons to assess the power and accountability of recent British prime ministers. Where teaching is less effective, teachers fail to define precise objectives for students' learning. Teachers talk too much and question and answer techniques are ineffective in the checking of learning.

86. Resources are extensive and of high-quality. Well-qualified teachers have a broad range of experience and up-to-date expertise. On many courses, for example politics, teachers' attractively designed booklets provide a clear structure for class work and students' independent study. The library holds an extensive range of books and periodicals but at busy times it is too small to accommodate all the students who wish to work there. Classrooms are well equipped. Geography teachers, in particular, make effective use of IT in their teaching. The décor and artefacts displayed in the religious studies classroom provide a stimulating environment for learning. Students benefit from a wide range of out-of-college activities which add greatly to what they learn in college. Classical civilisation students have visited Rome and the British Museum to examine artefacts, and visits to European capitals have provided realistic contexts to events and institutions studied by history and politics students. Excellent opportunities are available for geography fieldwork. Apart from a well-planned programme of local investigations, there is an annual field visit to Iceland and last summer two students were successful in gaining places on expeditions to Greenland and Lesotho.

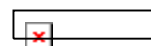
87. Assessment is generally good. Appropriate written assignments help students to develop their understanding and improve standards. Marking of students' work is usually thorough, and sometimes with careful attention to the correction of spelling and grammatical errors. Teachers' comments help students identify strengths and weaknesses. The extent to which teachers highlight areas for improvement varies. Teachers monitor students' progress carefully and take timely action to support students whose performance is below expectations. Students are made aware of their progress against target grades during individual review meetings with their teachers. Action plans are discussed, but they are often unspecific and not systematically monitored.

88. Students receive very good guidance and support. Teachers provide careful guidance to students about courses both on entry to college and as they transfer from AS level to GCE A level. Teachers are readily accessible through subject workshops to offer support to students outside lessons. Workshops are used effectively to meet a wide variety of individual needs identified by students themselves or by their teachers. The quality of information and guidance on careers and HE is good. Thorough procedures to monitor students' attendance are in place.

Leadership and management

89. The history department, which includes politics, classical civilisation and critical thinking, is very well led. Clear direction and effective teamwork have helped to raise standards to consistently high levels. Courses in all departments are well organised and managed. Thorough analysis of data on all aspects of students' performance results in much effective action in response to weaknesses. Targets are generally met. However, across all departments, course reviews and self-assessments overlook weaknesses in teaching. Lesson observations fail to highlight particularly good practice for dissemination to other teaching staff within or across departments. There is insufficient focus in team meetings on teaching and learning.

Social sciences



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

Strengths

- outstanding achievement on all courses

- high standards of students' oral and written work

- consistently good teaching

- good use of ILT to enrich learning.

Weaknesses

- insufficient challenge for exceptionally able students.

Scope of provision

90. There are 935 students aged 16 to 18 taking AS-level and GCE A-level courses in law, psychology and sociology as part of their full-time programmes. Around 60% of these are studying psychology.

Achievement and standards

91. Students of law, psychology and sociology are outstandingly and consistently successful. Pass rates for all subjects have been well above national averages for the past three years. The number of high-grade passes is also well above the national average. In 2003, 75% of the students passing AS-level sociology achieved either grade A or B, and on GCE A2 sociology almost 80% achieved a high grade. In law, 78% achieved a grade A or B and one student achieved marks which were

among the top ten marks in the country. On AS-level psychology, 71% achieved grade A or B. In 2003, most students achieved grades in line with, or above, what would be predicted by their GCSE scores.

92. The standard of work produced by students is consistent with their high examination successes. The majority of students are fluent and articulate and have strong powers of analysis. During a GCE A-level sociology lesson, students were successful in illustrating these qualities in their oral presentations and written summaries. Students handle difficult concepts with ease, show impressive mastery of evidence and produce work of a very high standard very early in their courses. Law students displayed excellent powers of analysis, fluent command of English and confident handling of sources when examining the interpretation of statutes. Psychology students, when tackling a question about hypnosis, showed great clarity of thought and strong evaluative skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	**	107	130
		% retention	**	93	91
		% pass rate	**	100	98
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	194	247	314
		% retention	90	89	94
		% pass rate	97	97	98
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	83	113	103
		% retention	93	92	92
		% pass rate	97	98	100
GCE A-level psychology *	3	No. of starts	136	132	186
		% retention	82	99	96
		% pass rate	94	98	99
GCE A-level sociology *	3	No. of starts	61	56	86
		% retention	87	100	99
		% pass rate	96	100	98

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

* GCE A level and GCE A2

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

93. Teaching is consistently good. Students learn within an ethos where high achievement is both expected and nurtured. There is a strong focus on preparing students for success in their examinations. Students respond well to these high expectations and are very highly motivated. A number of helpful revision classes were observed in which students reviewed and consolidated their understanding of a topic by working through a series of well-designed exercises. There is frequent reference in all lessons to the requirements of the examinations and to the assessment criteria, and this is reinforced in the setting and marking of assignments.

94. Students make progress in their learning with the help of probing questions that check and extend their understanding. Skilful questioning encourages students to develop deeper responses. In a minority of lessons, teachers answer their own questions. In many lessons, students work

through detailed and challenging handouts. Occasionally, teachers do the thinking for them, rather than letting them first tackle a question on their own. A data projector was used to good effect in an AS-level law lesson to guide students to relevant websites to support their investigation of advice agencies. In most lessons, the students respond with interest to the activities, work with high levels of concentration and ask searching questions. In one lesson, students delivered high-quality short talks to their peers on social stratification and HE. The teacher drew on his extensive knowledge of sociological research to further inform the discussion that followed. The most able students are not always appropriately challenged. Very few opportunities are provided in class for these students to work at a faster rate or on more advanced material.

95. Learning is enhanced by the effective use of ILT. There are banks of computers in the sociology rooms and one classroom has a data projector and a wide-screen video. There are well-developed intranet sites for all three subjects. All students are issued with up-to-date textbooks. Sociology has a dedicated study area and an extensive departmental library which provides excellent support for coursework. Classrooms have a strong subject identity and are enlivened by stimulating posters and examples of students' work.

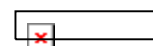
96. A wide range of additional activities enriches the students' experience of these subjects. Law students visit a variety of legal institutions including Gray's Inn and the London and Birmingham law courts. A leading international writer on the sociology of football recently addressed students, and psychology students found their visit to Paul McKenna's show provided helpful insights into their understanding of hypnotism.

97. Students receive good subject support from teachers. A significant number benefit from the weekly subject workshops on offer in each subject. There is thorough tracking of each student's academic progress. Any underachievement or poor attendance is swiftly followed up. Students' work is generally marked thoroughly and constructively, although there are some inconsistencies among teachers and across courses. Students find the twice-yearly subject reviews helpful. A minority have specific targets; others have simply recorded aspirations without the action points to help them achieve their goal. Likewise, though the written comments of subject teachers are invariably encouraging, too often they exhort students to improve rather than showing them how to do so with the aid of specific targets.

Leadership and management

98. Leadership and management are good. Departments meet regularly and set challenging targets for retention and pass rates. There is a culture of co-operation and mutual support and much sharing of resources within the separate teams. Newly qualified teachers value the support that the curriculum teams provide and staff development activities are effective in updating teachers' skills and knowledge. Changes in the timing of homework assignments in law were made following consultation with students. No common standards have been set for teaching and learning and managers pay insufficient attention to the classroom experience of their students. The outcomes from lesson observations are not used to pass on good practice or to raise standards in teaching and learning.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- high retention rates for English and communication studies and for GCE A-level languages
- strong support for students from their subject teachers
- a very high standard of work by many students
- stimulating teaching which encourages learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates at higher grades on languages and AS-level English courses
- insufficient emphasis on ensuring consistently good teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

99. AS-level and GCE A-level courses are offered in communication studies, English literature, English language and literature, French, German, and Spanish. The courses have a total of 775 enrolments, all by full-time students aged 16 to 18. Some 612 of these are on English and communications courses. There are very small numbers of students taking English and Spanish at GCSE.

Achievement and standards

100. Pass rates at AS level and GCE A level are good, especially on English courses, where all students passed in 2003 on GCE A-level courses and AS-level literature. Pass rates for communication studies are very high, with one student gaining the highest overall mark in the country in 2003 at GCE A level. Modern foreign languages pass rates exceeded the national average in 2003, except for GCE A-level French. The pass rate at grades A and B is high for communication studies and for GCE A-level English, but was below the average for the college on AS-level English and on modern foreign languages courses. Only 17% of AS-level Spanish students secured high grades in 2003. On AS-level English language and literature, AS-level Spanish and GCE A-level French courses, students' grades are significantly below those predicted from their GCSE results. Retention rates are very high on English and communications courses and there is good progression from AS level to GCE A2. Retention rates are high at GCE A level on French and German courses, but at AS level in 2003 retention rates were below the national average. The quality of much of the students' written work is good: ideas are expressed clearly and fluently and are well evidenced. Most students are articulate and confident in class, although some modern foreign languages students are reluctant to take part in conversations or discussions in the language being studied.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	102	96	143
		% retention	94	99	98
		% pass rate	99	98	99
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	160	183	112
		% retention	94	93	93
		% pass rate	100	99	100
AS-level German	3	No. of starts	31	51	41
		% retention	94	80	90
		% pass rate	100	100	95
GCE A-level English language and literature *	3	No. of starts	163	85	71
		% retention	95	99	100
		% pass rate	97	99	100
GCE A-level English literature *	3	No. of starts	55	116	140
		% retention	95	98	97
		% pass rate	100	99	100
GCE A-level French *	3	No. of starts	46	27	31
		% retention	83	96	100
		% pass rate	97	100	94

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

* GCE A level and GCE A2

Quality of education and training

101. Much of the teaching is good or better. In most lessons, confident and enthusiastic teachers provide varied and appropriate learning activities. In an AS-level English literature lesson, students were introduced to features of Larkin's life and times with information from the college intranet presented on powerpoint. They then worked in groups on extracts from his poems. Each group used an overhead projector to show the main features of his use of language and pooled their ideas through some very perceptive feedback. In a GCE A-level German lesson, students evaluated sales presentations for a German chocolate bar by the teacher and the language assistant. This successfully illustrated recent work on German TV and press advertisements, helping them to understand and use German. This lesson also demonstrated the very effective use made of language assistants in many languages classes. In other lessons, insufficient use was made of them in promoting the learning of the target language. In the best lessons, students contribute significantly. In one English class, a moving poem written by a student in the group added considerably to the impact of the lesson. In some lessons, teachers are less successful in engaging students' interest, challenging them and involving them actively in learning. They fail to involve the more reticent students. Teachers sometimes rely too much on a vocal and articulate group within the class to sustain the momentum of a lesson.

102. Subject teachers support students very effectively in their learning. Teachers produce very useful course and topic guides. The progress of individual students is regularly reviewed in one-to-one interviews with teachers. The targets set for improvement are not always precise and progress towards them is not consistently monitored. Students with a variety of learning difficulties and/or

disabilities have been helped to achieve considerable success during recent years. Teachers offer extensive informal help to students experiencing difficulties with their work. Marking is thorough and accurate. Students receive useful written and verbal feedback on their work, but some comments do not give clear indications of how to improve. Some modern languages teachers use the target language in verbal and written feedback, while others do not. Modern language students benefit from extra workshops, which many attend regularly. Absence is checked promptly.

103. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Classes are taught in dedicated rooms with good displays, creating a strong subject identity. The library is well stocked, although a number of books are becoming out of date. On English and communication studies courses, teachers have successfully developed the use of ICT in learning. Desktop publishing skills have been used to create mock newspapers covering events in some of the literature texts studied. The college intranet contains a wide range of material linked with GCE A-level courses. On modern foreign languages, the use of ICT is underdeveloped, but good use is made of authentic press and television material in many lessons.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management are good. English and communications studies are managed separately from modern foreign languages. Both heads of department have a clear intention to improve performance to benefit students. There is efficient management of courses and targeted staff development takes place. New teachers are well supported with induction and lesson observation. Part-time teachers are well integrated into teams. Course review and evaluation are careful and thorough in many respects. In English and communications, the self-assessment report and lesson observations failed to identify the weaker features of teaching and learning. Ensuring good and interesting teaching and learning consistently in all classes has not been a high enough priority in discussion and planning. Meetings are well recorded in modern foreign languages, but in English and communications, minutes do not always record decisions clearly and indicate precise courses of action resulting from them.

Part D: College data

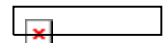
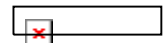


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2003/2004

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	0	0
2	8	0
3	88	100
4/5	0	0
Other	4	0
Total	100	100



Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2003/2004

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,770	0	21
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	38	0	0
Business administration, management and professional	415	0	5
Information and communications technology	762	0	9
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	202	0	4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public services	0	0	0
Visual and performing arts and media	303	0	4
Humanities	3,556	3	41
English, languages and communication	1,492	2	16
Foundation programmes	0	0	0
Total	8,538	5	100

Source: provided by the college

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year		
		16-18		
		2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	*	76	56
	Retention rate	*	51	98
	National average	*	78	**

	Pass rate	*	97	76
	National average	*	71	**
2	Starters excluding transfers	661	757	820
	Retention rate	97	97	97
	National average	80	81	**
	Pass rate	99	93	92
	National average	85	84	**
3	Starters excluding transfers	4,930	5,049	5,917
	Retention rate	92	94	96
	National average	80	89	**
	Pass rate	95	95	98
	National average	86	88	**

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 and tertiary colleges with a high number of students from disadvantaged areas). This may not be included in some notes, depending on the college.

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 2000 to 2002: *College ISR*.

* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

** no national averages available for 2002/03 at time of publication

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)	75	23	2	143
Totals	75	23	2	143

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