



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

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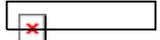
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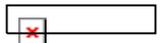
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Basic information about the institution

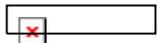


Name of institution:	Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies
Type of institution:	Specialist higher education institution
Principal:	Eddie McIntyre CBE
Address of institution:	Summer Row Birmingham B3 1JB
Telephone number:	0121 604 1000
Fax number:	0121 604 1050
Chair of governors:	Nigel Moss
Unique reference number:	130463
Name of reporting inspector:	Christine Dick HMI
Dates of inspection:	26-30 April 2004 and 4-7 May 2004

Part A: Summary



Information about the institution

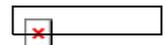


Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies is a specialist provider of education and training for the hospitality and other related service industries. It offers further education (FE) and

bakery; sport leisure and tourism; hair and beauty; and health and social care. It moved to its present, purpose-built premises, in central Birmingham, in 1968. In 2002, the college expanded into Richmond House, a six-storey block close to the main building. In the same year, after a long history of providing HE, the college transferred to the HE sector. Birmingham is the second largest city and one of the most deprived local authority areas in England. The rate of unemployment is almost double the regional and national figure. The service sector accounts for around 68% of local employment.

During 2002/03, the college had 1,567 full-time equivalent (fte) FE students from the United Kingdom and European Union, representing around 37% of its student population. Some 65% of these students were from areas of high social deprivation. Just over half of all FE students are aged 16 to 18. Approximately 36% of learners are from minority ethnic groups. CoVE pathfinder status has been awarded in hospitality and catering and, more recently, CoVE status in hair beauty and complimentary therapies. The college's mission is 'to maintain an environment that encourages and supports participation in the learning process by all those with the ambition and commitment to succeed. As a specialist provider of FE and HE, to promote a culture of scholarship and opportunity that equips students with appropriate skills, knowledge and quality standards to enable them to compete, with advantage, at all levels within the sectors we serve'.

How effective is the institution?



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

Key strengths

- high pass and retention rates on many courses
- excellent progress made by students with low prior achievement
- very good standards of teaching, learning and attainment
- excellent development of students' practical skills
- very effective promotion of high professional standards
- outstanding resources maintained to the best industry standard

- outstanding support for students
- strong and highly productive links with industry
- excellent financial management
- outstanding leadership and management
- very good governance
- welcoming and supportive environment
- excellent response to widening participation and raising learners' aspirations
- excellent promotion of equal opportunities.

What should be improved

- achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- retention rates on courses that are below the national average
- sharing of good practice between teaching teams and in particular in theory lessons
- key skills pass rates.

subjects and courses in the full report.

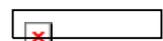
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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
Hospitality, catering and bakery	Outstanding. Pass and retention rates on most courses are high. Students demonstrate excellent skills and most progress to higher-level qualifications or relevant employment. There is much very good and some outstanding teaching, particularly in practical areas, and an outstanding range of well-used resources. Effective management promotes a culture of excellence; links with employers are strong, although achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks and pass rates on the part-time national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 1 food preparation and cooking are low.
Sport, leisure and tourism	Outstanding. High pass and retention rates on many courses in 2002/03. Much very good teaching leads to students' high standards of interpersonal and vocational skills. Very good personal and study support promotes effective learning and the wide range of resources are used well. Provision is managed very well, although in-year retention rates on advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) travel and tourism are low.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Outstanding. Retention and pass rates are high on most courses. There is much good teaching and very good support that promotes equality in learning. Students are highly professional and have very good practical skills. Outstanding resources reflect the best in industry standards and CoVE provision is well managed. Students benefit from highly productive links with industry, although there are low retention rates on some short courses in beauty therapy.
Health and social care	Outstanding. Pass rates are high on most courses and most retention rates are high. Teaching and learning are excellent and teachers are good role models of the core values of care and early years work. Plentiful and thriving partnerships enhance learning and students are supported very well. A wide range of resources is used well to enrich students' experiences, and curriculum and placement management are very good.

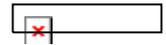
How well is the institution led and managed?



Leadership and management are outstanding. Governors and senior managers provide excellent

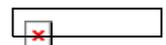
corporation works efficiently and effectively. Performance is monitored very closely against a wide range of targets. Quality assurance is thorough. The self-assessment process is well established and accurate. The curriculum is well managed. Highly effective team working promotes a culture of excellence. The proportion of good or better teaching is high. The management information system has been recently updated to meet the needs of both FE and HE. A programme of staff training on using the management information system is in place, although some staff are yet to be trained in its use. Progress on CoVE development plans is good. Partnerships with industry and local schools are highly productive. Financial management is excellent. The college provides very good value for money.

To what extent is the institution educationally and socially inclusive?



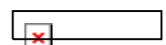
The institution's response to education and social inclusion is outstanding. Staff and students value the multicultural and inclusive environment. The equality and diversity policy is detailed and effective. The active equal opportunities committee has good representation from students and the community. Strategies and plans reflect the very high priority given to widening participation. More than a third of college students are from minority ethnic groups; well exceeding the proportion in the local population. Almost two-thirds of students are from some of the most economically deprived wards in the country. Many learners enter the college with low levels of prior attainment and make very good progress. Arrangements for literacy, numeracy and other specialist support, for example, dyslexia, are developed well. The college is complying with obligations placed upon it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Substantial progress has been made in addressing the requirements of the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Access to college areas for students with mobility difficulties and those with sight impairment is very good.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are outstanding. The college has excellent links with local schools. Prospective students receive very good advice about college courses. Induction activities are carefully designed. Individual learning support needs are comprehensively diagnosed and a wide range of appropriate support is offered. Emphasis is placed on encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. Consequently, students see learning support in a positive light, without stigma. Students who have specific barriers to learning, for example, dyslexia, are expertly supported. Pastoral care is very good. Individual tutorials are regular and highly valued by students, although some recording of the dialogue between students and tutors lacks detail. A few group tutorials lack structure. The individual needs of part-time students are addressed well. Attendance is monitored carefully. A dedicated attendance officer works closely with tutors to follow up unauthorised absence. Individual careers and progression guidance are very good.

Students' views of the institution



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

What students like about the institution

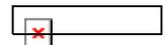
- being treated as adults
- very friendly and helpful support from staff
- excellent professional facilities for studying and training
- very good library service and specialist subject librarians
- the wide variety of placements and excellent opportunities to explore employment prospects
- excellent organisation of courses and subjects
- the flexible NVQ assessment that is available on demand
- receiving good advice and positive encouragement to progress to HE
- feeling proud of the college's good reputation
- the multicultural community and safe environment.

What they feel could be improved

- the help they receive to get the most out of placements
- the number of lockers

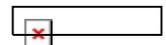
- the size of the common room at Summer Row to match HE provision, and better social facilities at Richmond House
- the lifts at Richmond House.

Other information



The institution inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the institution. Once published, the institution has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The institution's action plan must show what action the institution 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 institutions 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 institution as a whole



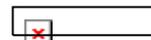
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	83	15	2
19+ and WBL*	93	7	0
Learning 16-18	78	20	2
19+ and WBL*	86	14	0

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

*work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. Data on students' achievements are drawn from college records validated by the LSC. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C of the report give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses. Retention and pass rates have been compared with those of other colleges that recruit a high percentage of students from disadvantaged areas.

2. Summary data indicate that pass rates, at all levels, for students aged 16 to 18 and adult learners, are in the top 10% of general FE colleges. The majority of learners study for NVQs. Pass rates on these courses have remained consistently high over the three years to 2003. Retention rates are also high and most are in the top 25% of general FE colleges. Overall, attendance in the lessons observed, at more than 80%, was above the national average for colleges of a similar type and higher than that recorded at the last inspection. Attendance was highest in hospitality and catering, at 85%.

3. Students are well motivated and typically have high aspirations. They work hard and are proud of the considerable skills they develop; often in a very short period of time. They have a mature approach to their studies. Hairdressing and catering students are very successful in vocational competitions at local, national and international level. Standards of students' behaviour are very high and an atmosphere of mutual respect is engendered. In hospitality and catering, learners have excellent practical skills and demonstrate high standards of professionalism. In sport, leisure and tourism, students have high levels of vocational and interpersonal skills. Hairdressing and beauty students display very good standards of client care and many of the professional attributes valued by industry. Health and social care students are well focused on their work and offer respect and support to each other. Almost 90% of the FE students that enrolled in 2002/03 progressed to more advanced studies. Progression to HE, within the college and to other HE institutions, is very good. In 2002/03, around 50% of leisure and travel students, and more than 30% of health and social care students, progressed to HE. More than 18% of the college's substantial HE population is made up of students who have progressed from internal courses. Many of these learners have little family history of participation in FE or HE. Significant numbers of students progress to employment in related occupations, often in prestigious establishments.

16 to 18 year olds

4. Most students are on courses leading to NVQ at levels 1 to 3. Many begin college with few formal qualifications and achieve well beyond the level expected. Overall, pass and retention rates are high and well above the national average for general FE colleges. In 2003, the pass rate at levels 1 and 2, for students aged 16 to 18, were 96% and 91% respectively, compared with national averages of 66% and 68%. At level 3, pass rates were some 13 percentage points above the national figure. Pass rates for the fewer students on other courses are generally good. In the national diplomas in early years, and in health studies, the number of high grades, merit or distinction, achieved in 2003, at 44% and 33% respectively, were outstanding. Pass rates and attendance in key skills have improved, although too few students complete the portfolio element required to achieve their award.

5. A few learners are on modern apprenticeship programmes in hospitality and catering, health and social care, and hairdressing. The number of apprentices achieving the full framework has been low although, in 2003/04, retention rates have improved and the majority of these learners are on target to achieve their qualifications.

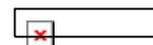
6. Retention rates on most courses for students aged 16 to 18 are high, although there is some variation on courses at different levels. In 2003, the retention rate on level 3 courses for students aged 16 to 18 was 76%, compared with 93% at levels 1 and 2. Currently, the in-year retention rate on the AVCE travel and tourism course is low.

Adult learners

7. At levels 1, 2 and 3, pass and retention rates for adult learners have been consistently above the national averages for the three years to 2003. At 95%, pass rates on level 1 courses were around

23% higher than the national figure in 2003. In the same year, at levels 2 and 3, pass rates were 16% and 19% higher. Increasing numbers of adult students are on short courses designed to encourage them to return to learning. Pass rates on the significant majority of short courses are good but retention rates on a few courses are low. Summary data indicates that retention rates of adult learners on long courses at levels 1 to 3 are very good. In 2002/03, at 95%, retention rates were highest on level 1 courses. At levels 2 and 3, retention rates were 88% and 86% respectively.

Quality of education and training



8. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 122 lessons. The proportion of good or better teaching was significantly above the national average for general FE colleges and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was significantly lower. Inspectors judged that teaching was good or better in more than 85% of lessons observed, satisfactory in 13.1% and unsatisfactory in less than 2%. The standard of teaching is particularly high in health and social care, where 100% of teaching was judged to be good or better. The proportion of good or better teaching was highest at level 3 and where mixed-ability groups were taught together in practical sessions. The highest proportion of outstanding teaching was in practical lessons in hospitality and catering. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in sport, leisure and tourism or hairdressing and beauty therapy.

9. Teachers make excellent use of their very good specialist knowledge. They have high expectations and set very high standards for their students. The best classes are carefully planned. High-quality learning materials and outstanding resources are used creatively to extend vocational and learning skills. Skilful demonstration, effective discussion and well-supported practise opportunities enable learners to develop confidence, knowledge and expertise. In a health and social care class, the teacher taught with a passion and enthusiasm that totally engaged the students in the concept of how children learn to read. Most activities in the lesson were designed to enable students to experience learning to read through the eyes of a child. This resulted not only in them understanding the intellectual process, but experiencing the range of emotions that children feel as they learn. In a class preparing students for restaurant service, the teacher engaged the group in reviewing areas for improvement and set them objectives for the practical session. Students were enthusiastic and well motivated as they implemented their ideas on speeding up service and increasing revenue.

10. In a minority of classes, teaching failed to challenge the most able learners. For example, in a sport and leisure class, extension activities consisted of more, rather than more complex, tasks. A few theory classes provided too few opportunities for students to participate.

11. Resources are outstanding. Accommodation is maintained very well and the college estates strategy is clearly defined. State-of-the-art, high-quality, industrial-standard equipment is available in most practical teaching areas, including some that is highly specialised and computerised. Excellent teaching and training facilities include a brasserie, fine dining restaurant, café and pub. The hairdressing and beauty therapy area has an outstanding spa replicating a top-quality health resort. This includes hair and beauty salons, a flotation tank, sauna, solarium and Jacuzzi areas. A well-resourced art room enables early years students to develop creative skills for working with children. Students improve their understanding of stock control in busy stores in the bakery, main food store, cellar and hair and beauty product dispensary. A college nursery enables learners with young children to continue their studies.

12. Staff training and development are very good. Teachers, many of whom teach across both the HE and FE provision, are highly qualified. Opportunities for industrial updating are excellent. Hair and beauty staff helped to develop learning materials for the National Learning Network in conjunction with the BBC and staff in catering have been involved in food product development for a leading manufacturer. This up-to-date specialist knowledge serves to enhance the learning experiences of their students.

13. Students benefit from an extensive range of learning resources. They have good access to modern computers. There is good use of information technology (IT) in teaching in some curriculum areas. For example, in leisure and travel, the on-line airline reservations and hotel bookings system is used effectively to develop understanding of industry procedures. Recipe analysis and bulk production is taught well using IT in bakery. Hair and beauty students create treatment plans for clients using a specially devised programme on the college intranet. The use of the intranet is not developed as well in other curriculum areas.
14. Access to college facilities, for those with restricted mobility and sight impairment, is good. There are ramps to most areas, main doors which open on sensors or touch pads, room signs in Braille and touch sensitive indicators on stair rails. Improvement plans are clear. Students and staff are proud of the college and the excellent facilities it offers.
15. Initial assessment of full-time students, based on GCSE results, an interview with vocational staff and diagnostic tests for basic and key skills, is thorough. Students who are identified as needing additional or learning support are provided with individually tailored programmes.
16. Students regularly review their progress in individual tutorials, although these dialogues are not always fully documented, and insufficient short-term targets are set. Course assignments are planned well. They are appropriately demanding and effectively stimulate students' interest. Assessment schedules are designed to spread the workload evenly. The good variety of methods used ensures that learners' skills are evaluated properly. Students are confident in their understanding of the criteria against which their work is assessed. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students use personal assessment tracking sheets effectively during the planning of clients' appointments, assuming a significant level of responsibility for managing their own assessment opportunities.
17. Marking and feedback is fair, timely and consistent. Assessment is standardised by course teams and internally verified to ensure awarding body requirements are met. Feedback on assessment and marked work helps learners to understand what they need to do in order to improve. Students are encouraged to reflect on, and evaluate, their own work in ways which help them to develop self-critical approaches.
18. The college offers a good range of courses to meet the need of its students and those of the specialist industries it serves. An increasing number of short courses are offered in the community. Additional qualifications enrich the learning experience of full-time students. Sport students take the community sports leaders award and kayaking courses. Catering and care students achieve food hygiene and health and safety qualifications. All learners have access to courses in modern foreign languages. Hair and beauty and catering students take part in industry competitions and are very successful. They have regular opportunities to observe demonstrations by skilled practitioners from industry. Students on most courses benefit from educational visits. Sport students visit England's centre of excellence for football. They also have the opportunity to go on outward bound trips to help their learning. Opportunities for trips and placements abroad are excellent in all curriculum areas.
19. Key skills are taught in discrete classes that form part of full-time students' timetables. Each curriculum area has a dedicated key skills co-ordinator who liaises closely with vocational teachers to ensure that key skills assignments have strong vocational relevance. Attendance, retention and pass rates for key skills are improving, as changes in teaching and better tracking systems begin to have a discernible impact on students' motivation. Key skills are taught particularly well in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in health and social care. Students do not always see the value of the qualifications, but they are increasingly persuaded of the benefits of developing the skills. Few students take a key skills qualification to level 3.
20. The college has excellent links with employers and other partners who speak very favourably of the high standard of students' skills. A successful employee training pilot scheme is offered in a prestigious department store for employed learners who wish to gain a level 2 qualification. Links with the local education authority (LEA) have resulted in college staff developing a programme for teaching assistants in secondary schools. Hairdressing staff have helped to develop the occupational standards for African-Caribbean hairdressing.

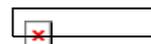
21. Work with schools encourages pupils who are at risk of exclusion or who are from socially disadvantaged areas to participate in FE. Courses in hair and beauty and catering are taught in local schools, including work with a school for the blind that encourages young people with sight impairment to progress into FE. A successful junior chefs academy inspires young people to enter the catering industry. To encourage adult learners to return to study, flexible timetabling of courses accommodates those who have difficulty attending regular college programmes

22. Support and guidance for students are outstanding. Pre-entry advice is objective and very informative. Considerable work takes place before enrolment to ensure that students are very well prepared to begin their chosen course. They have a clear understanding of opportunities for progression. Activities include numerous taster days, open days, visits to schools and a very successful summer school for hospitality and catering students. Consequently, most students start college with confidence and high vocational aspirations, often in spite of low prior attainment. Well-planned induction activities cover an introduction to cross-college procedures, the early development of interpersonal and team working skills, and close familiarisation with the relevant vocational area. The strong culture of mutual respect and professional conduct that permeates the college begins in induction.

23. A thorough diagnosis of students' individual learning needs is followed by highly accessible and specialist support. Well-qualified college staff give excellent support to students with specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, Asperger's syndrome, attention deficiency disorders, sensory impairment, colour-blindness and restricted mobility. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for improving their capacity to learn. The study support team have worked hard to remove any stigma associated with learning support. Attendance at support sessions is closely monitored, and progress is reported to tutors. Tutors have excellent knowledge of their students and are very active in providing elements of study support. The profiles that describe students' prior attainment, learning needs and milestones through their course are maintained well, although some lack specific detail. A college attendance officer assists tutors by responding rapidly to any unexplained absence, and monitoring patterns of attendance.

24. Regular individual tutorials are very effective in helping students to reflect on and evaluate their progress. A few group tutorials lack purpose and structure, whilst others cover valuable topics on issues of time management, health, careers, and study and research skills. Part-time students are also assigned a tutor and receive comparable levels of individual support. Processes such as initial diagnostic assessments are carried out on request. Students value the guidance offered by the subject librarians that are attached to each of the four main curriculum areas. Personal support services are comprehensive and include a full-time college nurse and counselling team. A member of the senior management team has responsibility for overseeing issues related to child protection. The student guild is active in representing the voices of students to the college management. Advice on progression to HE and employment is very good. Students make excellent progress beyond their FE courses.

Leadership and management



25. Leadership and management are outstanding. Governors and senior managers provide strong and effective direction. The college is highly regarded locally, nationally and internationally. It has a clear mission and role in relation to its FE and HE provision. Links with industry and local partners inform planning and are highly productive. Despite transfer to the HE sector, in August 2002, the college regards its FE provision as fundamental to its strategic role. Staff were fully consulted and informed about this change and remain positive about the strategic direction of the college. Pass and retention rates on many courses are high, most teaching is good and much is outstanding. A significant number of students progress from FE to HE courses at the college. The college has achieved several quality awards which include Investors in People, Charter Mark, hospitality assured and the Queen's anniversary prize for higher and further education.

26. The corporation discharges its duties effectively. The board and its sub-committees work very well and with enthusiasm. Members are clear about their role and the strategic direction of the college. Governors have a good range of skills and vocational experience. The board closely monitors the college's performance indicators, targets and financial position. A very clear document summarising performance is presented annually. The principal updates the board on progress, at each meeting, against the annual operating statement which is derived from the strategic plan. Governors attend meetings regularly and review their own performance against targets and their membership.

27. The college has a well-organised academic structure. Teams meet regularly. There is a very clear arrangement of committees, involving a wide range of staff and student representatives. Course teams meet frequently and subject boards discuss issues impacting on groups of related courses. A board of studies oversees the development of all FE courses. The academic board meets regularly to discuss the work of the college and reports directly to the corporation. These meetings provide an effective system for communication throughout the college. The principal meets with all staff on an annual basis and important issues are discussed. A monthly newsletter keeps staff informed of key events.

28. Quality assurance systems are comprehensive, systematic, effective and well understood. A two-year cycle of internal audits of curriculum and support areas is carried out. Action plans are drawn up and subsequently monitored by the curriculum quality committee, a sub-committee of the academic board. Audits include teaching observations by specially trained staff. In addition, each member of teaching staff is observed annually by their line manager. The overall profile of grades for this year very closely matched the profile of grades awarded by inspectors, although the number of high grades awarded was too generous. Student satisfaction surveys are carried out three times each year and are thoroughly analysed, and the actions are then fed back to students. A variety of mechanisms are used to gather employer feedback, including employer liaison groups. Course files contain a wide range of quality measures, targets and action plans. Contents are reviewed each term by a subject board. Course reviews take place on an annual basis and provide a structured assessment of progress, including performance against targets and actions taken on issues arising through the year. Effective curriculum changes take place in response to the reviews and students' feedback, although a few action plans and course team minutes lack sufficient clarity and detail. The quality assurance of the small amount of franchise provision is carried out thoroughly. The self-assessment process is well established, accurate and inclusive, but key judgements are not always clear.

29. Target setting for improvement is well developed. The college has identified a very wide range of performance indicators and sets an annual target against each of these, which are agreed with the corporation. College-wide performance indicators include recruitment, retention and pass rates, student progression, equal opportunities statistics, student satisfaction, accommodation utilisation and finance. Clear targets are set at course level for recruitment, retention and pass rates students' satisfaction and performance against the college charter. These targets are aggregated to produce overall college targets. Each course evaluates its performance against these. Under-performance is investigated and actions taken to address it. Targets are realistic but challenging.

30. Due emphasis is given to the industrial experience and qualifications of all staff. Excellent support is offered in acquiring further qualifications and developing links with industry. The college provides a comprehensive range of training events for staff. Annual staff appraisals review targets, set objectives and identify training needs. Staff development is prioritised to meet the college objectives. All staff development is evaluated, although the college recognises that some evaluation of the benefits of training is insufficiently thorough.

31. Curriculum managers demonstrate good leadership and very effective management. Courses are well organised and are planned to make good use of students' time. Timetables are often adjusted to meet students' personal and religious needs. Teams work together productively and are focused on improving teaching and learning. The small amount of work-based learning is not managed as well. Part-time staff are paid to attend meetings. The management information system has been recently updated to meet the needs of both FE and HE. It is capable of producing a comprehensive range of reports for management purposes. A programme of staff training is in place,

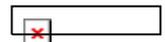
although some staff are yet to be trained in its use.

32. Promotion of equal opportunities and diversity is very effective. Substantial progress has been made on action plans arising from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and SENDA. The equal opportunities policy is comprehensive and incorporates race relations and disability equality policies. It covers students as well as staff. The college successfully attracts students from a wide range of minority ethnic communities and from disadvantaged areas. Partnerships in the community are effective in recruiting learners from under-represented groups. The equal opportunities committee produces a very detailed annual report. It identifies key issues and sets out targeted actions. Governors review the performance of students in relation to their ethnicity, age, gender and disability. Very good progress has been made in adapting the college to meet the needs of all its students. Adaptations include Braille signage, automatic doors and a range of assistive technologies. All staff and corporation members have had equal opportunities awareness training. The college has taken part in a number of successful projects and curriculum initiatives to widen participation.

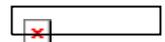
33. The college has two CoVEs: one in hospitality and catering and one in hair, beauty and complimentary therapies. Quality assurance of the CoVEs is integral to the effective college-wide quality systems. As a consequence of the high level of support provided to other colleges, a separate manager has been appointed for the CoVE in hospitality and catering. Other students have access to the high-quality resources the vocational areas provide. A wide range of good-practice dissemination activities have taken place. Progress on CoVE development plans is good.

34. Finances are strong. Significant surplus has been generated each year for the past eight years. Considerable investment continues to improve resources and accommodation for students. Building projects are well managed. Best value for goods and services is sought. The college carries out a thorough analysis of the risks it faces. Clear accounts are presented to the corporation and senior management team. Expenditure is carefully controlled. The hours taught by staff are closely monitored. Financial management is excellent and the college provides very good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Hospitality, catering and bakery



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

Strengths

- high pass rates and good retention rates on most courses
- excellent practical skills demonstrated by students
- excellent progression to level 3 qualifications, HE and employment

- very good teaching and learning
- outstanding range of well-used resources
- strong and effective links with employers
- effective curriculum management that promotes a culture of excellence.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for the part-time NVQ level 1 in food preparation and cooking
- poor framework achievement in work-based learning.

Scope of provision

35. The college was awarded pathfinder CoVE status for hospitality and catering in 2001. It offers a wide range of full-time and part-time provision in catering and bakery, including NVQs in food preparation and cooking, food and drink service and baking at levels 1 to 3. Other courses include the national diploma in hospitality supervision and short courses for the national licensee's certificate; the wine and spirit education trust certificate and higher certificate. Cake decorating and food hygiene at basic, intermediate and advanced levels are offered to adult learners and as additional courses for full-time students. Progression routes through to level 3 and on to the college's HE provision are excellent. Some 702 students are following hospitality and catering courses. There are 25 work-based learners on modern apprenticeship programmes.

Achievement and standards

36. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses. In the CoVE, pass rates are significantly higher than the national average on full-time NVQs, in food preparation and food service, at levels 1 to 3. The pass rate for the NVQ level 1 in preparing and serving food and pass and retention rates for NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking have been at least 14% above the national figure for the three consecutive years to 2003. At level 3, NVQ food preparation and cooking pass rates were 92% in 2003, against a national benchmark of 69%. In the same year, pass rates on NVQ level 2 serving food and drink were 99% compared with a national average of 81%. However, pass rates on part-time NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking and achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks, although showing signs of improvement, are low. In 2003, pass rates on the Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) certificate in wines and spirits rose to 93%, almost 30% above the national average and retention rates remained high at 100%. At 93% and 100%, respectively, retention and pass rates on the part-time professional cake decorating, at level 2, were very good.

37. Students have excellent practical skills. They demonstrate high standards of professionalism and well-organised working methods. Safe and hygienic practices are held in high regard. In food preparation, students consistently apply well-developed techniques, for example, in peeling, slicing and chopping. More complex culinary skills are cultivated over a relatively short period of time. During a busy food production lesson, learners showed exceptional skills in speedily preparing a la carte menu items to order. These included flavoursome and refined sauces, produced from stock reductions, to enhance skilfully cooked and attractively presented dishes. In food service, first-year students showed unusual confidence in dealing with customers as they described menu items in an accurate and appealing manner. Second-year students demonstrated advanced techniques in a range of service styles, including silver service, and the filleting of grilled Dover sole, at the customers' table. In bakery, very good skills were evident as students prepared dough products, confectionery and decorated cakes. They were systematic in evaluating the quality of the items they produced.

38. The majority of learners progress to higher qualifications or relevant employment. In 2003, over 50% of NVQ level 2 food preparation students progressed to level 3. A significant proportion of level 3 students progress to HE courses at the college. Jobs are gained locally, nationally and internationally, very often in prestigious establishments.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Hospitality, catering and bakery, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ preparing and serving food	1	No. of starts	201	209	342
		% retention	87	91	95
		% pass rate	96	97	100
NVQ food preparation and cooking	1	No. of starts	51	41	49
		% retention	94	71	78
		% pass rate	76	71	68
NVQ craft bakery	2	No. of starts	33	21	32
		% retention	86	81	81
		% pass rate	78	94	92
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	169	153	240
		% retention	93	95	92
		% pass rate	93	96	92
WSET certificate wines and spirits	2	No. of starts	140	82	94
		% retention	100	99	100
		% pass rate	67	77	93
NVQ serving food and drink	2	No. of starts	23	39	33
		% retention	87	90	84
		% pass rate	90	97	99
NVQ food preparation and cooking (general)	3	No. of starts	91	87	104
		% retention	76	82	83
		% pass rate	74	84	92

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

Quality of education and training

39. There is much very good and some outstanding teaching and learning. This is particularly evident in practical classes. Teachers have high expectations of their learners. Practical lessons are carefully planned and challenging targets are agreed. Well-produced learning materials detail recipes and methods of production. Dish descriptions are enhanced with photographs and students are encouraged to work independently to meet the demanding work schedules set. In the excellent realistic work environment of the student café, supervision is very effective. Students learn to work at speed, under industry pressures and are well supported. In a food service class, the teacher used a recently published magazine article to highlight changing trends in food service. At service time, deficiencies in product knowledge were addressed by the teacher briefing restaurant customers to request detailed information about the make up of dishes on the menu. Teachers and students are proud of their learning environment and of the college's very good external reputation.

40. Teachers are well qualified and have very good industrial experience. Extensive industrial updating is actively encouraged. The range of specialist facilities supporting learning is outstanding. Students develop their skills in college-based operations including a fine dining restaurant, brasserie, café and pub serving high-quality food and drink. Public restaurants are well attended and offer a wide range of experiences for learners. There is a comprehensive range of high-quality and state-of-the-art equipment including vacuum packing, an industrial smoker and computerised combination ovens. Recently purchased plant includes computerised equipment for preparing, mixing, moulding, proving and baking fermented goods. Technician staff are readily available to assist teachers and students. They make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning.

41. Students' progress is closely monitored in regular review sessions. In bakery, assessment of NVQs is managed particularly well. Portfolios are well presented. In food preparation, some standard college assessment procedures have not been fully implemented and as a consequence internal verification has not occurred with sufficient frequency during the year. Students are clear about what they have achieved and what they have left to do in order to complete their qualification. Feedback on practical and written assessment helps them to improve.

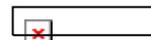
42. All students study for additional qualifications, including food hygiene, health and safety, wines, spirits and licensing courses. Studies are enriched through a variety of activities such as study tours and work with local schools. Leading industry practitioners regularly provide guest lectures and these motivate students to set themselves high personal targets. Participation in local, national and international competitions is encouraged, with an outstanding record of success for both staff and students.

43. Student services provide high levels of personal and study support and this is used extensively by hospitality, catering and bakery students. Learners speak highly of the ready access to support from their tutors. In food and drink service, learning support is particularly effective. The progress of groups and individual students is discussed across the teaching team. Teachers use this information to update their lesson plans. However, in food preparation, a few lesson plans contained insufficient information on the support needs of individual students.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are very good. Managers promote a culture of excellence in the high standards they set. There is a strong sense of mutual respect and value for the work of others. There are rigorous systems in place to maintain quality. Areas for improvement are consistently addressed, although course managers are unable to access retention and achievement information direct from management information systems. Strong and productive relationships with employers and industry organisations offer significant enrichment to the curriculum. There is prudent management of income and expenditure. Surplus trading income is used to continually update learning resources, furnishings and equipment.

Sport, leisure and tourism



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on many courses in 2002/03

- very good and some outstanding teaching

- students' high standards of interpersonal and vocational skills

- highly effective use of a wide range of resources to develop learning

- high levels of support that promote effective learning

- very well-managed provision.

Weaknesses

- low in-year retention rate on AVCE travel and tourism in 2003/04.

Scope of provision

45. The college offers general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate certificate in leisure and tourism, advanced courses in travel and tourism and a national diploma in sports studies, outdoor education. There are 157 full-time students studying leisure and tourism and 19 studying sport. Around 126 part-time students are on courses, including the Association of British Travel Agents Certificate (ABTAC) at primary and advanced levels and airfares and ticketing. Many students gain additional qualifications to help prepare for employment including Galileo first class and community sports leader's award. Some 77% of full-time students and 24% of part-time students are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

46. Retention and pass rates exceed the national averages for general FE colleges on many courses. In 2002/03, pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism exceeded the national average by 18%. Retention rates on the national diploma in travel and tourism are high and, in the three years to 2003, improved to more than 20% above the national figure. Some 56% of these learners achieved their qualification with higher-grade passes. Retention and pass rates are

high across additional and part-time courses. For example, retention and pass rates on the oral skills for leisure travel and tourism and welcome host courses, at 100%, are significantly above the national average. In 2002/03 pass rates on airfares and ticketing and ABTAC one-year courses were some 10% above the national figure for part-time adult learners and more than 20% higher for students aged 16 to 18. Pass rates on the Galileo first class course were also considerably higher. Students are prepared well for employment and employers speak highly of the skills they develop. Key skills pass rates are low and there have been some poor retention rates on current advanced level courses, however, clear action has been taken to address this. At the time of inspection, attendance at key skills sessions had improved to 77%. Students work to a high standard and have made significant progress towards fulfilling their goals, often from a low starting point. They demonstrate confidence in their understanding of the subjects they study. Sports students were particularly confident as they participated in mature discussion considering the outcomes and analysing the reasons behind an athlete's use of performance-enhancing drugs. At around 50%, progression to HE is very good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Sport, leisure and tourism, 2001 to 2003

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	70	41	28
		% retention	60	78	71
		% pass rate	72	66	90
Oral skills for leisure, travel and tourism	2	No. of starts	81	88	73
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	99	88	100
Welcome host	2	No. of starts	47	61	50
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma in travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	150	137	106
		% retention	72	87	89
		% pass rate	85	79	81
National diploma in leisure studies	3	No. of starts	32	22	24
		% retention	59	71	83
		% pass rate	67	79	72

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

Quality of education and training

47. Teaching and learning on all courses are very good. Some teaching is outstanding. Lessons are planned particularly well. Teachers are enthusiastic, well informed and often inspire students who respond well to the challenges set. In a kayaking session, learners were acting out a training session for a group of beginners. They demonstrated skills to each other, offered sensitive but constructive criticism and worked well as a team. Students showed a willingness to learn and to improve their performance. Teaching is often imaginative. Travel and tourism students revised enthusiastically for an exam by playing a game based on the successful definition of tourism terms. Tutors demonstrate authority and considerable expertise in their subject areas. They respond well to the challenge of students who are eager to extend their own learning. Working relationships are relaxed and informal but there is mutual respect.

48. In the few less successful aspects of a minority of classes, the more able students were not

given sufficient challenge to keep them fully interested. Activities were designed to meet the needs of students with differing levels of ability, although there was a tendency to provide additional work rather than more complex tasks.

49. Teachers are well qualified and the majority have first or masters degrees in related subjects. They are active participants in a comprehensive programme of staff development. Most have recent industrial updating, although this is not systematically documented or tracked.

50. Classrooms are spacious and equipped well. Interactive white boards are available, although the use of these is not well developed. Students have good access to computers on both sites. The college holds a licence for Galileo first class which provides on-line training for travel reservations. Sports students use a local reservoir for water-based activities and a nearby sports centre for activities including rock climbing. Library facilities are excellent. A specialist subject librarian works closely with students and teachers to ensure that materials available are current and appropriate. This support is valued and appreciated.

51. Assessment is well organised, students are clear about assessment schedules and plan their work accordingly. Assignments are demanding and designed to stimulate students' interest, with clear guidelines on how to complete tasks. Key skills assignments are vocationally relevant but a few students do not see the value of the qualification. Tutors' feedback on students' progress is usually very detailed with guidance to help learners to improve. Assessment records are used in tutorials to track progress and set targets, but there is some inconsistency in the formal recording of actions arising from this process. Internal verification and standards moderation is rigorous and leads to improvement.

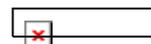
52. The curriculum area offers an appropriate range of full-time and part-time courses. Additional qualifications, including modern foreign languages, allow students to develop a broader range of industry-specific skills. A well-designed timetable blocks off half days to allow for outdoor education. Enrichment activities include visits to local attractions, overseas residential visits and work experience, either locally or abroad. The costs of residential and day trips are subsidised and form an integral part of each course. Good use is made of cross-college facilities to enhance learning. Students have work placements in the college visitor centre and telephone techniques are practised in the new industry-standard call centre.

53. Initial advice and guidance for students is very good. Induction prepares learners carefully for their courses. Students are very well informed about progression and employment opportunities. They make very good use of the study support available and speak highly of extensive pastoral and academic support from teachers. Students are free to seek help at any point on any issue. Students value this easy access to staff. It is instrumental in creating the close working relationships that exist. Students have confidence in their tutors. This is evident in classrooms where the relaxed environment kindles productive discussion and debate. Students have a mature attitude towards their studies.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are very good. The management and the teaching team are highly committed to the continuous improvement of students' learning experiences. Teams set demanding targets for retention and pass rates and progression. Course review processes are thorough and lead to improvements. Due regard is given to responses from student questionnaires and other feedback. Students are kept informed of decision making and progress on key issues. Timetabling makes effective use of staff and physical resources. Communication within the team is excellent and contributes to extremely good course planning.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- much good teaching and learning

- students' very good practical skills that are developed to high professional standards

- outstanding resources that reflect the best industry standards

- very good student support that promotes equality in learning

- highly effective and productive links with industry

- well-managed CoVE provision.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some short courses in beauty therapy.

Scope of provision

55. The college has recently been awarded funding to develop a CoVE in hair, beauty and complimentary therapies. Good progress is being made in expanding the range of provision. Some 453 students aged 16 to 18, and 75 adult learners study full-time courses. These include beauty therapy and hairdressing at NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3, with an African-Caribbean option in hairdressing. A smaller number of students follow the national diploma in beauty therapy. Currently, 153 adult students, and 11 students aged 16 to 18, are enrolled on part-time and short courses. These include hairdressing at NVQ level 3 and short courses in aromatherapy, Indian head massage, reflexology, Swedish massage, sports massage, nail art, manicure and pedicure, nail treatments and barbering. Six advanced modern apprentices who are employed in local salons attend college one day each week. Link courses for pupils aged 14 to 16 are offered in schools.

Achievement and standards

56. There are very high pass rates on most hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. With the exception of a few short courses, retention rates are at, and often exceed, the national average for colleges of a similar type. Pass rates on NVQ level 1 and 2 hairdressing exceed the national figure by 8% and 14% respectively. At level 3, NVQ beauty therapy pass rates are some 20% higher than the national average. The college introduced the national diploma in applied science, beauty therapy, in 2001/02. In the two consecutive years to 2003, at 92% and 100%, pass rates were very high. The college has developed a number of short courses to encourage adults to return to learning. Retention rates on some of these courses are low, although pass rates are often very high. In 2002/03, pass rates on the Indian head massage, short course, were 91% compared with a national average of 76%. Students demonstrate high standards of personal appearance and client care. They display many of the professional attributes required by industry and work very well in teams. Practical skills are very good and students are confident, well focused and enthusiastic. Significant numbers of learners start their college course with few formal qualifications. They make good progress and the majority move on to higher-level studies or employment. In 2002/03, some 80% of NVQ level 2 beauty therapy students progressed to level 3 courses. Progression to the college's HE courses is good

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing	1	No. of starts	153	168	194
		% retention	66	79	84
		% pass rate	93	92	95
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	2	No. of starts	32	35	69
		% retention	66	90	90
		% pass rate	89	80	88
NVQ beauty therapy	2	No. of starts	103	104	133
		% retention	71	74	92
		% pass rate	92	84	91
Indian head massage (short)	2	No. of starts	38	32	60
		% retention	92	78	68
		% pass rate	100	80	91
NVQ beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	61	66	49
		% retention	93	88	82
		% pass rate	69	81	97

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

Quality of education and training

57. Most teaching is good or better and some is outstanding. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and objectives. Teachers provide very good role models, reflecting high professional standards. Students are confident in commercial salons and when working in groups. Meticulous hygiene practices are promoted in practical lessons in beauty therapy. In African-Caribbean hairdressing, teachers use innovative approaches, including IT, for hair and skin analysis. They take care to reinforce the importance of accuracy when undertaking highly technical applications such as hair relaxing. In anatomy and physiology, students were inspired by imaginative methods used to reinforce essential knowledge. Key skills are linked effectively to curriculum context and delivered well. In a minority of lessons, note-taking disrupted the pace and did not take into account individual needs. Late clients and missed appointments are detrimental to planned assessment in a few commercial salon sessions.

58. Specialist facilities are outstanding. The purpose-built spa area is exceptional, with extensive and well-designed beauty suites and hair salons. The fitness suite has a large very well-equipped gymnasium and dance studio. There is an excellent wet area with a flotation tank. Staff are highly qualified and skilled in industrial practices. They have very good industrial experience and set high standards for their learners. Students enjoy and appreciate the high quality and good reputation of their learning environment. Links with product manufacturers are very good. College staff have assisted them in developing learning resources for industry. These materials are available for students on the college intranet.

59. Assessment practice is sound. Teachers are very well qualified in assessor awards and internal verification is robust, although a few staff are insufficiently familiar with the electronic tracking system that maps individual students' progress. Students are mature in their approach to their studies. They take responsibility for their vocational achievement using individual assessment tracking sheets to good effect during client appointment planning.

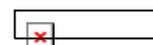
60. The college community and business unit is active in the marketing of short courses for adult learners. Opportunities mirror the full-time courses and offer a progression route to HE. A range of taster, introductory and foundation courses have been effective in encouraging adults to return to learning and progress to further study. Full-time students can also take these qualifications to enrich their learning, as well as five modern foreign languages offered at four levels. Work experience opportunities are very good and include placements in Germany, Portugal and the South of France. There are very good links with local employers who are very supportive and proud to be associated with the college. A recently introduced barbering course has been developed in response to local demand. Progression opportunities are excellent and used well, including to the college's own HE courses.

61. There is very good in-class support that is highly effective in promoting equality in learning. Signers are available for learners with hearing impairment. Students are screened on entry to establish literacy and numeracy needs. All learners have access to additional and study support, which is readily available in the college library. Full-time students are scheduled to receive individual tutorials to review progress and set targets every 3 to 4 weeks, although, these are not always consistently planned or documented. Group tutorials in beauty therapy help students to improving their assessment grades through detailed reflection and evaluation of their own performance. Students value the full range of academic and pastoral support available. They appreciate the additional, informal support offered by staff

Leadership and management

62. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are good. The CoVE provision is well managed and is making good progress. Staff are active in their support for students and in their efforts to continually improve the quality of their courses. New teachers are assigned a mentor. The well-developed appraisal process forms the basis for effective staff development. Quality assurance processes are thorough, although action plan targets, at course level, are not always well-defined. Links with other educational establishments and industry are very good.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses and much high retention rates

- high standards from many students
- excellent teaching and learning
- good role modelling of the core values of early years and care work
- effective use of a wide range of resources
- plentiful and thriving partnerships that enhance students' experience
- very good support for students
- very good curriculum and placement management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on national diploma in health studies in 2001/02 and 2002/03.

Scope of provision

63. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time provision at levels 2 and 3. There are 249 students on NVQs levels 2 and 3 in early years care and education and a further 21 students are on an advanced modern apprenticeship programme. The part-time level 3 certificate course for teaching assistants has 36 students enrolled. Some 285 students study on full-time courses including the certificate and diploma in child care and education, the first diploma in caring and national diplomas in early years and health studies.

Achievement and standards

64. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses. In 2003, at 93%, pass rates were especially high on the national diploma in early years and retention rates improved to 13% above the national average. The national diploma in health studies, offered since 2001/02, has had 100% pass rates, although retention rates were low to 2003. Current retention rates on this course have more than doubled and, at 81%, are now significantly above the national average. Pass and retention rates are also high on the diploma in childcare and education, NVQ levels 2 and 3 in early years care and education and on a range of additional qualifications. With the exception of level 2 application of

number, key skills pass rates are also high. The number of students achieving high grades on national diplomas in early years and health studies are very high. In 2002/03 they were 44% and 30%, respectively, against national averages of 5% and 3%. In the same year, on the diploma in childcare and education, 10% of learners achieved higher grades. This is in line with the national average, although about a quarter of these students started with less than the usually required five GCSE grades A* to C. Progression to HE is very good. Progression from the national diploma in health studies was exceptionally high at 67%. Students on full-time courses produce very good written work. They demonstrate good IT skills and explain concepts very well. The display work produced by early years students is of a very high standard. Students behave very well in lessons. They are focused on their work and offer respect and support to each other. Many articulate contributions in class with confidence. In the workplace, students have a professional approach and their skills are appreciated by employers. Early years students have particularly well-developed childcare skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ in early years care and education	2	No. of starts	112	78	100
		% retention	66	68	93
		% pass rate	73	*	74
NCFE creative craft skills	2	No. of starts	170	144	61
		% retention	83	88	98
		% pass rate	70	100	96
NVQ in early years care and education	3	No. of starts	90	129	95
		% retention	79	81	92
		% pass rate	80	78	75
Diploma in child care and education	3	No. of starts	42	21	36
		% retention	90	86	*
		% pass rate	80	72	90
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	29	41	43
		% retention	62	73	78
		% pass rate	100	96	93
National diploma in health studies	3	No. of starts	0	37	24
		% retention	**	59	55
		% pass rate	**	100	100

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

* data unreliable

** course not running

Quality of education and training

65. Teaching and learning are excellent. All lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good or better. Lesson planning is very good. Methods are chosen well to interest and motivate students. Lessons are carefully structured and well managed. Teachers teach with great enthusiasm and some with a passion that energises the whole group. One lesson focused on students recognising their role in supporting children. The method used was very creative; students were given an orange

to look after, even to the point of taking it home. Students learned that regardless of the external appearance or behaviour of children their role is to look after them. The orange was used to reveal the concept that everyone is important to someone, and it is what is on the inside that is important. Students enjoy lessons and participate with confidence. Effective use is made of vocational experiences. Teachers support individual students well although, occasionally, the more able students are not challenged sufficiently. Questions are skilfully used to extend and check learning. Teaching of key skills is very good. Teachers are very good role models. They are rigorous in practising the essential values that are central to the professions they represent. They respect and accept all students, celebrating difference and diversity. They listen to students' views and opinions and respond openly. Through acceptance and encouragement they build students' confidence. They understand students' social and emotional needs and maintain confidentiality appropriately. Safe working practices are demonstrated and reinforced.

66. A wide range of well-used resources enhance students' learning. Staff are extremely well qualified and experienced, representing many of the early years and care professions. High-standard teaching and learning aids are available in every classroom. Students have good access to modern computers. A well-stocked art room enables early years students to develop creative skills for working with children.

67. Assessment on full-time courses is well planned and rigorous. Assignment briefs are well written, clear and interesting. Key skills assignments are creative and vocationally specific. Good written feedback from teachers offers specific guidance on how to improve work and achieve higher grades. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are corrected. On part-time programmes in early years, assessment is planned with students, although planning records are insufficiently detailed; tracking lacks sophistication and does not easily convey students' progress. Knowledge is not routinely credited from performance and assessor feedback does not sufficiently emphasise the ten principles of good practice. Staff are aware of these issues and have recently implemented changes to bring about improvement. Internal verification is systematic and thorough.

68. Students broaden their experience and skills through additional qualifications in first aid, food hygiene, manual handling, health and safety and creative craft skills. Many thriving partnerships enhance students' learning experiences. Student placements and opportunities for industrial updating for staff are very good. Employers praise the college highly and are keen to provide opportunities for its students. Strong links with the LEA have led to the development of courses. In particular, a level 3 course for classroom assistants in secondary schools developed before a nationally recognised option became available.

69. Support for students is very good. A wide range of services including medical, counselling, careers guidance and study support are valued and well used. A standard tutorial framework ensures specific topics are addressed. Around this, tutorials are flexible to meet the needs of learners. Individual tutorials enable students to discuss personal and work-related issues. Tutors listen, and respond sensitively. Action points for review are identified and recorded. Progress is monitored and progression encouraged. Students are well prepared for work placement and the placement team provide good additional support. Employers are knowledgeable about the needs of early years students but are less well informed about the needs of health studies learners. Teachers are totally focused on students and their success. Students recognise this and respond positively.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are very good. Courses are organised well. Staff are carefully deployed to maximise their expertise and impact on learning. Curriculum planning provides access for a wide range of students. Openness, respect and trust between staff leads to very good teamwork. They communicate well and share information willingly. Courses are regularly reviewed and weaknesses are acted upon, although some reviews lack detailed action points. There is systematic and demanding target setting for attendance, retention and achievement. Management of placements is very good. The placement team communicate very well with teachers to ensure the promotion of competent and safe working.

Part D: Institution data

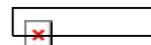
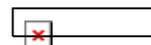


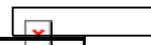
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	47	27
2	38	56
3	13	12
4/5	0	0
Other	2	5
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the institution in summer 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	0	0	0
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	0	28	0
Business administration, management and professional	17	85	2
Information and communication technology	15	165	3
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	7	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	1739	1919	53
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	445	351	12
Health, social care and public services	1105	693	27
Visual and performing arts and media	10	78	1

Humanities	0	0	0
English, languages and communication	7	25	1
Foundation programmes	35	0	1
Total	3,373	3,351	100

Source: provided by the institution in summer 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	895	1,054	1,053	458	277	388
	Retention rate %	83	91	93	83	86	95
	National average %	76	75	n/a	74	74	n/a
	Pass rate %	95	98	96	89	88	93
	National average %	64	66	n/a	68	69	n/a
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,077	1303	869	524	651	551
	Retention rate %	83	89	93	83	80	88
	National average %	70	70	n/a	71	70	n/a
	Pass rate %	85	92	91	81	91	85
	National average %	67	68	n/a	65	69	n/a
3	Starters excluding transfers	651	584	427	440	457	268
	Retention rate %	75	78	76	83	87	86
	National average %	68	76	n/a	67	70	n/a
	Pass rate %	84	88	85	84	82	80
	National average %	70	73	n/a	65	69	n/a
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Retention rate %	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	National average %	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Pass rate %	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	National average %	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

institutions or sixth form institutions).

Sources of information:

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

2. Institution rates for 2000 to 2003: Institution ISR..

n/a not applicable

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)	89	9	2	55
Level 2 (intermediate)	78	20	2	40
Level 1 (foundation)	75	25	0	8
Other sessions	95	5	0	19
Totals	85	13	2	122

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