

## South Nottingham College

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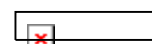
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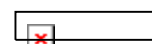
#### **Basic information about the college**



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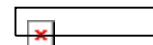
Name of college:	South Nottingham College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Malcolm Cowgill
Address of college:	Greythorn Drive West Bridgford Nottingham NG2 7GA
Telephone number:	0115 914 6400
Fax number:	0115 914 6444
Chair of governors:	Keith Beaumont
Unique reference number:	108485
Name of reporting inspector:	Alastair Taylor ALI
Dates of inspection:	19-23 April 2004

#### **Part A: Summary**



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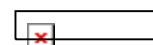
## Information about the college



South Nottingham College is a general further education (FE) college with two main sites at West Bridgford and the Charnwood Centre at Clifton. There is a further learning centre providing information technology (IT) short courses in the centre of Nottingham. The college also provides adult education in community centres in Bingham, Cotgrave, Keyworth, Bakersfield and Basford. There are a number of other FE and sixth form colleges in the area. In 2002/03, the college had 28,386 enrolments, of whom, 5,773 were aged 16 to 18 and 22,613 were adults. The college employs 352 full-time equivalent staff and has recently completed a major organisational restructure, guided by the ideals expressed in 'success for all' and the principles of the business excellence model. The college's strategic aims focus on four success areas: students' success, business success, market success and innovation success.

The college's catchment area includes urban, semi-rural and remote rural areas. Rushcliffe is situated in the south of Nottinghamshire and lies immediately south of the city of Nottingham and the River Trent, extending towards Newark in the northeast and Loughborough in the southwest. Although parts of the borough lie close to Nottingham, Rushcliffe has a separate identity and covers some 157 square miles. West Bridgford has a population of 36,000; the highest in the borough. The remainder of the catchment area is largely rural, with the centres of population split between small towns and villages. The borough of Rushcliffe has 105,599 residents with a workforce of 76,914. Its population is 95.9% white compared to 90.9% for England as a whole. The population is anticipated to grow to 119,200 by 2011. Rushcliffe is perceived as an affluent suburb of Nottingham and, at 1%, has the lowest unemployment rate in Nottinghamshire. The city has an unemployment rate of 3.8%. Clifton is located in the south-west of the city, with a population of 26,461 and it is in the top 20% of deprived areas in the country. As well as high levels of long-term unemployment, there are high proportions of lone parents and other disadvantaged groups. Some 43% of the population have no qualifications and it is estimated that approximately 20% of the population have low literacy skills and 45% have low numeric skills. The college has engaged in a number of initiatives to widen participation in learning and address the skills shortage of young people in the Clifton area.

## How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged that the provision of the college is outstanding in visual and performing arts, and good in foundation programmes and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). It is satisfactory in all other areas. Provision for work-based learners in hairdressing and beauty therapy is unsatisfactory. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- high standard of students' work in many areas
  
- innovative and stimulating teaching in hairdressing, visual arts and media, literacy and numeracy, and in teaching for adults

- good specialist teaching resources on visual arts and media courses
- effective monitoring of students' progress and assessment
- good pastoral and learning support for students
- wide range of courses and progression routes in most areas
- high-quality community provision
- good strategies to promote social inclusion
- good leadership during college recovery
- effective focus on students' success during college recovery.

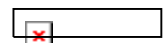
***What should be improved***

- low retention rates for adult students
- poor recruitment on many courses
- some dull and uninspiring teaching in business administration and sports therapy
- the poor quality of some teaching classrooms

- insufficient use of IT to support students' learning
- staff shortages in a number of curriculum areas
- the system of staff appraisal
- management strategies to monitor equal opportunities
- management of work-based learning
- management and quality assurance of franchised provision.

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

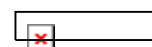


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Business administration, management and professional	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high pass rates on many courses, but low pass rates and slow progress on a few. Students produce high-quality work and develop good interpersonal and business skills. Support for students is good, but there is too much dull and uninspiring teaching. The range of trade union studies courses is particularly good, but there are insufficient links with employers for full-time students.
Information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is an extensive range of course provision offered at a range of venues. Retention rates are high on most courses with low pass rates on some. Students progress well from low to high levels. There are some inadequate staffing levels and a wide variation in the standard of teaching and learning resources.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on most full-time courses, but low on many short courses. Partnerships to widen participation and promote sport are good, with a broad range of courses and progression routes. Support for students is good, but some teaching in sports theory lessons is uninspiring. Assessment of work-based learners is weak.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Work-based learning contributory grade: <b>unsatisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on most courses and retention rates are improving. Teaching is satisfactory with students displaying good practical skills. Tutorial support is effective. Most full-time hairdressing students are placed on the entry-level course, but they are capable of beginning at a higher level. Work-based learning is poorly managed with inadequate assessment and low pass rates.
Health, social care and public services	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates are high on most courses, but low on franchised provision and in work-based learning. Teaching and learning on adult courses are good and there is strong support for college-based students. There is a wide range of courses, offering good progression and these are responsive to community needs. Accommodation for many classes is inadequate.
Visual and performing arts	<b>Outstanding.</b> Retention and pass rates are high on all courses. Very good teaching enables students to produce outstanding standards of creative work. Excellent accommodation, learning resources and well-qualified staff enrich students' experiences. The curriculum is managed well and offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses.
Humanities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates are variable. Teaching is satisfactory or better, but lacks sufficient variety. There is effective support for individual students and good assessment practice. Learning is impaired by unsatisfactory teaching accommodation and students' choice is restricted by a narrow range of subjects.
English, languages and communications	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses. There is much good teaching with strong formal and informal support for students. The range of courses is narrow except for level 1 where the range has increased.
Foundation programmes	<b>Good.</b> A good practical approach to learning includes high levels of support. Retention and pass rates are high on externally accredited courses. Effective action is taken to promote social inclusion. Learning resources are inadequate. Employer involvement is insufficient. Progression opportunities are limited for some students.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	<b>Good.</b> Teaching and learning are good and students develop good language and personal skills. There is a strong team of dedicated staff. Insufficient use is made of IT and some teaching rooms are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient externally accredited courses to meet the needs of students below entry level.

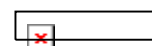
#### How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new management structure involves fewer layers with senior managers now much closer to curriculum areas. There is an open and consultative style

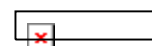
college are good. The college has developed a range of productive partnerships and has successfully raised participation in education and training. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory, but the internal assessment of the quality of teaching is too generous. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and inspectors agreed with most of its judgements. The management information system has improved and data are now reliable. There is no established trend of improvement in students' retention and pass rates in the three-year period, up to 2003, but inspectors noted that in-year retention rates appear to have improved. The arrangements for the appraisal of staff are inadequate. The management arrangements for ensuring that the college implements appropriate policies and procedures relating to equality of opportunity and diversity have been unsatisfactory during the past year. The college's financial position is weak, but improving. Effective measures are in place to raise the efficiency of resource allocation. Governance of the college is satisfactory. Governors monitor closely the progress of the recovery plan and the college's educational performance. As retention and pass rates improve, the college is beginning to provide satisfactory value for money.

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



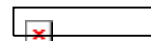
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Although the policy for widening participation remains in draft form, there is a wide range of initiatives to support disadvantaged learners. Over 70 community centres, linked to the main sites of the college, provide a broad range of programmes and are used to target specific groups of learners including, Asian women, Sikhs and the long-term unemployed. Figures produced by the college show the proportion of students recruited from disadvantaged areas has increased over time to reach 23% of all enrolments this year. The college has been slow to respond to the requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. Although a race equality policy was produced in 2002, no implementation plan followed and a new draft race equality statement which does make reference to the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 has not yet been approved by governors. Students' pass rates are analysed by ethnicity, but no action has resulted to address the underachievement of some ethnic groups. A college disability statement makes reference to improving access for students with mobility difficulties. The college commissioned a disability access audit in 2003 in line with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act 2001 (SENDA). Priorities identified in the action plan were being undertaken at the time of the inspection.

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



Guidance and support for students are good. Information, advice and guidance to prospective students are effective. Partnerships with schools and community support services facilitate students' entry to the college and support their progress. The initial assessment of many students' learning and support needs is undertaken early and thoroughly. Induction is well regarded by students and is reported as having helped them settle quickly into their studies. Individual students are supported well by both tutors and central support services. Support for students with physical and sensory disabilities, learning difficulties and other specific learning support needs is particularly strong. Individual tutorials help students make appropriate progress. Some group tutorial programmes are structured poorly and the tutorial work provided by some tutors is poor. The college has initiated a range of useful strategies to improve support for students and further increase retention rates.

### **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***

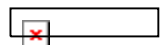
- friendly, helpful and supportive staff
- variety of convenient locations
- provision for adult students
- being treated as an adult
- making friends
- opportunity to carry out practical work and develop skills
- support to help with individual needs
- childcare facilities
- reception areas at both main campuses
- equipment and facilities for visual and performing arts
- general atmosphere of the college
- the help they received to settle into the college.



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

- standard and prices of food and tidiness in the refectories
- common room, recreational areas and places to relax
- timetabling of lessons and room allocations
- number of computers and reliability of the computer network
- timing of buses between sites
- the standards of main classrooms
- general decoration and condition of college buildings
- teaching of key skills
- on site facilities for sports
- information on staff and room changes.

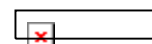
**Other information**



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to

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 LSC. The LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

## Part B: The college as a whole



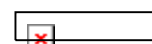
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	57	40	3
19+ and WBL*	70	27	3
Learning 16-18	56	38	6
19+ and WBL*	69	28	3

*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. At levels 1 and 2, overall retention rates are close to national averages, although for adult learners, retention rates have declined significantly. Retention rates at level 3 have been consistently low and the college partly attributes this to a large and poorly performing franchise contract which has now been withdrawn. A further initiative has been the introduction of learning mentors and guidance tutors, and an increased focus on retention rates by curriculum managers during the start of the academic year. Early indications are that retention rates have improved significantly in 2004.

2. Overall, pass rates are better for adults than for students aged 16 to 18, at levels 1 and 3, and whilst pass rates were very good for adults at level 2, in 2002, they fell sharply in 2003. At level 1, for both groups of learners, pass rates remain below national averages, but show an improving trend at level 3, where they are now well above national figures. Pass rates for adults on short courses, where there are large numbers of enrolments, are consistently good; pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 are consistently below national averages. The achievements of work-based learners are poor with very few achieving the full modern apprenticeship framework. In 2003, there was an improvement in key skills pass rates from previous years and recent results in external examinations confirm this trend. Key skills results are much better for students following art and design courses, where key skills are a central part of the course.

3. The destinations of those full-time students who are retained are tracked by course and level. For full-time students, at levels 1 to 3, in 2003, destinations are known for 611 out of 684 leavers. Progression rates to further study or employment are good. At levels 1 and 2, approximately 90% of students progressed on to the next highest level of their course, either at the college or elsewhere. At level 3, two-thirds of students progressed to higher education (HE) and a quarter into relevant employment. The college has little information on the destinations of those students that leave their course early.

4. There are particularly high standards of students' practical skills in visual and performing arts and media; those in hairdressing are also good. Adult learners enrolled on information and communications technology (ICT) courses at community venues often develop competent keyboard skills. In sports studies; the standard of students' sporting performance is high. Overall attendance is slightly above the national average of 78% for 2002/03. The attendance rate during the week of the inspection was highest in health and social care, at 83%, and lowest in English and business, at approximately 69%.

### **16 to 18 year olds**

5. For students aged 16 to 18, enrolled at level 1, retention rates have been close to national averages for the past four years. At level 2, retention rates have declined slightly, but remain close to national averages. The retention rate has improved at level 3, over the last four years, to a figure of 75% which is now close to the national average benchmark. On short courses, retention rates have gradually declined to a point where they are now below the national average. On many courses, college in-year retention rates demonstrate improvement in 2004.

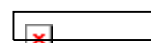
6. While the national average has been steadily improving, pass rates for students aged 16 to 18, at level 1, are low and declining. By contrast, at level 2, pass rates have been increasing steadily and are now close to the national average. At level 3, the declining pass rates, up to 2002, have been reversed in 2003; resulting in a pass rate of 81%, now above the national average. On short courses, pass rates have been declining steadily, although there was some improvement in 2003.

### **Adult learners**

7. For adult learners enrolled on long courses, at level 1, the overall retention rate of approximately 70%, has been close to the national average for the past four years. At level 2, the retention rate, at below 50%, was poor in 2001, although, in 2003, an improvement to 61% is recorded. This figure is still, however, below the national average. The level 3 retention rate has been poor and fell to 48% in 2003. By contrast, at just over 90% and slightly higher than the national average, the retention rate of adult learners following short courses is good. In the current year, college figures show that retention rates have improved, particularly at level 3.

8. Pass rates at level 1 fluctuate, but are close to national averages. At level 2, pass rates improved significantly in 2002, to a figure of 81%, but fell dramatically in 2003, to 59%. Steady improvement is recorded at level 3 and the figure of 86%, achieved in 2003, is well above the national average. Pass rates on short courses are good and, at close to 90% over the last four years, are better than national averages.

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



9. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 182 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 62.6% of lessons, satisfactory in 34.6% and less than satisfactory in 2.8%. It was excellent or very good in 24% of lessons. The proportion of good or better teaching is

than satisfactory is below the national average. The highest proportion of good or better teaching, at 81%, is in visual and performing arts and media; the lowest is just below 50% in business. The quality of teaching is much better for adult students, with 70% of lessons judged to be good or better, compared to 57% for students aged 16 to 18. When analysing teaching by level, the highest grades have been awarded on level 3 courses. Compared to the college's own internal observation profile, taken from the last academic year, the percentage of good or better lessons graded by inspectors is lower, however the proportion of lessons judged to be less than satisfactory is also considerably lower than the college figure of 11%.

10. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of methods to ensure that their lessons are lively. The lessons are well structured, objectives are made clear to students at the start and at the end of the lesson, and the teacher reviews and consolidates the learning with the whole class. For example, in media, students run the college newspaper and use specialist software to compose and collate the pages. They also take on the different roles of staff in a press room, learning through this experience, the importance of meeting publication deadlines. There is effective team teaching on trade union courses with lively debates about workplace practices and current industrial legislation. In foundation lessons, practical and group activities help students to develop confidence and consolidate their learning. In ICT, tutors possess good technical knowledge which they readily use in workshops to help individual students. In literacy and numeracy, teachers use their detailed knowledge of each student effectively to plan appropriate individual learning programmes. In modern foreign languages, much of the teaching is in the language which the students are learning and this effectively promotes their oral skills development.

11. Some of the teaching, for example, in sports studies and humanities, is dull and uninspiring. In these lessons, teachers talk too much, fail to vary sufficiently the activities they set for students and do not extend students' learning through discussion or extension work. In beauty therapy, teachers fail to give enough attention to individual students with the result that some are not given sufficiently demanding work. In other curriculum areas, for example, business, there is insufficient use of ICT to help learning and the failure to vary teaching methods leads to some disruptive behaviour. The standard of key skills teaching varies across the different areas of learning. Key skills are a central part of the course in visual and performing arts and media where, for example, in one lesson, students used spreadsheets to calculate the cost of buying equipment. In foundation programmes, students with learning difficulties use ICT effectively to produce high-quality greetings cards. The integration of key skills with schemes of work is not, however, systematic and there is little attempt to highlight key skills in project or assignment work.

12. The profile of learning is similar to that for teaching with 61.5% of lessons graded good or better, 34.1% satisfactory and 4.4% less than satisfactory. Learning is again more effective for adult students with 69% of lessons judged good or better compared to 57% for students aged 16 to 18. On level 2 courses, there is a relatively high proportion of unsatisfactory learning, at 10.4%.

13. The college has two main campuses on the southern outskirts of the city and three learning centres: one in the city centre, one on the southern outskirts and one in a nearby market town. Many rooms in the older accommodation are cramped, overheated and have poor sound insulation. However, those that have been refurbished recently provide much better learning environments. The quality of the learning centres on the different sites is particularly good. Most teaching staff hold appropriate professional and teaching qualifications. For example, 93% of full-time and 62% of part-time teachers possess a recognised teaching qualification; many are very experienced practitioners.

14. There are many good specialist resources, particularly in visual and performing arts and media. Hairdressing salons are well equipped. ICT resources across the college are good with industry-standard hardware and software platforms. Other audio-visual aids are stored centrally and not utilised sufficiently. Learning centres provide a sufficiency of books and other types of media; opening hours are appropriate to meet the needs of both part-time and full-time students. Learning centres are, however, small for the size of the student population and the college generally lacks sufficient quiet study spaces. The student support centres on both main campuses are of high quality. They are well laid out with reception and main information areas, and smaller rooms for confidential counselling sessions. There are also popular crèche facilities on both sites, available for the use of students' children during daytime classes.

15. The college has a clear policy on assessment and verification which goes beyond the minimum requirements of the various awarding bodies. The policy is distributed widely to teaching staff and is implemented effectively on college-based courses. Internal verification and moderation arrangements are generally good. There are, however, poor assessment practices in some work-based learning. Assessor visits are unnecessarily frequent, insufficient use of work-based assessors is made when they are present and some assessment by observation has been performed by unqualified assessors. Assessment by franchise partners in health and social care has been ineffective. Assessment results are recorded formally and analysed as part of the course review process. There is much good use of initial assessment for lesson and course planning, especially in foundation courses. Students are kept informed of their progress through assessment records, regular contact with tutors and through progress reviews. On courses where there are work placements, work placement supervisors contribute effectively to the review process. There is insufficient use of target setting for students. Some students do not have individual learning plans or targets set for achievement. The college keeps parents of students aged 16 to 18 well informed through pre-course information and reports about progress and attendance.

16. A broad range of programmes is offered to learners from entry to degree level. Compact arrangements provide clear progression opportunities from foundation to intermediate and advanced study. These arrangements are successful, particularly in art and design where, for example, all intermediate students progressed to a level 3 programme in 2002/03. While provisional data for the current year indicate that the college is generally on course to meet its enrolment targets, actual enrolments for the last academic year were significantly below target and showed a decline at levels 2 and 3. The college attributes this partly to a withdrawal of franchised provision and a reduction in the number of general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) subjects offered. The self-assessment report acknowledges the very high withdrawal rate from ESOL programmes which have now been restructured into shorter six week blocks of study, resulting in improved completion rates. Additional qualifications are available to many learners to support their main programmes of study. They are particularly wide ranging in hairdressing and beauty therapy, multimedia, art and design, and sports studies. An audit undertaken in January 2004, recognised that enrichment activities were not well established in a number of curriculum areas. A £30,000 budget has been secured to promote enrichment opportunities across the college more widely.

17. The number of schools working in partnership with the college to increase vocational opportunities for 14 to 16 year olds has expanded from 9 to 14 this academic year, with a total of over 300 pupils engaged on a variety of different programmes including hairdressing, printing and sporting activities. College staff collaborate with the adjacent school for students aged 11 to 18, to provide sixth form teaching in social sciences. There are close links with HE through the access programme, a compact with Nottingham Trent University and workshops run by local universities at college open evenings. A number of higher national diplomas (HNDs) are offered by the college which include fine art, design, photography and digital imaging, media, multimedia, sport, print media and digital design. Links with trades unions are well established with a range of bespoke programmes undertaken. However, the strategy to increase links with employers has not been implemented effectively.

18. The college's strategy for widening participation, produced in April 2003, remains in draft form with defined success measures left incomplete. Nevertheless, the practice to promote social inclusion is good. Over 70 community centres are used by the college including those which cater for Asian women, Sikhs and dyslexic learners. Programmes are broad ranging and include basic skills, IT, creative crafts, modern foreign languages and holistic therapies. Figures obtained from the college show that the proportion of students enrolling from disadvantaged post code areas has increased from 19% in 2002/03, to 23% in 2003/04. The range of recent initiatives includes providing a level 1 core curriculum programme for school pupils with Aspergers syndrome, a 'fresh horizons' course run in conjunction with Nottingham City Council to attract the long-term unemployed back to work and the 'learning @ Clifton library centre' which has been established to promote advice and learning opportunities for local residents in a disadvantaged community.

19. Pre-enrolment information, advice and guidance are effective. Prospectuses and subject-specific promotional materials are presented clearly and provide sufficient information to help prospective students make informed initial course choices. Prospective full-time students can sample courses

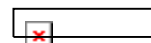
prior to enrolment through 'taster' activities and a welcome day which runs across a number of programme areas in June. Pre-entry support for part-time students is generally appropriate. The college has good links with a number of local schools, and voluntary and statutory agencies. Liaison with community groups is helpful, particularly in ensuring that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are integrated properly into college life. Student surveys indicate that induction is effective and helps students to settle quickly into their studies; it also enables them to understand their rights and responsibilities, and the demands of the course or programme. Many students' individual learning needs are assessed at the start of their course and the results are analysed quickly and communicated to them and their tutors. Students with a wide range of identified additional learning needs such as dyslexia receive early and effective support.

20. The college benefits from an effective central student support service. Personal support for individual students by both tutors and central support service staff is very good. Support for students with physical and sensory disabilities, learning difficulties and other specific learning support needs is a particularly strong feature of provision in the college. The college has a child protection policy which is consistent with local area child protection committee guidelines. Key staff have been trained in the implementation of the policy. A named senior manager has responsibility for liaison with appropriate authorities over referrals.

21. Individual tutorials are generally effective. Regular progress reviews assist students with both their studies and personal issues; tutorial records are maintained well. In some cases, however, subsequent action plan targets are not detailed sufficiently. The quality and relevance of group tutorial programmes for full-time students are not uniformly good. Where programmes work well, students benefit from a carefully constructed, balanced menu of activities, linked to topics in personal, social, health and careers education. However, some tutorials are poor and fail to give students appropriate help. A number of tutors are unaware of college guidance and recommendations about the organisation of group tutorial activity. Careers education and guidance, provided by college careers advisers and tutors, is generally effective in helping students prepare for further study and employment. For example, in a joint presentation on universities and colleges admissions service (UCAS) clearing arrangements, students were given good individual help in developing progression plans, should they need to make use of the clearing system.

22. Students' attendance is monitored closely. Particular efforts are made to ensure that full-time students attend regularly and punctually. The college takes an active role in informing parents about unsatisfactory attendance. However, attendance in some subjects is erratic and current systems for improving attendance rates are only partially effective. A number of support and guidance tutors have been recruited to, in part, focus on attendance issues. These appointments are part of a wider college strategy, designed to improve students' retention and pass rates.

## Leadership and management



23. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior management provides effective leadership. The college's management has been restructured following the resignation of the previous principal and the chair of the corporation, early in 2003. The new management structure has been in operation for about six months. At all levels, staff have a clear understanding of the new structure and they speak about the interest taken by senior managers enthusiastically in issues linked to students and the curriculum. The new structure places a much greater emphasis upon improving the chances of success for each student at the college. In order to address some historically poor college retention and pass rates, an 'excellence' team has been formed, comprising the principal and a small group of senior managers. The team meets with programme area managers and course co-ordinators regularly to identify and rectify unsatisfactory achievement. The quality of curriculum management is satisfactory, overall. In a few areas it is good, and in visual and performing arts it is very good. In some areas, there are ineffective arrangements for ensuring that all lessons are taught during periods of staff absence.

24. Communications across the college are good. The open and supportive management style has helped the college to adapt to the changes required, as a result of the need to recover financially. There are regular team meetings, newsletters and good use is made of internal e-mail.

25. The college has a strategic plan, covering the three-year period up to 2005/06. This sets out an improvement strategy, but a number of the proposed actions do not have completion dates stated clearly, and some that do, for example, to develop an employers' engagement strategy, lack urgency. The original plan has now been superseded, largely by a new draft plan which reflects a business excellence model more closely.

26. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. There is a quality assurance policy, but no overall guide to procedures. A well-established system of course review and self-assessment, involves course teams meeting four times during the course of a year. Course teams set appropriate targets for improvement, having regard to previous years' data and relevant national averages. There are appropriate arrangements for gathering and acting upon the views of full-time students; the views of evening class students and employers are gathered in alternate years. Issues raised by external verifiers are followed up carefully. The internal lesson observation system mainly involves teachers assessing each other although, more recently, the programme area managers have started to undertake this role. The college does recognise, in its self-assessment report, the likelihood that its own assessment might be too generous. It was unaware of the extent to which lessons are dull and uninspiring for some groups of students. The self-assessment report is comprehensive in its coverage of the college's activities and all staff were involved in its preparation. It draws on evidence from an appropriate range of sources. In some areas, for example, visual and performing arts and media, the report is evaluative and inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified. In some other areas, such as beauty therapy, the process failed to identify some key strengths and weaknesses. The management information system has improved. At the time of the last inspection, the unreliability of data was a weakness. In its self-assessment report, the college identified some continuing concerns, relating to the reliability of and access to, data. In recent months, the college has installed a new management information system. Students' information is more accurate and is increasingly used by staff at all levels for planning and monitoring purposes. There are plans to improve the system to enable better monitoring of retention and pass rates. Inspectors found the data on students' pass rates to be reliable.

27. The arrangements for the appraisal of staff are inadequate. The principal is appraised by the chair and vice-chair of governors, but the clerk has not been appraised during the past year. The principal monitors the performance of managers and agrees targets to be achieved. There is no appraisal system for other staff. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Staff are entitled to an annual meeting with their line manager to discuss continuing professional development. In the 15 months prior to inspection, only one-third of staff received such an interview. In other respects, the arrangements for staff development are satisfactory.

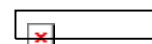
28. The management arrangements for ensuring that the college implements appropriate policies and procedures, relating to equality of opportunity and diversity, have been unsatisfactory during the past year. However, recently, these matters are beginning to be addressed. Although no meetings of the equal opportunities committee took place over a period of nearly one year, an equality and diversity forum is now in operation. The college has been slow to respond to the requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. A race equality policy was produced in May 2002, but without an implementation plan. A new draft race equality statement has not yet been approved by governors. Students' pass rate data are analysed by gender, age and ethnicity, but no action has resulted to address the causes of underachievement by some ethnic groups. A college disability statement makes reference to improving access for students with mobility difficulties, although there is no specific linking of the policy to the requirements of the SENDA. Inspectors found that the promotion of equality of opportunity within curriculum areas was generally satisfactory. Access for wheelchair users is good at the main sites.

29. Governance of the college is satisfactory. Governors have a clear view of the college's mission; they are involved in the strategic planning process and are aware of the issues concerning the strategic area review and the contribution which the college could make. They are well informed and committed strongly to ensuring that the college recovers from its financial difficulties. Governors

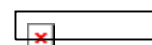
receive appropriate financial reports each month. They monitor the progress of the recovery plan closely. An academic committee meets regularly and, following improvements in the presentation of data, is now able to focus on key performance indicators for students' achievements more clearly.

30. The college's financial position is weak, but improving. In the past, weaknesses in financial and management frameworks contributed to a failure to monitor the college's activities adequately. The college did not meet its funding targets during 2001/03, resulting in operating deficits and a significant deterioration in the college's financial solvency. A robust recovery plan has been put in place and is being implemented. This is addressing key issues associated with costs and income generation. The college's financial standing is improving during the current year and it expects to break even in the year ending July 2005. Senior managers have introduced detailed budgeting down to course level, enabling curriculum managers to be much clearer about the efficiency with which they deploy resources. This is improving value for money, by helping to ensure that teachers' time is used more efficiently and that all courses operate with sufficient numbers of students, not only to cover costs, but also to make a contribution to the college budget. As retention and pass rates improve, the college is beginning to provide satisfactory value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Business administration, management and professional



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on many courses
- professional standard of work by many students
- good provision for trade union studies
- effective individual learning support
- good use of commercial experience in learning.

#### **Weaknesses**



- low pass rates on advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) and book-keeping courses
- much dull and uninspiring teaching
- inadequate involvement of employers in full-time courses
- insufficient rigour in course reviews
- insufficient contingency planning for staff absence.

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

31. There are currently 1,554 students on business, management and trades union courses. Most full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Part-time students are predominantly aged over 19 years. The 287 full-time students are working towards the AVCE in business advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) or GCE A-level courses or general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) foundation and intermediate awards. There are 1,267 students on a wide range of part-time courses, including management, personnel, professional development, and skills such as word processing and book keeping. In trade union studies, students attend courses at the college, at various union offices and in the workplace. Provision is made for students wishing to gain secretarial skills qualifications on a part-time day or evening basis, either by attending regular college courses or courses at local community centres.

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

32. At around 10 % above the national average, the retention rate of adult students is high. Retention rates are satisfactory and improving for students aged 16 to 18. Pass rates are high overall. Trades union courses are highly successful, with retention and pass rates approaching 100 %. Pass rates are consistently high in AS-level and GCE A-level business studies, text and word processing at level 1, and GNVQ intermediate. Pass rates are low for AVCE and book keeping, although they are showing signs of improvement. Key skills pass rates are low on full-time courses, but improving this year. Progress is slow on some national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses.

33. Many students produce work of professional quality. Students on management courses undertake innovative work-based projects which result in beneficial changes being implemented in their workplaces, such as reducing downtime for ambulances at the local hospital and providing cost-effective secretarial cover in the health service. NVQ portfolios contain much high-quality workplace evidence and are presented well. Students on trade union studies courses, produce well-researched workplace projects on such topics as sexual orientation, work/life balance and family-friendly policies. Full-time students are developing good presentational, organisation and team working skills through practical activities. On AVCE and GCE A-level courses, students' previous attainments are used to predict grades and set targets, and this shows positive signs of some students improving their performance. Attendance and punctuality are below national averages, but improving on full-time programmes through greater monitoring and support. During the inspection, attendance averaged 69 %.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Text/word processing	1	No. of starts	30	45	42
		% retention	80	89	86
		% pass rate	88	75	67
GNVQ business intermediate	2	No. of starts	18	15	*
		% retention	94	87	*
		% pass rate	82	69	*
Trades Union Congress (TUC) representatives intermediate	2	No. of starts	86	71	*
		% retention	70	93	*
		% pass rate	72	98	*
AVCE business 2 year	3	No. of starts	21	26	16
		% retention	90	54	56
		% pass rate	68	0	44
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	68	56	37
		% retention	88	75	86
		% pass rate	40	31	91
AS-level business studies	3	No. of starts	58	62	71
		% retention	90	82	90
		% pass rate	85	88	89

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

\* fewer than 15 students enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

34. Almost half of lessons were judged to be good or better. The best lessons are well prepared and tutors make maximum use of their own and students' wide expertise to facilitate lively debate. There is good team teaching on trade union courses. In some lessons, teachers and learning support assistants work together effectively to support students' diverse learning needs. However, too much teaching is dull and uninspiring. In some lessons, there is over reliance on the tutor reading from textbooks or handouts and there is little use of visual aids or IT equipment. Teachers' board work is untidy and they do not vary the work to take account of the different abilities and needs of students. In some lessons with full-time students, there is weak management of disruptive behaviour and insufficient consolidation or checking of students' understanding. The integration of key skills with coursework for full-time students is still being developed. Many assignments are challenging and develop valuable personal and work skills. AVCE students have reached the regional finals in a young enterprise competition, in which they used team working, financial management, promotion events and research skills to set up a company to raise money for charity.

35. Staff are generally well experienced and qualified. Difficulties in providing cover for specialist staff, at level 3 and above, lead to frequent timetable changes. Library staff are helpful and informative, but the stock of library books is becoming out of date. IT resources are generally adequate, although open access rooms are cramped at peak times. There is extensive access to the Internet. Accommodation is adequate in most cases, although some classrooms are decorated poorly. Many of the management and trades union courses are held in the well-resourced centre on the main site or in well-equipped training rooms at employers' or trades union premises.

36. Assessment and internal verification are rigorous. Assessors use an appropriate range of assessment methods and give detailed and constructive feedback to students on how to improve their performance. Internal verifiers use sampling plans, observe assessors, hold regular meetings with assessors and give useful feedback to them on assessment decisions. There has been a shortage of assessors on some NVQ courses and this has delayed progress for a few students. Progress for NVQ students on the teaching assistants' course, is delayed by insufficient work place visits by the assessor. Initial assessment is weak on part-time courses and sometimes results in adults being placed on inappropriate courses.

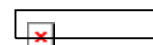
37. Although there is an adequate range of courses to meet local needs, there are few administration courses, apart from text and word processing, and numbers on many courses are declining. The range of trade union courses is particularly comprehensive and regarded well. Full-time students cannot always take advantage of enrichment activities or study additional subjects because of timetabling constraints. Full-time students do not have opportunities to undertake work experience and there is insufficient involvement of employers in course design.

38. All full-time students are screened effectively for additional learning needs such as numeracy, literacy, dyslexia, language or social needs. There are flexible arrangements to support students, including one-to-one support, group sessions or learning support assistants within lessons. Part-time students are not screened systematically and problems such as dyslexia are often not identified until the student is experiencing difficulties with coursework. Students make good use of the student support services offered for counselling, careers advice and financial information. Students value the individual support from approachable and friendly teaching staff, who provide sensitive advice and guidance to students who have concerns and difficulties. The three-monthly reviews of progress are satisfactory, but target setting and action planning is sometimes weak. Parents and employers of sponsored students are informed of students' progress regularly. Induction is satisfactory.

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

39. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Students receive satisfactory or better teaching and support. Retention and pass rates are good on many courses. However, there has been a high turnover of staff, and inadequate contingency planning means there are frequent changes of staff and timetables which affect students' progress. Management courses have not been planned strategically or adequately supported until very recently. Course reviews do not always incorporate judgements relating to teaching and learning. There is insufficient use of students' feedback and of management information to make improvements to courses. Action identified is not always carried out quickly enough. The self-assessment process was thorough and included relevant staff. However, the strengths were over estimated and insufficient account was taken of the impact of weaknesses on students.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates on most courses
  
- particularly effective community provision

- good progression from entry to higher levels
- effective individual advice and guidance.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on GNVQ intermediate and City and Guilds (C&G) certificate
- insufficient range of teaching methods
- wide variation in the availability of teaching and learning resources
- inadequate arrangements to cover staff absence.

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

40. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. These are offered at the two main campuses and at a wide range of community venues throughout south Nottinghamshire. Courses range from basic software applications to computer installation and maintenance. The majority of students enrolled on full-time courses are male and aged 16 to 18. The part-time community-based provision provides opportunities to a wide range of learners and focuses mostly on basic level courses such as computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and European computer driving licence (ECDL). In 2003/04 so far, 141 students aged 16 to 18 and 2,711 adults have enrolled on ICT courses.

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

41. Overall, retention and pass rates are satisfactory. Retention rates have been consistently high and in some cases have improved. On the C&G certificate in IT applications, the retention rate has been consistently high and improving. Across the whole area, the 2003/04 in-year retention rate is high, at 78%. Although pass rates on most courses have improved over the last two years, most remain at, or slightly below, the national average. There is a high pass rate on CLAIT and integrated business technology (IBT) III courses. Pass rates on C&G certificate courses have been low, but showed an improvement in 2002/03. On ECDL level 2, despite marked improvement in 2001/02, pass rates have declined. On the GNVQ intermediate course, an excellent pass rate in 2000/01 has not been sustained. The new CLAIT and ECDL level 3 courses have replaced the old CLAIT and IBT III courses. In 2003/04, the pass rate on ECDL level 3 is high. The majority of students are adults following part-time courses in basic software applications. These students develop good keyboard skills and increased confidence in the use of ICT equipment and software. For many of these students, this represents a good achievement and has helped to boost their confidence. Many progress to higher-level courses.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
7261 certificate in IT computer applications (one year)	1	No. of starts	714	395	104
		% retention	64	62	88
		% pass rate	44	45	60
CLAIT (short course)	1	No. of starts	653	459	42
		% retention	81	79	100
		% pass rate	72	74	93
ECDL	2	No. of starts	162	237	258
		% retention	85	89	69
		% pass rate	21	78	48
7261 diploma in computer applications (one year)	2	No. of starts	91	135	50
		% retention	55	45	82
		% pass rate	30	69	73
GNVQ intermediate computer technology (one year)	2	No. of starts	35	36	18
		% retention	69	64	94
		% pass rate	96	35	47
Intermediate business technology stage III (one year)	3	No. of starts	54	62	*
		% retention	89	81	*
		% pass rate	81	68	*

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

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

42. At community venues, all teaching was judged to be good or better. Teachers have good technical knowledge and give students very effective individual tuition. Teachers are responsive, particularly to the individual needs of mature students, many of whom have not participated in formal learning for many years. Students are encouraged to, and in many cases succeed in, achieving beyond their expectations. For example, one student, with no previous knowledge of ICT, progressed rapidly from a basic introductory course and has progressed, with the achievement of 15 qualifications at various levels.

43. In the best lessons, teachers challenge and motivate students effectively. Students are encouraged to choose subjects of particular interest to them. These subjects are researched individually and the outcomes of this are used in formal assessments. For example, the college now makes use of an on-line IT knowledge quiz which has been developed by two students as part of their coursework. In one class, students were testing their own knowledge by completing the on-line IT knowledge quiz enthusiastically and effectively. In other lessons, teaching is dull and uninspiring. Students do not fully participate when teachers spend an excessive time lecturing. In one lesson, a tutor spoke for 40 minutes explaining an aspect of IT theory. There were few opportunities for discussion and group activities.

44. Overall, resources are satisfactory. In the best community centres, there is a computer network with an appropriate range of hardware and software for learning. The larger centres have more up-

to-date software with good Internet access. In some centres and on the main campus at West Bridgford, there are some inadequate resources. In some rooms, there are no teaching aids such as overhead multi-media projectors, whiteboards or appropriate network software. Technical support is unsatisfactory and at community centres it is poor. There is often a long wait for assistance. Students are disadvantaged by a lack of hard-drive storage space to save necessarily large files. Not all computers have copies of relevant software.

45. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress is satisfactory. Work is set at an appropriate level. Verification is satisfactory. Most lesson plans and schemes of work satisfactorily plan for the regular assessment of students' progress. Work is marked regularly and to an appropriate standard. Students are given timely and constructive written and verbal feedback in lessons. Initial assessment ensures that students are on an appropriate level of study. Progress is monitored and reviewed regularly.

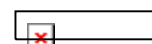
46. A wide range of courses across all levels provide very good opportunities for learning. Courses allow students to progress within FE and to HE or employment. There is good progression. In 2002/03, over 600 students progressed to a higher-level qualification within the college provision. A wide geographical distribution of learning venues provides opportunities for people within the community to study and gain a qualification. Many of the communities served by the college do not have a tradition of lifelong learning and academic attainment. One community venue serves an area with a particularly high percentage of social housing. Finance for the centre was identified by the college to enable a new, fully-equipped learning centre to be built. Flexible study times enable students to study at a time which suites their individual lifestyle. Another centre enrolls students from more remote rural areas.

47. Guidance and support for individual students are good. Students are given appropriate advice to ensure they are on a programme of study which will meet their aspirations. Students who are experiencing difficulties understanding coursework, theory or more practical aspects, receive prompt and effective guidance to help them resolve their difficulties. In response to changes in university entrance requirements, some students were advised and given opportunities to take extra qualifications in mathematics and other subjects. Satisfactory procedures are in place to recognise and redress poor punctuality and attendance. Poor performance is identified through regular reviews and appropriate action is taken.

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

48. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course reviews provide adequate quality assurance. Staff use retention and pass rate data to inform the management of courses. For example, IBT 3 has been replaced by ECDL advanced. Courses are managed effectively and in some cases, external moderators and verifiers have commended the quality. The self-assessment process does not provide a coherent analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. A staff appraisal and development mechanism is in place, but has not been used rigorously; specialist staff development needs are not addressed. Cover for staff absence is unsatisfactory. For example, one group of students received no tuition for their main qualification for several days due to staff absence. Management are clearly sensitive to local needs and courses are designed particularly to meet those needs. There is a clear strategy to widen participation through working with a range of external partners.

### **Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most full-time courses
- wide range of courses and progression routes
- good partnerships to widen participation and promote sport
- good support for students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on short courses
- weak assessment practices on NVQ and work-based learning programmes
- insufficient formal assessment of adult education students readiness for exercise
- uninspiring teaching in some sports theory lessons.

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

49. A wide range of sport, leisure and travel courses including full-time, part-time and short courses, from levels 1 to 4, is offered at the main college site in West Bridgford. At the time of the inspection, there were 109 students aged 16 to 18, of whom 74 were full time. There are 221 students aged 19 or over, 4 are full time. There are 17 modern apprentices in sport and recreation. Adult community courses are provided at a variety of venues for 338 students. Most students take additional qualifications and a majority of sports students complete the community sports leader award.

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

50. Pass rates are high and well above national averages on most full-time courses. The sports therapy diploma and advanced diploma courses, and the AVCE travel and tourism double award have particularly high pass rates. However, on many short courses, pass rates are low and in some cases, substantially below national averages. These include coaching courses in a variety of sports such as football, swimming and some professional travel courses, although retention rates have generally been very high. Overall, retention rates are improving, averaging 77 % in the current year. Attendance is satisfactory and most students arrive for lessons promptly. There is poor achievement of modern apprentice frameworks.

51. Many elite athletes achieve very high standards of sporting performance at county, national and international level in a wide variety of sports such as football, volleyball, basketball, athletics, kayak and ice skating. Academy teams perform well in national leagues. Progression rates to higher-level courses are good, particularly on sports courses. For example, 85 % of Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma in sports students progressed on to higher-level programmes, while 50 % of students on the BTEC national diploma in sport course progressed to HE. The remaining students go on to other programmes within the college or into jobs. Key skills retention and pass rates are improving this year.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
British Sports Trust (BST) community sports leaders award	1	No. of starts	101	66	100
		% retention	94	92	92
		% pass rate	59	39	62
Football Association (FA) coaching certificate (short)	2	No. of starts	130	127	75
		% retention	96	98	100
		% pass rate	68	10	20
National diploma in applied science (sports studies)	3	No. of starts	25	24	15
		% retention	60	54	39
		% pass rate	93	85	81
AVCE travel and tourism (double award)	3	No. of starts	*	18	25
		% retention	*	61	64
		% pass rate	*	91	100

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

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

52. Teaching is uninspiring in some sports theory lessons. Although generally attentive, students are not always motivated sufficiently to apply real effort to succeed in their work. In a few lessons, classroom management does not ensure that all students are engaged effectively. Teaching is often undemanding and insufficiently varied to meet individual students' needs. The best lessons are well planned and well structured. In these lessons, students are keen to acquire new knowledge and skills, and work productively and collaboratively. For example, in an AVCE travel and tourism class, the teacher used a wide variety of activities and a range of resources, including video and electronic presentations very effectively. This enhanced students' learning about the use of design and technology in meeting customer needs and expectations at tourist attractions.

53. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are generally well qualified and experienced, and sports staff have a good range and level of coaching qualifications. Most staff have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications and assessor awards. The college has few sports facilities and the fitness suite is inadequate. However, effective use is made of very good local external facilities such as local sports centres and health clubs, stadiums and arenas. This provides students with good practical experiences and use of specialist equipment. For NVQ students, there are insufficient work placements, although students do participate in the organisation and running of a range of voluntary events and work with schools.

54. Assessment practices on NVQ and work-based learning programmes in sport are weak, with insufficient workplace assessment opportunities. The staffing level for these programmes is



insufficient. Current staff are extremely stretched, but work hard to carry out assessments, sometimes in their own time. The course co-ordinator supports trainee assessors well as part of the internal verifier role, but assessment judgements by trainee assessors are not always checked by a qualified assessor during observed assessments. Written feedback is insufficient, although oral feedback is adequate. However, on other courses, assessment and internal verification are fair and valid. Progress reviews are generally satisfactory, although often briefly recorded and target setting is not always precise enough.

55. Formal assessment of adult community education students' readiness for exercise is insufficient. The gathering of initial and ongoing information about medical conditions and injuries is not consistently thorough and not always carried out on an individual basis to maintain confidentiality and ensure sufficiency of information. In some cases, no written records are completed and maintained. Although learning outcomes are identified for lessons, no individual learning goals are agreed.

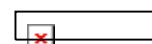
56. The range of courses and progression routes are wide ranging. Coaching qualifications are offered in a very wide variety of sports. These short courses provide very good vocational enrichment for students to broaden their experience, enhance personal development and develop employability skills. Partnerships to widen participation and promote sport are good. The college targets and supports disadvantaged students successfully through its 'aim higher' programme. Working closely with local clubs, sports development and disability units, particularly in the organisation of events, provides extensive vocational enrichment opportunities for students and enables the sharing of good practice and resources, as well as developing further community links. The college works well with schools to promote sport through the health for life programme and the college sports academies. More coaching courses have been arranged through partnerships with professional associations. Many students benefit from guest speakers and a range of study visits such as the overseas residential visit to the Gambia for second-year travel and tourism students.

57. Support for students is good. Initial assessment provides early identification of individual needs and prompt support is offered. Learning support such as note-takers for dyslexic students, signers for students who have impaired hearing and individual support sessions are effective. The college mentor scheme assists underperforming students successfully. Elite athletes, competing at county, national and international level are well supported to continue with their education while absent from college due to training and participation in major sporting events. There is some very good individual tutorial support, although group tutorials are not always effective. Pre-course advice and guidance, and careers advice is satisfactory. Arrangements for pastoral support are good.

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

58. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategies to improve retention and pass rates have been implemented and are showing signs of success. Communications are good. The course review system is satisfactory and makes appropriate use of feedback from students. The self-assessment process is generally satisfactory. Access to the management information system has improved significantly and data are being used to set and monitor targets more effectively. Action to address staff shortages in NVQ programmes is insufficient, although plans are in place to address this. The college has a satisfactory lesson observation scheme, but it does not clearly link into staff training and development. Internal verification is satisfactory. Promotion of equal opportunity is satisfactory, but recruitment, retention and pass rates by gender, ethnicity and disability are not monitored.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on part-time NVQ level 3 beauty therapy and full-time NVQ level 2 hairdressing and beauty therapy courses
- good retention rates on full-time NVQ beauty therapy, part-time aromatherapy and advanced nail techniques courses
- much innovative teaching in hairdressing
- high attainment of practical skills in hairdressing
- effective support for all students.

### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory planning for beauty therapy practical lessons
- inappropriate entry course for most full-time hairdressing students
- insufficient staff and physical resources
- poorly managed work-based learning provision.

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

59. Full-time courses are offered from levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy. There is a range of beauty therapy short courses in aromatherapy, reflexology, body massage, Indian head massage, depilation, manicure and pedicure, cosmetic make-up and artificial nails. A range of attendance patterns and flexible timetabling include full-time, part-time and work-based learning routes. A programme in hairdressing is taught one day a week for school pupils aged 14 to 16. In community venues, there are accredited courses in aromatherapy, reflexology and complementary therapies. Of 240 students, 85 are full time and 150 are adults. Additionally, there are 35 modern apprentices.

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

60. In previous years, retention rates have been low, but in 2003/04, retention rates have increased with the exception of advanced nail techniques. Retention and pass rates on most courses are at, or above, national averages with all students passing the NVQ level 3 body massage certificate, diploma in aromatherapy short courses and full-time NVQ level 2 hairdressing programme. Retention and pass rates on the full-time NVQ level 2 in beauty therapy course are good, although these are declining at both levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy and on the part-time advanced nail techniques and body massage certificates.

61. There is good technical development by all students in practical lessons. This includes the attainment of skills, together with personal and social development, client care and professionalism. Hairdressing students acquire competent practical skills after only six weeks of being on the courses. Attendance is high in most lessons. There is a good standard of students' written work in reflexology and beauty therapy. In reflexology, students produce comprehensive case studies to a high standard.

62. Retention and pass rates are poor and declining on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship programmes. For foundation modern apprentices, only 30% of those starting in 2001 have completed their apprenticeship and for those starting in 2002, only half are still on the programme. For advanced modern apprentices starting in 2001, retention and pass rates are 33%. These declined to 25% in 2002. For all modern apprentices, progress is slow.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing (full time)	2	No. of starts	24	15	25
		% retention	42	71	24
		% pass rate	100	73	100
NVQ beauty therapy (full time)	2	No. of starts	29	30	32
		% retention	93	83	84
		% pass rate	100	100	85
NVQ beauty therapy (full time)	3	No. of starts	15	22	21
		% retention	100	86	90
		% pass rate	100	95	84
Body massage certificate (part time)	3	No. of starts	43	24	43
		% retention	84	75	71
		% pass rate	94	94	100
Diploma in Indian head massage (part time)	3	No. of starts	36	37	81
		% retention	78	70	81
		% pass rate	89	88	82
VTCT diploma in aromatherapy	3	No. of starts	15	25	20
		% retention	80	92	100
		% pass rate	100	96	100

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

***Quality of education and training***

63. There is much innovative teaching in hairdressing with good links between theory and practice. In one hairdressing theory lesson on colour, students engaged in a paired activity to compare a

range of hair colour depths and tones with those on a manufacturer's shade charts. Students then applied this knowledge in a practical session to choose colours for clients. In a NVQ level 1 practical lesson, students completed a range of technical skills including perm winding, colour and foils, reaching a standard above the required level. Most teaching and learning in beauty therapy are satisfactory. There is unsatisfactory planning for beauty therapy practical lessons. In most beauty therapy lessons, the same generic lesson plan is used, with no account taken of individual students' activities, teaching and learning. In some lessons, students are left for up to an hour at the start of the lesson with little to do. Some practical lessons are managed poorly. In beauty therapy, the curtains are closed fully during practical lessons, preventing assessment from taking place. In one lesson, the teacher was unable to correct students' inappropriate work practices because she could not see what was happening.

64. There are insufficient staff and physical resources. Only two full-time members of staff are in post; the rest are fractional or part time. The programme area manager supervises the whole curriculum area as well as all hairdressing courses. A beauty therapy teacher is a course tutor for nineteen different groups. Only two members of staff are fully qualified teachers. There is insufficient room space in beauty therapy with only six beauty beds for 17 students. Some lessons are taught in unsuitable accommodation. There are poor resources for adult and community learners. In one community based aromatherapy lesson, students had to use classroom tables as beds with no access to hand basins for washing and no laundry facilities. In beauty therapy, there are insufficient clients and resources for students to develop wide-ranging practical skills sufficiently. The students rotate and work at the first or second half of the session, reducing the time they have to develop skills.

65. Assessment practices are satisfactory for full-time students. Assessment practice is weak for work-based learners. There are insufficient assessment opportunities, a poor awareness of progress and gaps in students' competence. Progress reviews involving work-based learners and their employers take place infrequently. There is little assessment planning. There are insufficient qualified verifiers to monitor the quality of assessment practice. Little internal verification is carried out on courses running in the evening. Comprehensive discussions take place between students and teachers about what has been achieved since previous targets were set. Clear plans are agreed and discussed about further work and any particular issues which may be a barrier to learning. Students are an integral part of this process; they highly value these meetings and use them as a means to secure achievement.

66. Various progression routes are available across an adequate range of full-time and short courses, and work-based learning. Flexible attendance patterns are used to assist mature students. A good range of short courses in beauty therapy is provided in the evening. All full-time students, regardless of prior attainment, start with NVQ level 1 in hairdressing. For some, this is inappropriate, as they have already gained skills in hairdressing and higher-level entry qualifications. The introduction of the diploma in hairdressing has widened provision to enable employed adults and modern apprentices to achieve technical certificates. Students participate in a range of enrichment activities such as visits to exhibitions and hairdressing competitions.

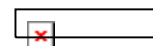
67. With the exception of the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course, support for students is effective in helping them to stay on their course. Induction introduces students to a range of student services. Adult students receive good support for childcare, financial assistance and counselling. Students aged 16 to 18; receive support in relation to financial matters and counselling. There are no students in hairdressing or beauty therapy receiving basic skills support from the central college support service. Students appreciate the support received from their tutors. There is good individual tutorial practice in beauty therapy which includes reviews of work, tracking of individual progress through the NVQ units and target setting.

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

68. Overall, there is unsatisfactory leadership and management. Progress is hampered by the inadequate level of staff resources. There are plans to recruit two additional beauty therapy staff, but there were no suitable applicants and the posts have been re-advertised. There is insufficient support for new and part-time beauty therapy staff. Community learning is managed separately.

There are two self-assessment reports, one for hairdressing and one for beauty therapy. The self-assessment reports do not consider work-based learning sufficiently and failed to identify strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. Work-based learning is poorly managed with ineffective employer involvement, poorly managed assessment and insufficient co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job learning. A positive approach has been taken to expand the range of courses offered within the area. There is good access to the salons for students with restricted mobility.

## Health, social care and public services



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention and pass rates on most adult courses and the certificate in child care and education
- good teaching and learning on adult courses
- strong support for college-based students
- good progression
- wide range of provision responsive to community needs.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on franchised NVQ care provision
- low pass rates on some early years courses
- poor framework achievement in work-based learning
- inadequate accommodation for many lessons.

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

69. Courses ranging from foundation level to level 4 operate from the West Bridgford campus. Most of the 190 full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Early years courses include the foundation award in caring for children, certificate and diploma in child care and education, and national diploma in early years care and education. Care courses include GNVQ intermediate in health and social care, national diploma in care and the diploma in health studies. Public services courses include a first and national diploma, and a diploma in forensic science and criminology. Approximately 200 students follow other college-based courses in counselling, and sign language and deaf awareness. There are a range of franchise partnerships including 1,350 first-aid course enrolments and almost 400 students following NVQ levels 2 and 3 in care. Another franchise is with a local care consortium consisting of local hospitals and residential care homes. The early years programme area provides NVQ in early years care and education, at levels 2 and 3, on which 92 students are enrolled. Work-based learning in care is franchised with 70 modern apprentices.

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

70. Retention and pass rates are high on most adult courses. In the past three years, both counselling and sign language courses have achieved consistently high retention and pass rates. The certificate in child care and education course, in the same period, has retention and pass rates of over 90%. The foundation award in caring for children has very good pass rates. Other early years care and education courses had good retention rates, but low pass rates in 2003. Pass rates on the franchised NVQ in care course are high, but the retention rate is very low. Retention and pass rates on NVQs undertaken through the care consortium are good. Pass rates on most franchised provision and modern apprenticeships are very poor. During the current year, retention rates on most courses have improved. Progression within college courses, to related employment and to HE is good.

71. Most students' work is of an appropriate standard and some is of a high standard. Students demonstrate a good standard of work during lessons. They use their placement and other experiences willingly to make links with the theory being taught. In some lessons, the students work well in small groups and demonstrate assessment and evaluative skills.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Introduction to counselling skills	1	No. of starts	61	16	24
		% retention	95	81	100
		% pass rate	88	100	95
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	177	181	148
		% retention	32	28	30
		% pass rate	96	94	91
Diploma in child care and education	3	No. of starts	27	17	29
		% retention	74	88	82
		% pass rate	100	93	73
NVQ care	3	No. of starts	61	72	93
		% retention	34	46	44
		% pass rate	95	100	87

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

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

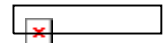
72. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teaching and learning on adult courses are good. The best lessons have clear aims and learning objectives. Teachers use a variety of learning activities to maintain students' interest and to develop their learning. They challenge students to address the complex relationship between theory and practice, and to develop skills and knowledge for their personal and vocational aspirations. In British sign language lessons, no talking is allowed. In one lesson, the teacher directed questions at particular students effectively to check learning from the previous lesson. The teacher explained the learning objectives for the lesson clearly and introduced new language and vocabulary related to travel and holidays. Humour was used well to reinforce learning. The teacher used small group work effectively to enable students to practise with short video inputs, in order to test understanding and develop vocabulary. Students' concentration was intense with good interaction. In lessons for full-time students, learning is slow. Teachers have low expectations of students and fail to check their levels of understanding. The teaching is insufficiently demanding and students lose concentration. In a few lessons, students spend too much time copying notes from the board.

73. Teaching accommodation for many full-time courses is inadequate and inhibits the use of an appropriate range of teaching and learning methods. Rooms are often too small for the size of lesson being taught. They are too cramped to allow small group or practical activities, or the use of multimedia presentations. Staff are generally qualified and experienced to an appropriate level. The range of specialist equipment and learning resources is satisfactory.

### **Leadership and management**

74. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication is good within the programme area. Placements are well organised and monitored. The self-assessment, produced prior to the new management structure, overestimates the quality of achievements, and teaching and learning. The reviews of full-time courses are now being monitored more rigorously, leading to more immediate action and some improvements in critical areas such as retention rates. A replacement co-ordinator for the care consortium has been appointed very recently, and the NVQs provided by the consortium now have retention and pass rates at, or above, the national averages. The management of part-time courses is effective and there is significant growth in recruitment. The college has made a strategic decision to terminate the poorest performing franchise partnerships. The support and review of part-time teachers are effective. There is no appraisal system to ensure performance is effective. Staff training is insufficient.

### **Visual and performing arts**



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

#### **Strengths**

- high retention and pass rates on full-time courses
  
- outstanding standards of students' work

- very good teaching and learning activities
- excellent resources
- particularly wide range of courses
- successful management to effect change.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention and pass rates on some short courses.

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

75. In visual arts and media, there are 396 full-time and 1,400 part-time students, of whom, 332 are aged 16 to 18 and the remainder are adults. A wide range of subjects is offered at levels 1, 2 and 3. Full-time courses include first and national diplomas, AVCE, GNVQ intermediate and GCE A levels, as well as a diploma in foundation art and design. There is a range of adult community lessons in art and design, including painting and drawing and a range of crafts subjects. These are accredited through C&G and a range of open college network (OCN) short course qualifications. Most courses are offered at the colleges Charnwood Centre at the Clifton campus, as well as at a number of schools and other community venues.

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

76. Retention and pass rates are very good on full-time courses. On many courses, retention rates exceed 90% and on some courses, all students pass the main qualification. Recently introduced qualifications such as media production are performing very well. In printing, the college has retained more traditional technology-based courses to meet niche market needs as well as introducing courses using current commercial technology. Declining numbers of students during 2002/03, on many courses, have improved in 2003/04. There is very good progression into HE.

77. Students use sketch books and portfolios to display an excellent range of experimental projects with a wide variety of media, materials and processes. Creative studies students demonstrate a high standard of completed products in fashion, embroidery, soft furnishings and rug making. Design is accomplished and uses a variety of media and construction techniques in graphics and three-dimensional design. Portfolios of work generated by students studying on the foundation diploma and AVCE art and design courses are outstanding. Students attain extremely good skills in lessons. For example, they produce expressive animation sequences and promotional media. Students demonstrate the conceptual and technical application processes to a high standard. Creative and innovative art work is well presented and demonstrates excellent development of research and individual concepts.



78. There is a history of poor retention and pass rates on some evening classes. Some students do not want accreditation and do not undertake assessment. A number of students have taken the qualification previously and cannot be resubmitted. Strategies are in place to review and monitor this provision and retention rates are improving.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	24	15	18
		% retention	95	98	83
		% pass rate	86	64	81
First diploma in printing	2	No. of starts	26	16	*
		% retention	77	81	*
		% pass rate	90	85	*
National diploma in photography	3	No. of starts	23	26	23
		% retention	91	73	91
		% pass rate	100	100	91
Diploma in foundation studies	3	No. of starts	45	52	44
		% retention	96	100	95
		% pass rate	91	98	100
AVCE art and design	3	No. of starts	39	24	29
		% retention	99	65	69
		% pass rate	100	73	100
National diploma in media	3	No. of starts	28	25	*
		% retention	86	64	*
		% pass rate	82	60	*

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

\* fewer than 15 students enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

79. There is much inspirational teaching in visual arts and media. In a photography lesson, the teacher gave a skilful demonstration on spotting; explaining the technique and cost of materials clearly, while demonstrating the process. Key skills are integrated well with the curriculum. For example, in one lesson, students produced spreadsheets to calculate the cost of print room equipment. Challenging assignments and project briefs encourage learning. One student with learning difficulties will be progressing on to a full-time media course next year, having developed great understanding and confidence in level 1 music technology.

80. Rooms for multimedia design are resourced excellently with industry-standard hardware and software. There is a well-resourced print room with traditional industrial machinery. Facilities for photography are good with well-equipped studios and a good range of equipment. Full-time art students benefit from dedicated individual work stations in studios. Well-equipped practical workshop areas such as a plaster room, pottery studio and wood machine shop, enable students to interpret their work in a wide variety of media techniques. There is very good technical support for teaching and learning. The well-stocked learning resource centre provides a good range of relevant text, journals and electronic resources, including Internet access. Teaching staff are well qualified and many are practising artists and designers. This brings a wealth of experience and current knowledge

to enrich the students' experience.

81. Initial assessment identifies students' learning needs satisfactorily and feeds into individual learning plans which identify learning goals clearly. Formal tutorials are scheduled four times a year. Students receive good-quality oral feedback and evaluative written comments on their progress. Teachers check students' progress in lessons effectively by pointing out weaknesses and questioning understanding constructively. Most assignments are clear and comprehensive, and cross reference key skills and other naturally occurring evidence. Group sessions often include presentations of work by individual students. Internal verification is reliable, routinely undertaken and well documented.

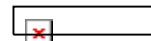
82. The wide range of courses and levels of provision meet the needs of students successfully. A broad range of full-time courses is offered in visual arts and media, catering for fine art, graphics, three-dimensional design, creative crafts, printing, multimedia design and photography. Strong school links in media positively promote the college and attract students from local schools. The college offers these courses in a number of media-based subjects at level 1 for students aged 14 to 16. Strong business links in media promote good partnerships with local employers. Good links with industry provide professional training programmes to keep staff up to date. An extensive part-time programme of art, crafts, design and media courses is offered at the college's main sites and a variety of community venues. An exciting summer school programme is provided in visual arts, crafts, design and media and is well subscribed each year. Day trips and overseas visits are a central part of courses and are linked to assignments. Students also have the opportunity to take part in live events such as a radio week which is transmitted on local radio.

83. A comprehensive induction programme is provided for both full-time and part-time students. Informative student handbooks have been developed for each full-time programme and for all creative studies courses. A range of activities introduces students to the college, the course content, safe working practices and students' entitlements. Students with specific learning needs are well supported in lessons, tutorials and additional learning support sessions. A member of the full-time teaching team has undertaken a higher-level qualification to support dyslexic students and is allocated 10 hours a week to support students. Interpreters are employed to support students with impaired hearing and some teaching staff are trained in deaf awareness and basic signing. Support workers provide positive assistance for students with physical disabilities who are well integrated with main stream provision. Open days and evenings at main college centres and community venues, provide clear advice and guidance sessions for prospective students.

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

84. Leadership and management are good. The visual arts and media department has maintained and improved standards through a difficult period of change. Managers have a clear vision for the future and have carefully analysed threats and opportunities. The self-assessment process is consultative and takes account of students' views and course reviews. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Management information has improved significantly in the last year. Regular meetings, with effective minutes, outline important issues for action and delegate responsibility effectively. Continuing professional development is conducted regularly. However, there is no formal appraisal that monitors outcomes. Observations of teaching are carried out by fellow teachers and managers. Information provided to staff is informative and outlines clearly strengths and weaknesses observed. There is a clear inventory, outlining all equipment and its life expectancy.

### **Humanities**



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

**Strengths**

- high retention and pass rates in GCE A-level psychology
- good teaching for adult learners
- well-developed assessment practices
- effective support for individual students.

**Weaknesses**

- low retention rates in AS-level psychology, sociology and access to HE courses
- insufficient variety in teaching methods for students aged 16 to 18
- unsatisfactory teaching classrooms
- narrow range of subjects.

**Scope of provision**

85. During the past year, the college has reduced the range of courses offered in humanities, in order to achieve more viable lesson sizes. In 2000/01, humanities subjects included GCSE in law, psychology, religious studies, social studies, and AS level and GCE A level in history, geography, law, religious studies, philosophy, government and politics. Current courses include GCSE sociology, and AS-level and GCE A2 sociology, psychology, and law. GCE A2 history is running this year, but is not included in 2004/05. In 2002/03, there were 704 enrolments of students aged 16 to 18 and 340 adult enrolments within humanities subjects. This reduced in 2003/04, to 566 enrolments for students aged 16 to 18 and 299 adult enrolments. All courses are run from the West Bridgford campus. There is a narrow range of courses and progression routes in humanities. The college has reduced the range of courses as part of an efficiency drive.

**Achievement and standards**

86. Overall, pass rates are satisfactory. Over the three-year period to 2003, GCE A-level psychology students achieved pass rates, at or above, national averages. In 2002/03, retention and pass rates at GCE A-level sociology were good. In 2002/03, GCE A-level law and AS-level psychology students

achieved good pass rates, but retention rates were low. Retention and pass rates in AS-level law are good, while in AS-level sociology, they are low, with approximately two-thirds of students remaining on their course and two-thirds of these passing the examination. There are good pass rates on the access to HE course, although the retention rate is poor. In the current academic year, retention rates have improved in all of the main courses, with the exception of AS-level psychology and AS-level sociology.

87. Students within the GCE A-level programme appropriately demonstrate a basic understanding of key concepts and the skills of description and narrative. At AS level and GCE A2 level, and on the access to HE programme, the higher level skills of analysis are properly developed.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCE A-level psychology (one year)	3	No. of starts	74	56	63
		% retention	74	82	92
		% pass rate	78	74	90
GCE A-level law (one year)	3	No. of starts	17	29	*
		% retention	53	55	*
		% pass rate	56	50	*
GCE A-level sociology (one year)	3	No. of starts	23	42	17
		% retention	83	76	82
		% pass rate	26	59	93
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	80	112	104
		% retention	81	76	71
		% pass rate	83	84	91
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	25	20	16
		% retention	76	85	88
		% pass rate	37	47	86
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	19	37	46
		% retention	68	84	67
		% pass rate	92	74	68

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

\* fewer than 15 students enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

88. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Lesson plans in some subjects lack detail and teaching methods do not take account of individual students' needs. This is apparent particularly in the combined teaching of adult learners and students aged 16 to 18, where the need to set different work to meet the varying abilities and needs of students is greatest. The most effective lessons are well structured and teachers generally use an appropriate range of activities and contemporary materials. For example, in an access to HE sociology lesson, the teacher exploited the range of students' experiences fully in a lively discussion to develop their thinking, when considering whether society is characterised by conflict or consensus. In these lessons, students demonstrate confidence in tackling set tasks and clearly enjoy learning. In a number of lessons, teaching is uninspiring, particularly for students aged 16 to 18, where there is less thoughtful planning and poor classroom management.

89. Resources within the humanities area of learning are unsatisfactory. Some teaching accommodation is unsatisfactory and not fit for purpose. Within this accommodation, lessons are disrupted by excessive noise from adjoining rooms and there is a lack of effective ventilation. Other teaching rooms are too small for the lesson sizes, resulting in cramped conditions where activities such as group work are restricted severely. In these rooms, teachers are unable to move around the classroom. Teachers produce learning materials of good quality. They are well qualified and experienced within their specialist subjects, but one-quarter have yet to achieve qualified teacher status. There is adequate access to IT in the learning resource centre. However, access to, and the use of information learning technology (ILT) in classrooms, is unsatisfactory. There are adequate library resources.

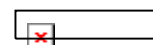
90. Assessment is well planned, with schemes of work usually identifying appropriate assessment points. Assessment practices meet the requirements of the awarding bodies. The objectives of assignment work are clear with standard forms used to set and return work. Students' work is marked usually within a few days. The assessment of students' work is good, with teachers taking care to point out specific ways in which students can improve their performance. Initial assessment of students' abilities is not used effectively as a basis for future assessment or to promote students' development of subject-specific skills. Individual learning plans are not used effectively to monitor general progress. Reports on students' performance are issued to parents twice a year, before a parents' evening. There are good enrichment opportunities for humanities students. For example, both GCE A-level law day and evening lessons have visited the London courts and psychology students have visited the galleries of justice. However, enrichment activities are not planned and not reflected in schemes of work. The teaching and assessment of key skills is not well established. There is no reference to key skills in schemes of work or lesson plans. Workshops for level 3 students are available on Fridays, but students do not attend as they either clash with lessons or are the only commitment on an otherwise free day. Many do not see the relevance of key skills.

91. Advice and support for students are good. The prospectus and subject-specific materials are attractive and presented clearly. Induction arrangements are effective. A taster day is held in June for prospective students. Staff give individual support to students during lessons, extending their understanding through questioning and drawing upon their personal experience. Support is also given freely outside of lessons. Staff know their students very well and students comment on the degree of individual support that they receive from subject teachers favourably. A comprehensive tutorial programme is in place that reflects milestones in the academic year. There are effective arrangements in place for initial diagnostic testing and referral for additional learning support. Students' attendance is erratic in some subjects and current systems for improving attendance are ineffective.

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

92. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are effective communications within the curriculum area for both full-time and part-time staff. Regular meetings are held and minuted for course co-ordinators, programme area managers and personal tutors throughout the year. All staff are informed of immediate issues through a weekly bulletin. Quality assurance systems are adhered to and course reviews identify action required for improvement clearly. There is effective teamwork and a positive attitude towards improvement. Staff are supportive of the new management structure and welcome delegated responsibility. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. However, there is general acceptance among staff that there is the need to develop effective systems for the implementation of key skills and the monitoring of students' progress and attendance.

### **English, languages and communications**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on GCSE and OCN courses
- much good teaching
- effective support for students
- close monitoring of students' progress on OCN courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- declining numbers on advanced programmes in English and languages
- low retention rates on AS-level English language and AS-level English literature courses
- insufficient opportunities for the sharing of resources and good practice in languages
- not enough progression opportunities in languages and English.

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

93. Currently, English, languages and communications account for some 8% of total college enrolments. The decline of advanced programmes and the increasing uptake for OCN language courses has altered the balance between provision for students aged 16 to 18 and adults. In 2003/04, enrolments of students aged 16 to 18 reduced to 751 and adult enrolments rose to 936. In languages, there is no advanced level provision except for one AS-level evening lesson in French. In English language, there is one AS-level and one GCE A-level lesson in the evening. Both AS-level and GCE A-level lessons are offered in English literature. GCSE enrolments have also declined in recent years. Most courses are offered at the West Bridgford campus.

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

94. Pass rates are high in GCSE English, Spanish and French, and were also high in German, up to 2003. Pass rates on OCN language courses have steadily improved and are now high. Retention rates have been poor in AS-level English literature and English language, but retention rates on both

courses have improved during the current year. On all other courses, both retention and pass rates are satisfactory.

95. In English, most students make appropriate progress. They are acquiring the necessary analytical skills and are learning to support their views with textual evidence. Progress in GCSE English is generally sound, but some pupils are hampered by poor grammar and spelling. Progress and learning in modern foreign language lessons are generally good. Students, even at rudimentary stages, are able to manipulate questions on familiar topics to provide accurate answers. Accent and intonation are sometimes far from authentic, especially when teachers, often native speakers, use too much unnecessary English in the classroom. This practice also impedes comprehension. Where teaching is good, students are learning to be more independent and self reliant. For example, in a Spanish lesson, the teacher developed students' deductive skills rather than simply giving the answer.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
OCN languages	1	No. of starts	65	436	590
		% retention	56	67	70
		% pass rate	56	87	90
GCSE English language (one year)	2	No. of starts	119	100	82
		% retention	72	67	73
		% pass rate	64	43	75
GCSE Spanish (one year)	2	No. of starts	34	42	27
		% retention	65	55	67
		% pass rate	64	70	94
AS-level English language (one year)	3	No. of starts	23	20	**
		% retention	65	80	**
		% pass rate	87	88	**
AS-level English literature (one year)	3	No. of starts	*	30	29
		% retention	*	77	62
		% pass rate	*	74	83

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

\* fewer than 15 students enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

96. Most teaching is good. It is often lively and enthusiastic, and leads to a positive response from students who enjoy their learning thoroughly. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Aims and objectives of lessons are made clear at the outset and accompanied by a crisp summary at the end to review students' progress and learning. The best lessons start at a good pace which is then maintained so that no time is wasted and ample learning opportunities are provided. The teacher in a German lesson encouraged students to be enthusiastic through her verve and obvious enthusiasm for the subject. Students not only answered questions in German, but they quite naturally used it to ask questions. Constant use of the foreign language in lessons, builds students' oral skills and confidence. In languages, students work in pairs and small groups, practising speaking and listening to consolidate new learning. In English, they work together well analysing texts for language or

meaning. Rapport between students and their teachers is particularly harmonious and this creates a very positive atmosphere for learning. Most learners work hard and are more than willing to contribute to the lesson.

97. In a minority of modern foreign language lessons, teachers speak too much unnecessary English. Students therefore miss opportunities to become accustomed to the sounds of the foreign language and their comprehension suffers. Students' accents and intonation often remain anglicised. In some English GCSE lessons, teachers have to work very hard to engage disinterested and disaffected students who take every opportunity to ignore what they are supposed to learn and chat amongst themselves. This occurs particularly when the time allowance to complete tasks and activities is too generous and learning materials are not stimulating.

98. Overall, resources are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and experienced. The college employs large numbers of part-time teachers, but there is no dedicated accommodation for languages or English. This means that there are insufficient opportunities for the dissemination of good practice, and the sharing and centralisation of resources. Students also have no specialist study areas. A languages resources room, houses an adequate language laboratory with a small stock of text and reference books.

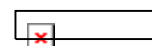
99. Day-to-day recording of students' progress is thorough and informative. This information is often kept within registers or in teachers' mark books. The more formalised record keeping, required for OCN, is monitored carefully by managers who ensure that all staff keep their paper work up to date. Assessment standards meet awarding body requirements and there are complimentary reports from external moderators. Students find oral feedback in lessons very helpful. Written work is marked well and teachers' comments let students see clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. As part of its efficiency measures and in response to other local competition in this area, the college has closed a number of advanced language programmes. While there is a good range of level 1 OCN courses, the choice of subjects and levels is narrow. This restricts the range of progression routes available to students.

100. Support for students is effective in helping them to progress. Staff know their students very well. They provide much valuable individual support and specialist help in lessons. Teachers use profiles of students' skills to identify weaknesses in students' performance. In one small advanced lesson, the work could only be sustained by close collaboration and interaction between the class teacher and the appropriate tutors. In another part-time lesson, the teacher sent work by e-mail to students with authorised absences so that they would not fall behind. In some lessons, students are guided and helped to become more independent and self-reliant. Teachers co-operate with central college support services closely to give students all the support they need.

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

101. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. General and adult education in languages are managed separately. Courses are well managed. There is good co-operation between managers and course co-ordinators. However, not all co-ordinators are full time. This means that time for academic leadership and planning is restricted. Self-assessment reports in this area have been produced in varying formats, but are clear and comprehensive in their identification of strengths and weaknesses. They also review progress made against objectives arising from the previous self assessment usefully and identified weaknesses form part of the next action plan. The central allocation of accommodation is unsatisfactory. Students report frequent mismatches between room and class size which adversely affect their learning.

### **Foundation programmes**



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



**Strengths**

- high retention and pass rates on externally accredited courses
- good practical approaches to learning
- high levels of support
- very good opportunities to acquire external qualifications
- effective action to promote social inclusion.

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate learning resources
- insufficient employer involvement
- few progression opportunities for some students.

**Scope of provision**

102. There are three entry level courses, a return to learning course and an entry to employment (E2E) programme. There are 24 full-time students on entry level courses, 9 on return to learning, and 47 on the E2E programme. Additionally, there are 65 students on entry-level courses that are running in day-care centres and residential homes. Pupils from mainstream and special schools, who attend college for one half-day each week, join suitable entry modules. The E2E programme provides students with opportunities to improve their personal and social skills in addition to developing their basic and vocational skills, and their knowledge. All students have the opportunity to take a range of external qualifications relating to life skills and skills for working life.

**Achievement and standards**

103. There are high retention and pass rates on externally accredited courses. For instance, in 2001/02, 87 % of students completed the employment skills and career development course and 92 % gained the qualification. In 2002/03, the 20 students who began the entry-level vocational skills award completed the course successfully. In the same year, there were 16 students on the entry-level skills for life award and 88% of them completed the course successfully and gained the

qualification. In the current year, retention rates are high. All students who enrolled on courses running in day-care centres and residential homes are still on their course. Some 88% of E2E learners remain in learning and, with the exception of the entry level 2 programme, between 80 % and 90 % of all students have been retained. Students' attendance is satisfactory. During the inspection, the average attendance was 80 %. Students' work is of a satisfactory standard and meets awarding body requirements.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) certificate in personal skills development	1	No. of starts	19	14	10
		% retention	68	93	80
		% pass rate	77	92	100
Entry-level skills for life	1	No. of starts	*	5	16
		% retention	*	100	88
		% pass rate	*	100	88
Entry-level vocational skills award	1	No. of starts	6	7	7
		% retention	67	57	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Employment skills and career development	1	No. of starts	19	15	*
		% retention	84	87	*
		% pass rate	63	92	*

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

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

104. Students have very good opportunities for learning through a range of practical activities. Teachers encourage them to participate in discussions and group activities to develop their confidence and consolidate learning. In one very effective lesson, groups of students were working on life-size drawings of human beings. They wrote particularly appropriate words and phrases such as 'shy', 'confident' and 'friendly'. To increase their self-awareness and acceptance by others, they discussed each personal trait and what it meant to them. In an ICT lesson, the tutor was exceptionally skilled at managing a group of students with learning difficulties and in encouraging them to produce well-designed and attractive greetings cards. Very good provision was made in another lesson to enable a group of students with severe sensory impairments to mix ingredients together and to bake scones. In a minority of lessons, there is poor lesson planning and too many paper-based activities which are not sufficiently varied to take account of the different needs and abilities of students.

105. Staff are appropriately qualified. Many have had several years' experience of working with students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as working with disaffected and disillusioned young people in other contexts, such as social work and school inclusion. Learning resources are inadequate. There are too few ICT resources and too little educational software to support teaching and learning sessions, especially for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are not enough learning resources for students' use that are produced commercially, although one member of staff has made a range of aids that are innovative and of an extremely high standard. There are insufficient resources to develop students' independent living skills. Although attempts have been made to improve the rooms at the West Bridgford campus,

many are inadequate. The kitchen is unhygienic and unattractive. It is laid out unsuitably and there is a lack of specialist kitchen equipment.

106. Students have very good opportunities to gain external qualifications in a wide range of subjects. Many students prepare for internally assessed and externally moderated awards such as art and craft, ICT, the natural environment, food hygiene and film studies. Many students have not obtained any qualifications previously and they are extremely well motivated by those they obtain while in college. Assessment is systematic and fair. Students are given encouraging feedback, informing them on their progress and what improvements are needed.

107. There is extremely effective action to promote social inclusion and to encourage students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with behavioural and social problems, to work together. Staff liaise very well with mainstream and special schools very effectively. Students who are excluded from school or who would benefit from working in a college, rather than a school environment, are encouraged actively to join a foundation programme. Employers are insufficiently involved in the foundation courses. There are not enough opportunities for work tasters and more sustained work experience. Employers are informed insufficiently about the content of students' courses and how work experience contributes to students' ongoing development. Students are not given enough opportunities to sample different courses within college to prepare them for undertaking more specific occupational training. Some students have insufficient progression opportunities. Many E2E students are unable to move immediately to a foundation modern apprenticeship. Some initial action has been taken to design a bridging course to ease the transition. Students on the return to learning course do not have a suitable follow-on programme. There is a wide range of enrichment activities including a three-day residential visit to the Peak District, an evening visit to a pantomime and a visit to London. Students also enjoy participating in a range of sporting events, such as ice skating, orienteering, hill walking and mountain biking.

108. Students are extremely well supported by tutors and learning support workers who are exceptionally committed to their work. They are very well informed about their students and the difficulties they encounter. They use their knowledge very effectively to help students to progress. Students receive high levels of pastoral and learning support. Tutors work hard to enable them to overcome barriers to learning, such as low levels of literacy and numeracy, dependency on drugs, offending behaviour and homelessness. Staff are very active in liaising with a wide range of external organisations, such as youth offending teams, drugs and alcohol dependency agencies, and health care providers, when the need arises. Students praise the high levels of support they receive and they attribute their progress to the help they receive from their tutors.

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

109. Leadership and management are effective. There are frequent staff meetings and regular opportunities for staff to work together to plan teaching programmes, develop resources and to evaluate students' progress. Managers and co-ordinators are active in seeking additional funding. The college has recently received funding for six laptop computers, a printer and a minibus for transporting students to off-campus venues. Social inclusiveness and equality of opportunity are implicit in the work of the section and inequalities are challenged rigorously and eliminated. Internal verification is satisfactory. Regular course reviews and students' feedback help staff to identify weaknesses in foundation programmes. Effective action is taken to resolve any weaknesses. Annual continuous professional development meetings are held to discuss staff training needs and professional development requirements for full-time staff. There is inadequate staff appraisal for part-time members of staff. Inspectors considered that the internal observation grades for teaching and learning were too generous, but agreed with all the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

### **Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages**

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

### ***Strengths***

- much stimulating teaching
- good development of language skills
- strong team of skilled and experienced teachers
- effective strategies for improving retention and pass rates.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient use of IT to support literacy, numeracy and language learning
- some unsatisfactory learning environments
- insufficient external accreditation opportunities below entry level.

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

110. The college offers courses in basic literacy, numeracy, ESOL and key skills at its main sites and at centres in local communities. Basic skills courses cover a range of skills including speaking and listening, and reading and writing from entry level to level 2. Key skills in application of number, IT, communications, working with others, problem solving and improving own learning are offered from levels 1 to 3. At the time of inspection, 1,867 students were enrolled on courses. An additional 57 students from curriculum areas across the college were receiving specialist basic skills support.

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

111. Retention and pass rates on basic skills and ESOL programmes have improved greatly each year since 2000. In the current academic year, retention rates are very good. Of 33 basic skills courses and 35 ESOL courses commencing this year, approximately half have 100% retention and over three-quarters have retention rates higher than 80%. Overall figures show improving trends in retention rates on basic skills programmes from 72% in 2000/01, to 82% in 2002/03. Overall pass rates have also improved, from 52% in 2000/01, to 87% in 2002/03. Pass rates for key skills over the last three years have been poor. In the current year, the pass rate for externally set exams at levels 1 and 2 has averaged 69%. Students' progress is satisfactory.

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

112. There is much stimulating teaching. Detailed schemes of work are cross-referenced to relevant qualifications. Teachers have good knowledge of students' abilities, levels, needs and barriers to

learning. Clear and detailed student profiles are used to plan individual learning. There is good differentiation in lessons. Students' progress is recorded after every lesson, learning is evaluated and results are used to plan the next lesson. In the best lessons, teachers are lively and enthusiastic. They use a range of teaching methods and learning materials. Students develop speaking, listening, reading and writing skills during lessons effectively and are keen to demonstrate these by taking part in discussions. Students improve their personal skills. For example, ESOL students have developed in confidence and use their language skills in day-to-day activities, such as shopping or going to the doctor. One student has been in England for 14 years without learning English and felt confined to the home. She is now able to attend college confidently and enjoys speaking to other students and people in the community. All students are improving study skills and many are preparing for higher level qualifications effectively such as GCSE English or mathematics. Teaching in GCSE mathematics lessons is satisfactory.

113. The standard of key skills teaching varies. In the good lessons, key skills form a central part of students' main subject study. For example, sports students were completing activities to prepare for assessments in communications. Their teacher gave a well-planned and structured session on evaluation and comparison of information, gathered from articles in the media. This was planned to form the basis of a topic for students to discuss. The content was linked closely to sports and cross-referenced to a health and safety unit of the main qualification. In other sessions, students work on projects and assignments on their own and they are not clear how this links with key skills or their area of learning.

114. There is insufficient use of IT to help most literacy, numeracy and language learning. Equipment is available, but not always utilised. There are excellent IT facilities at some centres in the community. These are used for drop-in workshops in literacy and numeracy and for Internet access. There is a very strong team of skilled and highly experienced teachers, of whom, over 90% hold appropriate teaching and occupational qualifications. There is a good programme of staff training and continuous professional development to keep teachers up-to-date with national standards. Core teaching staff are working towards new level 4 standards.

115. Resources are generally adequate, but teachers do not always use a wide variety of learning support materials. Most teachers depend on workbooks, handouts and paper-based materials. Students have access to sufficient dictionaries and where appropriate, these are in other languages or are illustrated. There are some unsatisfactory learning environments. Classrooms on the main campus are cramped and one IT suite is extremely hot and has poor ventilation. In another area used for key skills, lessons are taught in an open-plan area with constant background noise.

116. All full-time students receive an initial assessment in relation to literacy, numeracy and key skills. Individual learning plans are cross-referenced to the national core curriculum. Assessment and verification procedures are satisfactory. Students' work is marked and the results are fed back promptly. Learning is recorded and evaluated by students and teachers after every lesson and results are used to plan the next lesson and update the individual learning plans.

117. Most students are placed on courses at an appropriate level. There are insufficient external accreditation opportunities below entry level; where the skills that students' develop are not being accredited. Students engage in a variety of enrichment activities and external visits.

118. Support and guidance are satisfactory. The results of initial assessment are used to draw-up simple, but adequate individual learning plans. All activities are recorded as aims for each individual student. Learning plans are updated regularly and evaluated, but some do not record where evidence can be cross-referenced to the adult core curriculum. Learning support assistants are deployed satisfactorily to work with students who are identified as having needs. Additional volunteers are used after appropriate screening. In all observed lessons, volunteers or learning support assistants were providing adequate and appropriate support. Support for basic skills needs of referred students is satisfactory. When literacy, numeracy or language support needs are identified, they are fed back to course teachers who liaise with the student support department to arrange support. Students are offered support in lessons or when the majority of students in one group need help, a specialist class is arranged.

## Leadership and management

119. Leadership and management are good. There are effective strategies for improving recruitment, retention and pass rates. The newly appointed programme area manager, key skills co-ordinator and the basic skills team, have worked hard during the last nine months to implement the joint basic and key skills strategy across college provision. Strategies include a shift from long to short intensive courses that are accredited by external tests. Within each curriculum area, there is a person with specific responsibility for planning and co-ordination of key skills. Periods of absence are followed up and students are encouraged to return. There are several initiatives to engage employers and trade unions in the skills for life at work programme for adults. Staff are set targets for recruitment, retention and pass rates for national qualifications. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Staff from each programme were involved in course reviews and students' views were gathered and included in the evidence base.

## Part D: College data

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

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	30	60
2	36	18
3	31	13
4/5	0	1
Other	3	8
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in Spring 2004.

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

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	474	241	3
Land-based provision	0	6	0
Construction	1	53	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	59	125	1
Business administration,	469	2,715	11

management and professional			
Information and communication technology	700	6,949	26
Retailing, customer service and transportation	22	230	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	557	796	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	233	282	2
Health, social care and public services	594	6,268	24
Visual and performing arts and media	493	2,421	10
Humanities	704	340	4
English, languages and communication	863	923	6
Foundation programmes	604	1,264	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,773</b>	<b>22,613</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in Spring 2004

\* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	300	254	230	2,504	2,625	2,768
	Retention rate %	74	76	72	67	71	70
	National average %	76	75	76	73	69	70
	Pass rate %	74	56	58	67	49	71
	National average %	65	69	71	66	68	71
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	724	685	640	1,185	2,692	2,108
	Retention rate %	75	75	71	74	44	53
	National average %	72	70	72	70	68	68
	Pass rate %	63	67	72	70	68	81

	National average %	67	69	71	64	68	72
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	865	1,488	1,225	1,316	1,537	1,200
	Retention rate %	66	66	71	72	57	55
	National average %	67	71	77	69	68	70
	Pass rate %	75	71	70	55	73	75
	National average %	75	77	79	66	69	72
<b>Short Courses at all levels</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,484	1,186	1,153	18,139	14,960	12,423
	Retention rate %	93	87	88	93	93	94
	National average %	90	90	91	91	89	92
	Pass rate %	75	66	67	90	90	89
	National average %	72	75	78	73	76	82

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

*Sources of information:*

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

*2. College rates for 1999/2000 to 2001/02: College ISR.*

**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)	67	33	0	73
Level 2 (intermediate)	62	29	8	48
Level 1 (foundation)	52	44	4	25
Other sessions	61	39	0	36
<b>Totals</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>182</b>



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