



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Chesterfield College

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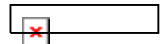
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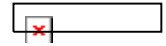
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Basic information about the college

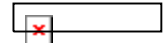


Name of college:	Chesterfield
Type of college:	General further education
Principal:	Ian Murray
Address of college:	Infirmery Road Chesterfield Derbyshire S41 7NG
Telephone number:	01246 500500
Fax number:	01246 500585
Chair of governors:	Frank Smith
Unique reference number:	130683
Name of reporting inspector:	Jan Bennett HMI
Dates of inspection:	19-30 April 2004

Part A: Summary



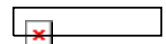
Information about the college



Chesterfield is a large general further education (FE) college serving a total population of over a quarter of a million in Chesterfield and north Derbyshire. It was formed in 1984 as a result of the merger of Chesterfield College of Technology and Chesterfield College of Art and Design. In January 2003 the college absorbed the former North Derbyshire Tertiary College, which was based at Clowne. The college has a budget of £25m and enrolled nearly 27,000 students last year. Courses are offered in all 14 areas of learning but there is little land-based provision and few students on courses in retailing, customer service and transportation. The college has a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in design practice. The main college site is close to Chesterfield town centre and Tapton House, which is a mile from the main campus, houses much of the college's higher education (HE) and access to HE provision. A small number of full-time and part-time courses are offered at Clowne, which is ten miles to the east of Chesterfield. Work has just begun on a new purpose built campus at Clowne, which should be fully operational in September 2005. The college offers courses at 17 community venues around north Derbyshire.

Chesterfield has a population of just over 100,000 and is the second largest town in Derbyshire. Service industries are becoming increasingly important in the area following the decline of the mining industry, which has left pockets of high unemployment. Less than 2% of the population are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are seven schools with sixth-forms within Chesterfield and north Derbyshire and no other FE colleges. In 2003, 53.4% of year 11 school leavers in the Derbyshire Local Education Authority (LEA) obtained five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) passes at grades A* to C which was slightly higher than the national average of 52.9%. The post-16 staying on rate varies across the district with the lowest rates in the east.

How effective is the college?



The college provides good teaching and opportunities for learning for most of its students. Provision is good in 8 of the 11 curriculum areas that were inspected. Provision is outstanding in visual and performing arts and media and is satisfactory in the other two curriculum areas. Provision for work-based learning is satisfactory or better. Pass rates have been good for the last three years and retention rates improved significantly in 2002/03 to around or above the national average.

Key strengths

- clear and effective strategic leadership and management

- high pass rates on many courses

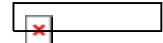
- improving retention rates
- much good teaching and learning in practical lessons
- good specialist resources in most areas
- extensive range of local partnerships effectively used to widen participation
- wide range of courses in most curriculum areas
- good support and guidance for students
- good curriculum management.

What should be improved

- the appropriateness of the teaching strategies in a minority of lessons
- the provision for some aspects of work based learning
- retention and/or pass rates on the small number of low performing courses
- some unsuitable accommodation and access to IT facilities in a few areas.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

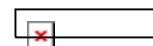


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Pass rates on general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level), advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) chemistry and physics and GCSE science courses are good. Whilst much science teaching is good, the teaching of GCE A-level mathematics is dull. The lack of information and communications technology (ICT) facilities, especially in mathematics, adversely affects learning. There is insufficient subject support for AS-level students early in their course.
Construction	Good. Work-based learning contributory grade: good . Retention and pass rates are good. There is much good teaching and learning and the standard of practical work is high. Learning support is good. The monitoring and review processes are effective but there are some weak assessment practices particularly in work-based learning.
Engineering	Good. Work-based learning contributory grade: satisfactory . There are high pass rates on many courses but the retention rate is low on national diploma courses. There are good retention and pass rates on most advanced modern apprenticeships but completion rates in motor vehicle are poor. There is much good teaching. Student support is very effective and courses are well matched to the needs of learners and employers.
Business and public services	Good. Pass rates are good. Most teaching is satisfactory or better but some teaching fails to interest or challenge the students sufficiently. The assessment of students' work is good and their progress is carefully monitored. There is a wide range of enrichment activities and support for students is good.
Information and communications technology	Good. There are high pass rates on most courses and both retention and pass rates are good in community provision. The quality of teaching is generally good but there is a failure to engage more passive students in some lessons. There is a very good range of courses. The leadership and management of the area are good.
Sports, leisure and travel	Good. Retention and pass rates were good on most courses in 2002/03. There is much good teaching but the learning needs of a small number of students are not being met effectively. Support for students is very good and there are strong links with employers that enable the college to provide valuable work experience. The management of the area is good.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Hairdressing contributory grade: satisfactory . Work-based learning contributory grade: satisfactory . Retention rates are good on beauty therapy courses but the retention rate on national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 hairdressing course is poor. Teaching is good in practical lessons and the students have high level practical skills. Support for students is good. There are inadequate arrangements to monitor students' progress on work-based learning

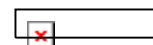
	programmes.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. Childcare contributory grade: good . Retention and pass rates are generally good especially on childcare courses. There is very good teaching on childcare courses for adult students. Students are given detailed and constructive feedback on their work. Learning is sometimes inhibited by uninspiring teaching and/or poor accommodation.
Visual and performing arts and media	Outstanding. Pass rates are excellent and students' work is of an exceptionally high standard. Resources are outstanding. There are very good links with industry that enhance the students' learning experience. The leadership and management of the area are highly effective.
English and humanities	Good. Pass rates are good. There is good teaching in social sciences and on the access to HE course but some lessons allow little opportunity for students to participate actively. Resources are good and effective use is made of assessment to raise standards. There is good support for students.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Retention rates are good on key skills communication and application of number courses at levels 1 and 2 but retention rates are poor on other long courses. Pass rates are good on most courses. Teaching is good and meets the needs of individual students. Leadership and management of the area are strong and the college is working effectively with other organisations to improve literacy and numeracy provision across the district.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. Pass rates are generally good and are significantly above the national average on most courses. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. A range of partnerships is effectively supporting widening participation and there has been considerable growth in student numbers in recent years. There is a high standard of governance. Governors are strongly representative of the college's stakeholders and are appropriately involved in determining the character, mission and strategy of the college. Quality systems are effective overall and the monitoring of action plans is systematic. The teacher observation and improvement programme has not yet fully addressed the weaknesses in teaching that were identified in the self-assessment report. The college's response to recent legislation on race relations and special educational needs and disability is good. The management information system is reliable and effectively informs corporate and curriculum decision-making in most respects. There is strong leadership at curriculum area and course levels and the management of work-based training is improving. The absorption of a failed neighbouring college has been managed effectively. Financial management is strong and the college provides good value for money.

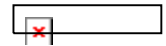
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. There are effective strategies for widening participation. The college has formed partnerships with a wide range of local organisations

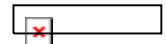
it recruits a large number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The college has made a good response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Progress in implementing the action plan has been good and there are effective procedures for admissions and for ensuring access to facilities and courses. The support for students with disabilities is very good. The response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has been satisfactory. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds in the college is greater than in the local community. The promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities is good. The college is actively promoting the 'Skills for Life' agenda by working closely with local partners to develop literacy, numeracy and language provision in the community.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



The college provides good support for students. Arrangements for recruiting and advising prospective students are effective. Comprehensive information is available about the college and its courses and there are timely open days and taster courses. Students receive an effective induction to the college that includes an individual interview after four weeks during which students can discuss any changes that they wish to make to their course. Additional learning support is good but the needs of students on full-time level 3 courses are not routinely assessed. Support for students with disabilities is very good. The tutorial system is well organised and a comprehensive manual for tutors is available on the college's intranet. Students receive good advice and guidance about progression to employment and HE. Counselling and welfare services are good but there are no drop-in advice services for students at Tapton House. Childcare facilities are good and a free college bus service is provided.

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

- knowledgeable and approachable lecturers

- helpful and reliable support staff

- useful feedback on assignments

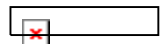
- good specialist resources and facilities

- friendly environment
- work placements
- free bus service.

What they feel could be improved

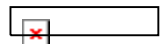
- prices in the refectory
- capacity of car parks
- timetabling of assignments
- number and condition of toilets.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and 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	66	30	4
19+ and WBL*	66	30	4
Learning 16-18	62	34	4
19+ and WBL*	66	33	2

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards

1. Data on students' achievements drawn from the individualised student records (ISR) for 2000/01 and 2001/02 were provided by the LSC. Data provided by the college were used for 2002/03. Inspectors also used additional data held by the college, particularly in the area of work-based learning. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more details about achievement and standards on particular courses.

2. The overall attendance in lessons observed by inspectors was 77.7%, which is close to the national average of 76.4% for all inspections carried out in general FE colleges in 2002/03. Attendance was highest on engineering and science and mathematics courses and it was lowest on literacy and numeracy courses. Students are generally on time for lessons except on health and social care courses at Clowne where too many students arrive late.

3. The standard of students' practical work is high especially on construction, engineering, sport, hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. The quality of the students' work in visual and performing arts and media is outstanding. For example, fashion and clothing students produced very innovative designs for a swimwear company that showed a very good understanding of the industry and graphic design students produced very creative and professionally finished posters and brochures for the local law society. In science, students often demonstrate high-level skills. For example, the most able students can obtain the mass of a metre rule given only a pivot and a standard mass. English and humanities students have good subject knowledge and the access to HE students develop the skills and confidence to present convincing and rational arguments. Literacy and numeracy students are improving their skills and they are also developing more confidence and self esteem.

4. Retention rates on key skills courses are high and improving but the pass rates on key skills courses for both adults and students aged 16 to 18 fell to around the national average in 2002/03.

5. The college has 270 work-based learners, of whom 175 are advanced modern apprentices, 75 are foundation modern apprentices and 20 are on NVQ courses. The main areas of work-based learning are construction, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Pass rates are satisfactory or better. For example, 56% of the trainees who joined an advanced modern apprenticeship

programme in 2000/01 have achieved the full framework.

16 to 18 year olds

6. In 2002/03 there were almost 2,500 students aged 16 to 18 studying full time at the college.

7. Retention rates have improved considerably in the last three years. In 2002/03 they were above the national average on level 1 and 2 courses and around the national average on level 3 courses. Data for this year indicate that retention rates are continuing to improve.

8. Pass rates have been very good for the last three years. In 2002/03, the pass rate on level 1 courses was 86%, which is 15% above the national average; the pass rate on level 2 courses was 84%, which is 13% above the national average; and the pass rate at level 3 was 84%, which is 5% above the national average. Pass rates on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ), GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level courses have been good for the past three years. The pass rate on NVQ courses fell below the national average in 2001/02 but rose by 15%, to above the national average, in 2002/03.

9. The college was part of a national value added scheme from 1999 to 2001 and rejoined last year. The data for 2002/03 shows that AS-level students generally achieved slightly lower grades than predicted on the basis of their performance at GCSE but there was a wide variation between subjects. For example, students on AS-level chemistry and physics courses achieved significantly higher grades than those expected whereas students on AS-level computing and physical education courses achieved lower grades than predicted.

Adult learners

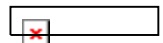
10. In 2002/03 there were around 750 adults studying full time at the college and almost 22,000 adults on part-time courses.

11. Retention rates on courses at level 1 have been above the national average for the last three years. Retention rates on courses at levels 2 and 3 were well below national averages in 2001/02 but improved considerably in 2002/03 and exceeded the national averages by 17% and 19% respectively.

12. Pass rates on courses at level 1 were below the national average in 2000/01 and 2001/02 but improved in 2002/03 to 13% above the national average. Pass rates at level 2 and 3 have also improved over the last three years and were above the national average in 2002/03.

13. On short courses, retention rates and pass rates have been good for the last three years.

Quality of education and training



14. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 207 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 66% of lessons, satisfactory in 30% and less than satisfactory in 4%. This profile of teaching grades is just above the national average. Over 90% of the teaching observed in construction was good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching in engineering, ICT and visual and performing arts. Teaching was generally better on level 3 courses and in practical sessions. The proportion of good or better teaching was lowest on level 1 courses. The quality of teaching for students aged 16 to 18 and for adult students was similar, although adults generally learned better and achieved higher levels of attainment in their lessons.

15. In the most effective lessons, clear learning objectives that take account of students' different

needs and abilities are identified in the lesson plan. The students participate fully and enthusiastically in an appropriate range of activities. The teachers display good classroom and workshop management skills and the work is well prepared and skilfully taught. Teachers make use of their own experience and that of the students, to make topics relevant and to promote understanding. There is a positive approach to helping students overcome any difficulties in their learning and teachers take an active interest in students' progress and general welfare.

16. In the least effective lessons, planning is weak and insufficient attention is given to the individual needs of students. There is a lack of organisation and structure. In these lessons, the teacher frequently talks for long periods of time and the students lose their concentration. There are too few checks on learning and the students are not sufficiently challenged or involved. The range of learning activities is often very limited and the lessons lack pace and vitality.

17. Permanent teaching staff are well qualified and 86% have a teaching qualification. Teaching staff in vocational areas have appropriate and relevant industrial experience. There are satisfactory arrangements in place for the induction of all staff and the college has a well-established staff appraisal and development system for all permanent teaching staff. Hourly paid staff who teach more than three hours a week are included in the lesson observation schedule but are not part of the college's formal appraisal system. In the current academic year, hourly paid staff teach around a fifth of all lessons. The college has Investor in People status.

18. The college sites are well maintained. The college has a clear accommodation strategy with appropriate links to curriculum development. Issues identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed. Most teaching accommodation is satisfactory and in many cases good but there is poor hairdressing accommodation at the Clowne site and some rooms used for care courses at the main site are cramped. Specialist facilities are generally good and the resources in visual and performing arts and media are outstanding. The college has recently gained a second gold award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. Health and Safety procedures are generally good but some poor practice was observed in hairdressing lessons at the Manor site. Access for students with restricted mobility is good and 95% of all buildings are accessible.

19. The three resources centres at the main site are well used and one has been extended to include a cyber café that includes workstations designed for use by those in wheelchairs. There are insufficient ICT facilities in science and mathematics and in health and social care. The library stock is adequate and is particularly good for English and humanities subjects but that relating to sports is insufficient to meet demand. At the Clowne site, the college has taken steps to increase current utilisation of the existing accommodation and it has refurbished some areas. A new purpose-built centre is being constructed at Clowne and is due to open in September 2005.

20. There are good systems in place for the assessment and monitoring of students' progress. The initial assessment of literacy and numeracy is thorough for students on programmes at level 2 and below. At level 3, however, it is inconsistent. A new, effective system for monitoring the progress of full-time students was introduced in September. Within this system, minimum target grades form the basis of individual learning plans and all full-time students have an individual review, with their tutor, at least three times in the year, when they draw up an action plan. Reports are sent out to parents and employers where appropriate and regular parents evenings are held. Progress review boards, at which course teams discuss students' performance, are scheduled at key times and effectively inform the individual review process. Work-based assessment is well planned in hairdressing and beauty therapy but target setting is poor. In construction, there are some weak assessment practices but they are being addressed. The monitoring of students' attendance lacks sufficient rigour and immediacy. Students often have three consecutive absences before any action is taken and there is no systematic analysis of attendance patterns and trends.

21. The quality of the feedback given to students varies. In literacy and numeracy and visual arts, for example, students are given very detailed feedback and guidance, which helps them to improve their performance. In mathematics, however, insufficient feedback is sometimes given and poor spelling is not always corrected in health and social care. Internal verification procedures are very rigorous. Awarding body and examination board requirements are met and the college has an effective system to ensure that any issues from external verifiers' reports are addressed quickly.

22. The college provides an extensive range of courses and programmes that meet the needs of students, the community and industry. Effective links with schools, employers and other external agencies ensure that the college continues to meet the strategic needs of the region. There are good progression routes in almost all curriculum areas. Most vocational areas have good school links programmes that enable pupils to gain an insight into vocational training and to develop useful skills. This is particularly evident in catering, ICT, construction, engineering, hairdressing and beauty therapy. The college also works with disaffected young people who are not in mainstream education and integrates them into college provision. Many students from these programmes progress onto further college courses.

23. There is a good enrichment programme. Most curriculum areas provide short courses that enable students to gain further skills and qualifications to improve their employability. There is a range of sport teams and art, cookery and computer based activities for students. The sports academy provides the opportunity for students to improve their sporting performance whilst undertaking a relevant programme of study. This initiative is successful in attracting disaffected young people back into education.

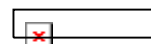
24. The teaching, assessment and management of key skills are satisfactory. The college has a policy of integrating the delivery of key skills into vocational courses. The main responsibility for the implementation of key skills is with curriculum teams and each area has a nominated member of staff who coordinates the key skills provision. In sport, art and design, hairdressing and beauty therapy, key skills are particularly well integrated and students make good progress towards achieving accreditation. In construction, however, there is insufficient integration of key skills into the vocational courses.

25. Guidance and support for students are good. A comprehensive support service is available at the college's main site in a well-designed centre. Services are available for four days a week at the Clowne site but there are no drop-in facilities at Tapton House. Students are well informed about their choice of courses. In many areas prospective students have the opportunity to learn about the college at taster days and there is good liaison with feeder schools. The college holds regular open evenings and responds to requests from schools and individuals for tours and visits. A useful information guide about the college and its courses is available for potential students and their parents.

26. Tutorial support is well organised and good. All those on full-time and substantive part-time courses receive group and individual tutorials. The manual for pastoral tutors is comprehensive and available on-line along with other tutorial materials. Students are well inducted into the college. After four weeks all students have an individual interview with their tutor and they discuss any changes that they would like to make to their course. The college identifies students at risk of not completing their course and provides additional support for these students. The effectiveness of this support is well monitored. Additional learning support is good and it is well managed. Support for students with physical disabilities is particularly good.

27. The college offers a good range of services to support students including nursery facilities at the three main sites, an established counselling service and financial advice. Students appreciate the free bus service provided by the college. Careers education and guidance is good. There is a well-equipped careers library at the main centre and the college has progression agreements with local universities. The college has a child protection policy, which is the responsibility of a designated senior manager.

Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management are good. Pass rates are generally good and are significantly

improved over the last three years to a level very close to the threshold that attracts premium funding from the LSC. Pass rates on key skills courses, however, have fallen over the past three years. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good particularly in construction, visual and performing arts and media, sport, leisure and travel and ICT. Inspectors observed a significant proportion of lessons, however, in which the students were too passive and the more able were not being sufficiently challenged. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was close to the average for comparable colleges. The results of surveys show that the level of student satisfaction is high.

29. The college serves its community well and a high proportion of the local population enrolls at the college. There has been significant growth in student numbers over the last three years. The college responds quickly to the needs of the community, schools and employers. Work with a range of partnerships is effectively supporting widening participation, for both students aged 14 to 19 and adults. Community centres are strategically placed in areas of high social deprivation and recruitment is buoyant. Successful programmes include those for young offenders, adults with mental health problems, and family numeracy courses for parents of primary school children. There is a large link-course programme for students aged 14 to 16, which is much praised by partner schools and has a high post-16 progression rate. Employer engagement is good. The college was awarded a CoVE in design practice in 2003.

30. There is a high standard of governance. Governors and employer liaison committee members are strongly representative of the college's stakeholders and they bring a good range of relevant experience to the college. Governors are appropriately involved in determining the character, mission and strategy of the college. There is a well-planned and documented annual cycle for reviewing the college's strategy, which engages relevant contributors from academic and business support areas. Liaison between governors and college managers is good and there is substantial governor and stakeholder attendance at college events. Governors carry out their supervisory role effectively and are kept well informed through training activities, by contact with the college and through reports by managers. The board is appropriately focused on student performance and there is a strong governor standards committee, which receives good management information that enables the careful monitoring of the improvement strategy. Governors are well-informed about both financial and quality issues and ask challenging questions of the managers.

31. The absorption of the failed North Derbyshire Tertiary College was well led and managed. Chesterfield College's quality and support systems were applied to the newly acquired provision in mid-year and produced significant improvement in the students' performance. Governors and managers have carefully researched the needs of the community both in and around Clowne and they have consulted widely. Building has now begun on a new centre designed to meet the current and future needs of the community.

32. Equality of opportunity and promotion of diversity is embedded in the college culture and its practices. There is an effective equal opportunities board with sub-committees that promote diversity and monitor equality issues for staff and students. In some curriculum areas successful action has been taken to challenge gender stereotyping in student recruitment but there is insufficient focus on diversity and equality issues in other curriculum areas. Student achievements, student satisfaction surveys and disciplinary cases are analysed by gender, ethnicity and disability. The college's response to obligations under legislation on race relations, special educational needs and disability is good. All required policies were published by due dates and operations have been reviewed to match best practice. Substantial staff training has taken place.

33. The self-assessment process is a core element of the college's well-documented quality assurance system. Most staff are involved in the process which is generally improving performance. Quality systems are largely effective and there is a culture of continuous improvement. The substantial volume of outward collaborative provision is also subject to rigorous quality review. Steps are taken to address poor performance in particular subjects through investigation by senior managers and reporting to governors. Monitoring of action plans is systematic. Student views are sought through a range of questionnaires, in-course feedback and student focus groups.

34. The teacher observation and improvement programme, a core component of the quality strategy,

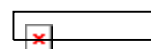
is not yet fully effective. Observations have taken place for many years and the framework and procedures are well documented, within a comprehensive strategy aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning. This includes advanced practitioners, appraisal and an extensive programme of professional development activities. Although the number of unsatisfactory classes observed was low, the overall teaching and learning grades awarded by inspectors were only marginally above the average for comparable colleges and were below the college's self-assessed observation grades. Inspectors found too much uninspiring teaching that sometimes failed to meet the needs of individual students, particularly the most able. These features had been identified in college self-assessment. Staff development is well resourced and provides a good range of opportunities. Sharing of good practice within and between curriculum areas is variable although the advanced practitioners have made a significant impact in many areas. Action on external verifier and similar reports is comprehensive.

35. The management information system is now much improved and is reliable. The college previously identified data deficiencies that led to major re-investment in new management and computer software. The college now has good data, which effectively inform corporate and curriculum decision-making. Planned improvements include the introduction of a central reporting system for student attendance and a managed learning environment.

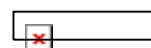
36. The management of the curriculum is good overall and very good in some areas. There is strong leadership at curriculum area and course levels. Management of the access to HE programme is outstanding. The college has recently revised its management and organisation of work-based training after identifying weaknesses in the provision. There is evidence of improvement in the effectiveness of communication with employers and in assessment practices in the workplace. Communication throughout the college is good. There is a monthly newsletter, extensive use of email, whole staff development days and ample opportunities for staff to work with managers.

37. Financial management is good. The college's financial position is monitored closely by managers and governors. The college is currently implementing a new course and cost centre performance system which will inform operational and strategic decisions. The college regularly achieves budget surpluses, which are used to support new building projects, maintenance and equipment investments. The college is aware of constant financial pressures and has a range of contingent responses to secure continuing viability. Risk management systems are good. On the basis of good student achievement, a wide range of provision, the quality of the teaching and learning, the enrichment programme and effective procurement, the college provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- very good and improving pass rates in GCSE sciences and AS-level chemistry and physics

- good pass rates on GCE A-level courses

- much good science teaching

- good subject support and preparation for science-related HE.

Weaknesses

- uninspiring teaching of AS-level and GCE A-level mathematics

- failure to meet the learning needs of all students in some lessons

- unsatisfactory access to ICT in teaching areas

- inadequate subject support for less able AS-level students.

Scope of provision

38. There are over 250 enrolments on AS-level and GCE A-level science courses mainly by students aged 16 to 18. There are several part-time adult students on daytime courses and there is an AS-level biology evening class. There are 150 enrolments on GCSE mathematics and science courses, which are taught as full-time day and part-time evening courses. There are almost 130 students, on the access to HE programme, who are studying subjects in this area of learning. Biological sciences and GCSE equivalent mathematics are the most popular subjects with small numbers of students studying chemistry and physics.

Achievement and standards

39. Pass rates on all GCE A-level mathematics and science courses are good, and have been well above national averages in the last two years. Retention on current courses is excellent. Pass rates on AS-level chemistry and physics courses, including those at the higher grades, have improved and are now very good; students do better than predicted from their GCSE scores. There have been long-term staffing difficulties in biology. Pass rates in AS-level human biology have been particularly poor, and the college has now ceased to offer this course. GCSE science results are very good and those in mathematics are slightly above national averages. Attendance overall is good. It is below average on several level 2 mathematics courses and on those science or biology courses where two classes have been combined as a result of long-term staff absence.

40. The students' work is satisfactory and often good. For example, in GCE A-level physics students

can solve moments problems and make predictions on the optimum position for a load in a wheelbarrow. On AS-level biology and chemistry courses practical skills are good. Chemistry students can derive redox equations for the reactions they carry out. In biology, students enjoy applying their knowledge to, for example, designing posters showing the relationship between lifestyle and health. GCE A-level mathematics students enjoy work on vectors and complete assignments well. In mathematics lessons students work particularly well on practical activities

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	140	159	146
		% retention	75	61	77
		% pass rate	52	47	46
GCSE science	2	No. of starts	35	37	42
		% retention	74	68	74
		% pass rate	42	52	74
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	46	70	69
		% retention	72	69	80
		% pass rate	61	67	67
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	19	27	47
		% retention	32	89	83
		% pass rate	50	71	100
AS-level human biology	3	No. of starts	33	42	45
		% retention	73	74	60
		% pass rate	79	32	48
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	22	53	75
		% retention	32	83	72
		% pass rate	43	50	57
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	11	29	29
		% retention	55	79	79
		% pass rate	50	78	87

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

Quality of education and training

41. All science teaching is satisfactory and much is good or better. Almost all lessons include a range of activities. These include student practical activities, for example, using a potometer to investigate the effect of changed conditions on transpiration in plants, and demonstrations by the teacher. Videos are used to illustrate explanations on the nature of the hydrogen electrode, for example, or to help students to understand why gamma emitters are dangerous. In less successful lessons, teachers give explanations instead of questioning students, or do not make sufficient use of practical work or models to aid explanation. Teaching of AS-level and GCE A-level mathematics is uninspired. There is little variety of activity and no use of ICT. In the best GCSE mathematics lessons students are given problems to solve, or ICT is used to support learning. Students learn about geometric shapes and symmetry by revolving or rotating shapes on the interactive whiteboard. Although teachers have received training in strategies for teaching students with a wide range of

ability, lesson planning is insufficiently developed to meet the range of student needs, especially in mathematics. Many lessons do not have a variety of activities appropriate to the varying abilities of students, and lesson plans do not take into account different learning styles. In large combined biology or science groups, teachers find it difficult to cater adequately for the needs of the more able students.

42. All teachers and technicians are well qualified and experienced. Only half of current teachers are full time and although the department benefits from the presence of experienced part-time and hourly paid staff, there are insufficient opportunities for them to share their expertise. The quality of the teaching has not improved in the areas where subject specialists are not involved in lesson observations. Currently, there are not enough teachers to cover adequately long-term absence in biology. Laboratories, apparatus and book stocks are satisfactory for the courses taught but there is insufficient mathematics equipment and software. Access to ICT in teaching areas is inadequate. The only internet link is in a mathematics classroom and there is no link in any of the laboratories. Graph drawing software is not licensed for classroom use.

43. All courses have regular assessment programmes, and students receive valuable support from the six weekly reviews. Teachers keep detailed student records and work is carefully marked but the quality of feedback to students is variable. At best, there are detailed annotations but some work, especially in mathematics, has little comment. There is not always sufficient guidance on how to improve. Students, especially in biology and mathematics, do not all submit all assignments. Marking of access to HE assignments is thorough but there is insufficient routine marking of other work. Teachers make good use of predicted grades, based on prior achievement, to monitor progress and encourage students.

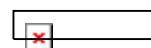
44. The range of GCSE and GCE courses is satisfactory. Enrichment opportunities in science are good. They include an ecology field course, lectures from visiting science professionals, and a Nuffield student bursary scheme, which enables students to spend time in the summer doing a research project in a local company. The college makes good use of local and national schemes to facilitate entry of students from widening participation areas into science and medicine. There are no mathematics enrichment activities.

45. Initial assessment for AS-level courses is inadequate. AS-level students were not given initial assessment tests as part of their induction. In-year retention on these courses is below average. Many students, especially in biology, have very low predicted grades. This was recognised late in the course through the new scheme to monitor students' progress against their predicted grades. These students are now receiving extra tuition. Tutorial support is good, and includes effective careers education and personal support. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality at an individual student level is good. There is no similar check on attendance patterns at group or course level.

Leadership and management

46. Curriculum leadership and management are satisfactory. Team spirit is good despite staffing shortages and recent change of head of department. There have been staffing problems in biology for the last three years. Achievement in biology is lower than in other science subjects. The self-assessment report clearly identified most of the important issues. Although the inadequate initial assessment was not recognised, the department has responded well to the consequent need for additional student support. Staff are aware of the college's equal opportunities policy, and analyse achievement of different groups but little action has been taken to modify provision in the light of this information.

Construction



Contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good or better pass rates

- good and improving retention rates on most courses

- high standard of practical work

- good teaching and learning

- effective student monitoring and review

- effective learning support

- good curriculum area management.

Weaknesses

- lack of work-based assessment in plumbing and carpentry and joinery

- unsatisfactory internal verification and standardisation of assessments.

Scope of provision

47. There is a broad range of craft and technician courses at levels 1 to 3 in bricklaying, plumbing, carpentry and joinery, and wood machining. There are also higher national certificate courses at level 4 in building studies and civil engineering. Modes of attendance include full-time, part-time and some evening courses. A programme for students aged 14 to 16 is also being piloted. Most courses are located on the main college campus with additional provision at the Clowne Campus ten miles away. At the time of inspection there were 796 students enrolled, 70 of whom were work-based learners and 15 of whom were students aged 14 to 16. This is an increase of 236 students from the previous year, which has put pressure on both staffing and physical resources.

Achievement and standards

48. There are good and improving retention rates on most courses. There are good or better pass rates on most courses with the exception of the pre-vocational certificate in carpentry and joinery. Many courses have pass rates that have been above the national averages for the past three years. Pass rates on work-based learning programmes are substantially above LSC national averages. There are high pass rates on key skills tests but few students working at level 2 successfully complete their portfolio. The standard of practical work is high. Students on level 2 courses demonstrate good practical skills in college workshops. In a first year full-time plumbing lesson, all students demonstrated high levels of skill when working with a range of materials including copper, iron and plastic. A number of mature students have completed their course work well ahead of schedule and have been given extra work experience.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	26	16	22
		% retention	73	41	41
		% pass rate	84	100	100
Pre-vocational certificate in carpentry and joinery	1	No. of starts	*	26	28
		% retention	*	62	82
		% pass rate	*	81	65
NVQ bricklaying	2	No. of starts	8	25	17
		% retention	88	44	88
		% pass rate	100	100	100
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	40	27	38
		% retention	73	74	97
		% pass rate	97	100	89
NVQ mechanical engineering services (plumbing)	2	No. of starts	32	28	49
		% retention	22	21	49
		% pass rate	100	100	88
NVQ wood occupations	3	No. of starts	17	23	20
		% retention	94	87	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National certificate building studies	3	No. of starts	17	16	16
		% retention	24	44	81
		% pass rate	100	100	92

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

* no data available

Quality of education and training

49. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are characterised by knowledgeable tutors sharing lesson objectives with the students and discussing achievement strategies. A wide and appropriate range of teaching strategies is used. In one lesson, the objective was for first year

plumbing students to understand the parts of control systems. The students watched a video on basic control systems and then worked in small groups handling types of electrical cable and identifying each type against descriptors on a gapped hand out. They then went on to predicting its prime usage. During class discussion students were able to demonstrate very good learning and attainment. Similar participative learning sessions were used for technician students to understand the nature of stress and strain in a steel beam and also to understand tendering codes of practice. In all lessons, both tutors and students are able to relate theoretical knowledge to real industrial situations. During practical workshop sessions, carefully designed schemes of work and lesson plans allow large groups of students to engage in a variety of interesting and differentiated learning tasks. In most practical workshop classes, there are a number of students who are successfully completing work ahead of the course schedule, which enables them to undertake additional industrial work experience or to engage in more advance learning tasks.

50. Teachers are well qualified and undertake regular updating on teaching and learning issues. There is a close relationship between staff development, performance management and appraisal. Most of the college workshops are well resourced especially the wood machining workshop. Any shortages in construction craft workshop space have been addressed by the acquisition of additional workshops at the Clowne campus.

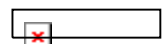
51. Student monitoring and the review and action planning processes are effective. Appropriate advice, guidance and a negotiated individual student action plan are part of the process. All full-time and part-time students have regular individual reviews with a tutor. This process is supported by a very good student tracking system for each course, which includes regular checks on the students' punctuality and attendance. Since the monitoring and review procedures were introduced there has been a marked improvement in both students' attendance and in the retention and pass rates.

52. External verifier reports for craft level courses identify unsatisfactory internal verification procedures and a lack of assessment standardisation. Currently, there are no formal curriculum area verification and standardisation meetings but plans are in place to address the issue. There has been a lack of work-based assessment in plumbing and carpentry and joinery. This has not affected student learning but many assessment opportunities have been missed. Work-based assessors have been appointed but there is still much catching-up to do.

53. There is very effective learning support. The initial student assessment process for number and communication needs is thorough and results in some students attending extra classes for number and/or communications whilst others receive individual help on course. There are many examples of students who were at risk of failing their vocational qualifications but effective learning support is enabling them to complete their courses successfully.

54. Leadership and management are good. There is very effective delegation of responsibility to team leaders and course teams. There are good communications and staff feel that they are able to contribute to strategic decision making through regular meetings. There are effective systems to manage work-based training with clear lines of responsibility. The curriculum area has been proactive in addressing the gender imbalance within the industry. They have introduced several initiatives to attract more female students including a summer challenge for schools that attracted 120 pupils, of whom half were female. There are now more female students enrolled on construction courses. The curriculum area has a sharp focus on quality improvement and has successfully addressed a number of issues that were identified in their last self-assessment report. Effective measures have been put in place to improve retention rates. These include better pre-course guidance and counselling and the effective use of the student review and action planning process. The standard of teaching and learning has also improved significantly following the introduction of regular lesson observations, a mentoring scheme and additional staff development.

Engineering



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**
Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on many courses

- good retention and pass rates on the advanced modern apprenticeship engineering production programme

- much good teaching

- very responsive to the needs of learners and local employers

- very effective student support.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on national diploma programmes

- poor completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks in motor vehicle.

Scope of provision

55. The curriculum area consists of automobile, electrical and mechanical engineering. There are 285 full-time and 850 part-time enrolments distributed nearly equally between the three areas. There is a wide range of full and part-time courses at levels 1 to 4. Craft education and training is through progression awards, NVQs and certificate courses up to level 3. Technician training includes national certificates and diplomas in electrical and automobile engineering, national and higher national certificates in mechanical and electrical engineering and a higher national diploma in electrical engineering. There are around 70 pupils from local schools attending engineering courses at the college.

56. There are approximately 70 work-based learners in engineering. Around 30 are on motor vehicle programmes and about 40 are on general engineering programmes including electrical and fabrication and welding. Approximately 50 of the work-based learners are on an advanced modern apprenticeship programme, 13 are foundation modern apprentices and 7 are taking NVQ courses. All work-based learners are employed and attend college for off-the-job training on day release.

Achievement and standards

57. Retention rates on most courses are at or above national averages with the exception of the national diploma programmes in engineering, which have retention rates that have been below the national average for the last three years. The retention rate for all engineering work-based programmes is satisfactory. There are good retention rates for advanced modern apprentices on the engineering production programme with an average of 84% over the last four years.

58. Pass rates on many courses are outstanding. For example, the performing engineering operations manufacturing course has had pass rates that were 36%, 36%, and 20% above the national averages over the last three years and the level 3 fabrication and welding course has had a pass rate of 100% for the last three years. Advanced modern apprentices in engineering production have a good rate of framework completion. Modern apprentices in motor vehicle, however, have a poor framework completion rate with only one completion out of a possible nineteen.

59. Manufacturing students displayed a high standard of skill. Practical work is of a good standard and students generally work hard in practical lessons, demonstrating high levels of motivation. Most students' NVQ portfolios are well organised and contain a satisfactory range of evidence. Students' key skills portfolios are satisfactory but lack individuality and the use of different media such as digital photographs, video and audiotapes for evidence.

60. Student attendance in the lessons observed averaged 86% overall which is well above the national average for this area of learning.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Motor vehicle progression award City and Guilds 6956/4100	1	No. of starts	40	19	30
		% retention	70	89	77
		% pass rate	67	47	100
Motor vehicle repair and maintenance City and Guilds 3992	1	No. of starts	*	37	48
		% retention	*	81	77
		% pass rate	*	100	95
Electrical installation City and Guilds 2351	2	No. of starts	40	66	65
		% retention	35	35	55
		% pass rate	64	70	89
Performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	56	47	56
		% retention	91	83	89
		% pass rate	100	100	84
National certificates	3	No. of starts	29	31	45
		% retention	52	26	78
		% pass rate	87	75	74
National diplomas	3	No. of starts	39	39	37
		% retention	41	49	54
		% pass rate	63	100	100
ABC fabrication and welding	3	No. of starts	8	18	19
		% retention	88	89	95

		% pass rate	100	100	100
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Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

61. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are generally well planned and managed. In the better lessons, teachers engage and sustain the interest of the students by lively and clear exposition and frequent questioning to check on the students' understanding. They relate the topic to industrial practice and use practical work, demonstrations and ICT to illustrate key points and enhance their teaching. For example, in a lesson on riveting, the teacher outlined the theory of pop-riveting and the students took notes on a gapped hand-out. The teacher then demonstrated the use of the riveting gun and the students attempted to rivet two plates together. The practical activity effectively illustrated and reinforced the theory. The students were interested, keen to learn and attentive and they demonstrated a good level of learning and attainment. In a small number of theory and practical lessons, some students were not stretched or they had to wait too long for equipment or help from the teacher and became passive and lost interest.

62. Engineering is well resourced. It has a wide range of equipment, most of which is of good quality. Classrooms are well equipped with teaching aids. Laboratories and workshops are clean and tidy and generally well equipped with up-to-date appropriate equipment. Staff are appropriately qualified and have received industrial updating and/or in-service training. Staff are highly motivated, interested in the success of students, and proud of their work. Library book stock is adequate for the current curriculum. Resources in the work place are satisfactory and one of the motor vehicle dealerships has the latest diagnostic test equipment and engine tuning rigs.

63. College-based learners are clear on how they will be assessed and the criteria for success. Work is returned quickly and contains helpful comments on how the work may be improved.

64. The assessment of work-based learners is satisfactory and assessments are available on demand. The initial assessment of motor vehicle apprentices is unsatisfactory. Many were recruited to inappropriate frameworks before being initially assessed and they are unable to achieve the level of key skills needed, which means that they are not able to complete the full framework.

65. Programmes meet the requirements of work-based learners and employers. An engineering and construction liaison committee meets twice a year. Employers on the committee advice on curriculum changes, outline their projected priorities for training and give updates on current industrial practices. Prospective students undertake a range of practical activities at summer schools and a taster programme is organised jointly by the engineering and construction sections. These provide valuable information about the courses that are available and help prospective students to find a suitable course that matches their needs and interests.

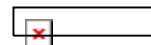
66. There is very effective student support. All prospective full-time students are interviewed and given sufficient guidance and information to enable them to make an informed choice of course. During induction, all students take an initial literacy and numeracy assessment and appropriate learning support is offered. Targets and deadlines are set for the students to achieve and these are monitored every six weeks at a progress review. The female students on motor vehicle courses have formed a support group in engineering, which provides the opportunity for them to raise issues and concerns and to support one another. Work-based learners receive satisfactory levels of support from employers and college staff, particularly additional learning support.

Leadership and management

67. Management in engineering is good. Communications are good and teams meet regularly. Course teams, which include a student representative, meet at least once a term. The minutes are formally recorded by the programme manager and retention and achievement targets are standard

agenda items. There are three progress boards each year where course teams meet to assess their students' progress. All staff contribute to the self-assessment process through a series of one-day meetings. Challenging targets are set, based on past performance and national averages. The self-assessment report is critical and fair but did not refer to the poor completion rate on work-based learning programmes in motor vehicle. The management of work-based learning is satisfactory.

Business and public services



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on most courses

- good assessment and monitoring of students' progress

- wide range of enrichment activities which enhance students' experience

- very effective guidance and support.

Weaknesses

- insufficient challenge for students in many lessons

- underdeveloped provision at level 2.

Scope of provision

68. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time business, administration, public services, management and professional courses. At the time of the inspection, there were around 250 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 390 part-time students. The courses offered include programmes at levels 1 to 3 in administration, office skills and bookkeeping, level 3 programmes in business and level 3 and 4 courses in management and professional studies. Public services courses are offered at levels 2 and 3. Provision for students aged 16 to 18 is mainly delivered at the main site. Courses for adult students are offered at the main site and at Tapton House, for those studying on management and professional programmes.

Achievement and standards

69. Retention rates on most courses have been variable. Of the courses regularly recruiting more than 10 students, only the NVQ course at level 4 in accounting and short courses in text processing have had consistently good retention rates over the last three years. Nevertheless, only the first diploma in public services has had retention rates that have been consistently below national averages. Pass rates are good on most courses. Pass rates have been above national averages for the last three years on NVQ courses at levels 2 to 4 in accounting; on the AS-level and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses in business; and on the national diploma course in public services. No courses that consistently recruited more than ten students have had pass rates that have been below national averages in the last three years. Pass rates on office skill courses are good.

70. Students produce work of a good standard. Portfolios are well arranged and evidence is carefully collated. Students have achieved success in the regional young enterprise challenges, the national pro-share competition and sporting events related to public services diplomas.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Text processing stage 2 short course	2	No. of starts	61	51	29
		% retention	95	96	100
		% pass rate	88	78	72
First diploma in public services	2	No. of starts	30	53	61
		% retention	67	75	75
		% pass rate	85	100	85
NVQ accounting level 2 (one year)	2	No. of starts	30	39	47
		% retention	83	77	70
		% pass rate	92	97	100
AVCE double award/GNVQ advanced business	3	No. of starts	52	44	52
		% retention	54	36	46
		% pass rate	86	73	83
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	19	30	46
		% retention	89	97	80
		% pass rate	100	93	97
National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	39	42	60
		% retention	54	69	48
		% pass rate	95	100	86
NVQ accounting level 3 (one year)	3	No. of starts	52	47	45
		% retention	67	79	82
		% pass rate	69	73	86
GCE A2 business*	3	No. of starts	19	18	26
		% retention	68	83	100
		% pass rate	62	80	96

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

* two-year GCE A-level course in 2001

Quality of education and training

71. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory or better. In a significant minority of lessons, however, teaching fails to challenge the students sufficiently and to engage their interest. In too many sessions theory is developed without sufficient examples drawn from the real world to engender interest or understanding. Where group work is undertaken, the tasks involved are either too straightforward or not sufficiently clear for satisfactory learning outcomes to be achieved. Many individual students are not challenged sufficiently. In one session, after a very good introduction peppered with excellent examples, the students were divided into groups. The tasks given to the groups were not clear and resulted in much idle chatter and little learning. In another session too much time was devoted to administrative issues already well covered in the students' notes. The better sessions are well planned and implemented effectively. The students' experience of the world of work is well used to develop interest and provide a local context for discussion in these sessions.

72. Teachers are well qualified. The majority have a teaching qualification and many have recent industrial or commercial experience. Most classrooms are well-equipped and contain good displays of students' work. In most, the layout of furniture is appropriate for group work. Some classrooms facing south are either uncomfortably hot when the sun is out or there is too much noise from the nearby road if the windows are open. These factors affect student concentration and performance. Staff use good materials that have been developed in house. Textbooks are up to date and relevant. On the public services courses, good use is made of off-site facilities to develop skills and competence in fitness, sport and outdoor education. The college provides transport to all off-site activities that are not close to the main campus.

73. The assessment of students' work and the monitoring of their progress are good. Assignments that are submitted for marking are returned in a timely manner with good supporting comments that allow students to improve their work. Internal verification is highly effective in standardising the quality of assessed work. Internal verifiers have regular meetings to ensure consistency. There are good systems in place to track the progress of students and to monitor individual, group and course performance. This helps to identify issues of concern and alert staff to students who are at risk of leaving the course. Initial assessment is effective in identifying individual literacy and numeracy needs and support is provided when required.

74. There are very good links with schools, employers and public service organisations. Very effective working links are established with a wide range of organisations that have improved the students' experience. Good use is made of educational visits to local industry, commerce and public institutions related to the public services such as the courts, fire services and armed forces centres. Speakers frequently visit the college to share their current experience of the world of work. There is a good choice of additional qualifications and enrichment activities. Students take part in the young enterprise programme and the pro-share game and have been successful locally and regionally. Many students gain qualifications and experience in first aid, in outdoor pursuits and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Administration students gain additional qualifications in customer service and office skills. Key skills have been satisfactorily integrated into most courses.

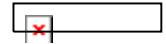
75. Students receive very good support. Staff have excellent working relationships with the students and respond quickly to requests for assistance. They devote additional time to students in order to overcome individual or group problems. Pastoral issues are dealt with sensitively and effectively. Students acknowledge the genuine concern that staff display for their welfare and progress.

Leadership and management

76. Leadership and management are good. Quality assurance systems have led to significant improvement over the last three years. Course reviews accurately identify the strong and weaker aspects of the provision although action plans lack sufficient detail. Most programmes, especially those in administration and professional studies, are well managed but the provision at level 2 is underdeveloped. There are regular meetings of staff to discuss quality, planning and general course and student progress issues. The minutes of meetings are carefully recorded and action points are followed up. There is good support for part-time teachers. Staff appraisal systems are effective in considering staff performance and also in identifying training and development needs. The

promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Some tutorial programmes now include diversity issues and take account of recent legislative responsibilities.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on most courses

- high quality of teaching

- consistently good quality of students' work

- very good range of programmes

- good support and guidance

- very strong leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on the AS-level computing course

- inefficient use of time in some lessons.

Scope of provision

77. The college offers a good range of courses in computing and ICT. Full-time programmes include GNVQ intermediate IT, AVCE ICT, AS-level and GCE A-level computing and AS-level ICT. Part-time programmes are offered in fifteen satellite centres and include beginners' courses based on open college network (OCN) units, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) courses and the

European computer driving licence (ECDL). There are good links with local schools, which allow pupils to enjoy taster courses either at the college or in their own school. The college also provides a foundation degree in ICT at Tapton House and second year AVCE students are able to benefit from the quality of resources required for the degree course. There are around 250 full-time and over 2600 part-time enrolments in this area of learning.

Achievement and standards

78. Retention rates vary from year to year but are satisfactory overall. Retention rates on the short OCN courses have been around the national average for the last three years but the retention rates on both CLAIT and ECDL courses fell to below the national average in 2002/03. The retention rates on the AVCE and the GNVQ intermediate courses rose significantly in 2002/03. The retention rate on AS-level computing rose in 2001/02 but fell below the national average in 2002/03. Pass rates are high and above national averages on many programmes particularly on the GNVQ intermediate and the AVCE course. Pass rates on the ECDL and the short OCN courses have been good for the last three years. Pass rates on AS-level computing have been unsatisfactory for the last two years.

79. The standard of students' work on most full and part-time courses is consistently high. There is good progression between courses and a number of students have joined introductory ICT courses, with little prior experience or achievement, and have progressed through the programme levels to the foundation degree. There is good progression from the AVCE course to HE and into employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
OCN ICT entry level short course	E	No. of starts	775	396	362
		% retention	94	95	95
		% pass rate	86	81	82
Computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) New CLAIT (2003)	1	No. of starts	991	659	329
		% retention	96	94	78
		% pass rate	74	76	55
ECDL short course	2	No. of starts	105	129	86
		% retention	97	88	70
		% pass rate	73	69	92
GNVQ intermediate information technology	2	No. of starts	52	52	57
		% retention	69	65	79
		% pass rate	64	79	80
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	30	41	36
		% retention	63	85	64
		% pass rate	58	49	48
GNVQ advanced and AVCE double award ICT	3	No. of starts	51	49	81
		% retention	67	47	65
		% pass rate	91	96	100
GCE A-level computing*	3	No. of starts	28	3	11
		% retention	39	67	91

		% pass rate	82	100	70
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Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* two-year GCE A-level course in 2001

Quality of education and training

80. The quality of teaching is consistently high. In the best lessons, good planning and delivery are enhanced by excellent personal relationships and commitment to the students, who respond well. Individual lesson plans are good and link to coherent and thoroughly articulated schemes of work. On GNVQ courses, imaginative assignments allow students to develop a range of skills and extend their knowledge.

81. Teachers are very well qualified and many have recent industrial experience. Over half of the staff are female and act as role models and provide support and encouragement for females studying on computing courses. There are good hardware and software resources. Although some of the poorer rooms constrain learning and teaching styles, they are scheduled for refurbishment over the next two years. The computer network is being developed to make resources available across college. Assignments, hand-outs and specimen tests are available on-line. Staff have intranet access to course specifications and links to exam boards and to a range of relevant websites. The student area likewise contains hyperlinks to work material and to on-line resources, which can be reached from home. A good budget for the library ensures that the book stock is relevant and up to date, supported by suitable periodicals and magazines.

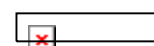
82. External moderation confirms that marking is accurate and consistent, and students report satisfaction at the speed with which marking is returned and the helpfulness of feedback. Close monitoring ensures that students complete work on schedule and support sessions are offered on vocational programmes for those who need help to catch up. Initial assessment helps ensure students are on appropriate courses and identifies any additional learning needs. Any issues are followed up quickly. The new student monitoring system, which is based on targeted minimum grades, is already improving students' performance and helping individuals understand how they can improve. Useful checklists, linked to mark schemes, enable tracking of progress in course work and help individual students to plan their programmes.

83. Support for students is good particularly on full-time vocational courses. There is good additional support for students identified as being 'at risk' of leaving the course early or failing and there is an effective student mentoring system. Students receive sensitive help on personal issues and there is good support for students with disabilities including specially adapted workstations and ultra large monitors for use by visually impaired students.

Leadership and management

84. Leadership and management are good at both departmental and programme levels securing a coherent approach to improving quality and achievement. There are clear policies, shared procedures and thorough and imaginative planning of course delivery. Staff manuals and resources are excellent. There is very strong leadership by example. The self-assessment review is accurate and robust and feeds into a coherent development plan. There is a strong staff development culture with mechanisms to share good practice and resources. Student feedback is systematically collected, analysed and acted upon. There is good teamwork and part-time staff feel they are well supported and part of a coherent team.

Sports, leisure and travel



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on most courses in 2002/03

- much good teaching on advanced level courses

- very good links with employers

- very good support for students

- good and effective management.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on the AS-level physical education and AVCE travel and tourism courses

- failure to meet the individual learning needs of intermediate level students.

Scope of provision

85. There is a good range of provision at levels 2 and 3. There are around 250 full-time and 930 part-time enrolments in sports and 70 full-time and 50 part-time enrolments in travel and tourism. At level 2, students access either an NVQ in sport and recreation or an intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism. At level 3 there is an AVCE in travel and tourism, AS-level and GCE A-level physical education and a sports science national diploma. Additional qualifications such as the sports leader's award and ABTA travel agents certificate (ABTAC) qualifications add value to the core provision. Progression to level 4 is available in travel and tourism. There is a successful soccer academy and a partnership with Chesterfield Football Club.

Achievement and standards

86. Students' performance is satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are improving and most students achieve their personal targets. In 2002/03, retention rates on the NVQ course in sport and recreation and the GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism rose to well above national averages. The retention rate on the AVCE in travel and tourism is also improving but remains below the national average and pass rates on this course are poor. Both retention and pass rates are improving on the

community sports leader awards (CSLA) and the national diploma in sports science. Retention rates on these courses were above national averages in 2002/03 and pass rates have been well above national averages for the past three years. Both retention and pass rates on the AS-level physical education course are poor and there has been poor progression from AS level to GCE A level for the last three years. Appropriate progression to university, further training at college or into associated employment is good. Punctuality is good. Lateness is challenged discretely and persistent offenders are disciplined. Attendance is good in travel lessons and satisfactory in sport. The practical skills of most students are good and some gain international and county honours.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ sport and recreation	2	No. of starts	45	46	44
		% retention	64	78	89
		% pass rate	66	72	92
GNVQ leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	44	24	18
		% retention	75	79	89
		% pass rate	70	95	81
Community sports leader award	2	No. of starts	43	48	37
		% retention	65	63	89
		% pass rate	82	80	91
National diploma in sports science	3	No. of starts	40	39	56
		% retention	53	62	77
		% pass rate	95	83	94
AS-level physical education	3	No. of starts	25	19	34
		% retention	64	84	71
		% pass rate	63	75	63
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	25	28	52
		% retention	28	43	52
		% pass rate	57	67	52

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

Quality of education and training

87. Most teaching is good. Schemes of work are detailed and provide an effective framework for learning. Most lessons are well planned and teachers provide varied and enjoyable lessons. Nearly all teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate well with students. Work is set at an appropriate level and skilled question and answer techniques encourage students to think, analyse and apply new learning to practical tasks. In a minority of lessons the individual learning needs of students are not met, particularly in the level 2 lessons staffed by two teachers. In these lessons there is a lack of focus and students are not always encouraged to demonstrate their skills or apply their learning.

88. Accommodation is good. Classrooms are equipped with whiteboards and overhead projectors and some contain standalone computers with internet access. All teachers have access to IT at their desks, which assists internal communication, and laptop computers are available for staff use. Specialist facilities for sport are good. A small travel office provides second year travel and tourism students with opportunities to provide commercial travel agency services in a protected environment.

Library stock has recently been updated but there are still insufficient books to meet student demand in some subjects. There are also insufficient workstations in resource centres at key times. Teachers are appropriately qualified and have excellent industrial and commercial experience. Staff training needs identified during lesson observations and appraisal are usually met and staff development is well managed.

89. Assessment is well managed and thorough. Students are provided with assignment schedules for the year in advance. Assignment briefs are specific, clear and include assessment criteria that are shared with students. Course handbooks are helpful. Individual minimum target grades were introduced recently and are helping students to monitor their progress and to take remedial action where needed. Internal verification is well managed. All teachers are linked with a verifier who is responsible for confirming the validity of awarded grades. The system works well and the marking regime is understood by students. External verification reports are positive and issues raised by verifiers are addressed promptly.

90. There are good work experience opportunities. All vocational sports students and all advanced level travel students undertake a two-week work experience and complete an associated assignment. Some travel students undertake work experience in Europe.

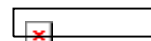
91. Links with industry are good. External speakers visit the college, students regularly visit outside venues and strong links are maintained with industry through a thriving employer liaison group that is chaired by a college governor. These initiatives have raised the profile of the college in the community. Employment opportunities are good and progression to university is satisfactory. Key skills are integrated well into the curriculum and into assignment work, particularly in sports courses.

92. Student support is very good. Learning plans are established at induction and are maintained throughout the year although some recording lacks specificity. Some students are assessed for learning support on entry and although take up is not mandatory it is strongly recommended. Minimum target grades, agreed with students, provide a basis for personal target setting and ongoing review. Persistent, unsatisfactory performance is formally reviewed by teachers at progress board review meetings where arrangements for increased support are agreed, activated and monitored. Students who do not meet their obligations are put on report. Tutors provide good academic and personal support and weekly tutorials are well managed.

Leadership and management

93. Leadership and management are good. Staff meet regularly and there is a positive culture of improvement. Minutes are taken and actions are agreed and monitored although deadlines are sometimes imprecise. Communication is good. Curriculum planning is a shared process. Teachers are listened to and innovation encouraged. Planning is based on the self-assessment report, which is jointly developed. Professional development is encouraged and the lesson observation process is integral to the annual appraisal system. The process is thorough and action plans and training needs are clearly identified. Staff value the process and benefit from development opportunities. Teachers are aware of the college's policies to promote equality, diversity and race equality but do not consistently focus on the promotion of equality and diversity issues in the classroom.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Contributory grade for hairdressing is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good retention rates on beauty therapy courses

- high standard of students' practical skills

- good teaching in practical lessons

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course

- some poor facilities at the Manor and Clowne sites

- inadequate arrangements to monitor students' progress in work-based learning.

Scope of provision

94. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty, sports fitness and holistic therapies. There is also a good community provision including courses in natural home pharmacies and baby massage. There are over 500 students enrolled on courses in this area of learning. Of these 170 are full-time and over 330 are part-time students. There are 22 work-based learners. Around 40 pupils from local secondary schools attend hairdressing courses.

Achievement and standards

95. Retention rates are satisfactory or better on beauty therapy courses but there are low retention rates on some NVQ courses in hairdressing. Retention rates on the NVQ level 2 course in hairdressing have been low for the last three years. In 2002/03, the retention rate was 31% compared to the national average of 46%. The NVQ level 1 course in hairdressing also has low retention rates. On the NVQ level 2 course in beauty therapy and on the national diploma in beauty therapy, retention rates are consistently above the national average. Pass rates are generally satisfactory or better although, in 2002/03, the pass rate on both the NVQ level 2 course in hairdressing and the national diploma in beauty therapy fell to well below national averages.

96. Both hairdressing and beauty therapy students have high levels of practical skill. They often displayed skills of a higher level than expected for their level of study. For example, level 2 beauty therapy students were carrying out body massage on clients in realistic working environments and level 2 hairdressing students were colouring clients' hair. Photographs show that students' work for competitions and shows is very creative and of a high professional standard. National diploma students have produced some very good three-dimensional models of muscles that show a good

understanding of muscle structure and function. Portfolios and the standards of students' written work are satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ hairdressing level 1	1	No. of starts	*	63	45
		% retention	*	71	69
		% pass rate	*	78	81
NVQ hairdressing level 2	2	No. of starts	71	74	88
		% retention	38	34	31
		% pass rate	78	83	59
NVQ beauty therapy level 2	2	No. of starts	35	71	95
		% retention	91	83	88
		% pass rate	97	71	81
Indian head massage diploma 1 year	2	No. of starts	49	36	27
		% retention	80	92	96
		% pass rate	79	52	96
National diploma in beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	16	15	12
		% retention	50	73	83
		% pass rate	88	100	50
NVQ beauty therapy level 3	3	No. of starts	24	38	25
		% retention	75	82	88
		% pass rate	89	74	91

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

97. There is much good teaching especially in practical sessions. In the best lessons, students are set challenging learning goals that effectively develop their vocational skills. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of underlying theory and current industrial skills. For example, in an aromatherapy massage lesson, the teacher demonstrated the use of flare techniques when diagnosing back problems. In the best theory lessons, a good range of learning activities is used. In an effective theory lesson on hair colouring, good use was made of colour products to support the learning, a short video clip was shown and a card game was used to enliven a question and answer session. Teachers reinforce the theory by relating it to practice. In a very good lesson on bleaching and testing hair, students were keen to share their own experiences and the teacher was able to use these to illustrate important points. Staff and students are well motivated and have established good working relationships.

98. All staff have appropriate qualifications and are continuously updating their skills. The hairdressing and beauty salons at the Chesterfield site reflect industrial standards but there are some poor facilities at the Manor and Clowne sites. The salons at Clowne are dated, with poor décor and old, worn-out fixtures. On the Manor site there are issues of poor hygiene. There was no evidence that sterilisation was taking place during a hairdressing practical lesson and the sterilizing fluid that was available looked very old and misused. The trolleys were dirty and old hair clippings from previous sessions were left lying around the edges of the room. Students have good access to

ICT and websites, which help them study from home.

99. Students' individual learning styles are identified in detailed learner profiles, which take into account initial assessment, literacy and numeracy initial assessment results and any individual learning needs. Initial assessment accurately identifies students' literacy and numeracy needs. Procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are in place and are being used effectively. Internal verification is satisfactory although there was no evidence of ongoing internal verification in students' portfolios at the Manor site. Work-based assessment is well planned and structured to meet the demands of the individual learners but the target setting and review process is ineffective.

100. The college has good links with schools offering tasters for pupils aged 14 to 16 that allows them to sample vocational areas before they choose their career route. Programme timetables are flexible and take into account individual students needs e.g. child care needs.

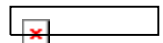
101. All permanent staff have an annual appraisal, which identifies performance, and staff development needs.

102. Support for students is good. At induction, students access a range of taster programmes and they are given the opportunity to review if they are on the right programme after a month. There are many types of support available including scribes, care assistants, specialist equipment and individual learning support. Tutorial is effective and supports the learning and personal needs of the students. The provision of literacy and numeracy learning support is good and around 90 students are benefiting from this.

Leadership and management

103. Leadership and management are good overall. Communications are good and staff are kept well informed. Weekly team meetings are minuted and actions are recorded and monitored. The self-assessment report identifies the strengths and weaknesses accurately. The tutorial programme develops students' understanding of equality and diversity issues and equality of opportunity is well promoted. All salons have appropriate access for wheelchair users and those with restricted mobility. There are a few management issues in work-based learning that have not yet been resolved.

Health and social care



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**
Contributory grade for childcare is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on childcare courses

- good teaching on childcare courses for adult students

- good student support

- detailed and constructive feedback on assessed work.

Weaknesses

- poor accommodation at the main site inhibits learning
- lack of access to IT facilities
- some uninspiring teaching which fails to motivate students.

Scope of provision

104. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time programmes for both students aged 16 to 18 and adult learners. Full-time courses in health and social care include the GNVQ foundation, the AVCE and the first diploma. In childcare, the college offers the national diploma in childhood studies and the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) certificate and diploma in childcare and education. For adult students, there is the access to nursing course, a range of NVQ courses in care at levels 2 and 3 and a large franchised programme of short first aid courses that are run in conjunction with St. John's Ambulance Service. There are also over 420 students with franchise partners taking NVQ courses in residential care, direct care and childcare. The college is developing a number of initiatives with community organisations such as Sure Start, Derbyshire Social Services, and Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Royal Hospital to meet their training needs. In addition the college is working with Sheffield Hallam University to create pathways into HE. Over 100 adults are on courses for teaching assistants and are working towards qualified status. A number will progress onto the new foundation degree for learning assistants starting in the autumn.

Achievement and standards

105. Retention rates on full-time courses are improving except on the AVCE in health and social care where the retention rate fell by 18% in 2002/03 to the national average. Pass rates on the significant full-time programmes have continuously improved over the past three years to around or above national averages. In 2002/03, childcare courses had pass rates that were significantly higher than national averages. For example, in 2002/03, the pass and retention rates on the certificate in childhood studies were 10% above the national average. Pass and retention rates for part-time provision have been high over the last three years. The Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) certificate course in supporting children has had a 100% pass rate for the last three years.

106. In level 3 lessons students exhibit maturity and an understanding of the values underpinning the health and care profession but this is not always the case with students working at levels 1 and 2. Few students demonstrated the capacity for independent study. The quality of student work is satisfactory or good and is well displayed in their rooms and corridors. Many students are performing better than their entry qualifications would suggest.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	22	26	24
		% retention	82	77	83
		% pass rate	72	90	85
First aid at work OCP (franchise)	1	No. of starts	2007	2300	3067
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	93	96	99
NCFE certificate in supporting children's education	2	No. of starts	19	23	16
		% retention	100	96	94
		% pass rate	100	100	100
First diploma in care	2	No. of starts	11	16	35
		% retention	45	81	74
		% pass rate	60	85	81
Certificate in childhood studies	2	No. of starts	30	8	38
		% retention	74	88	87
		% pass rate	80	71	97
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	53	36	46
		% retention	57	44	59
		% pass rate	83	94	93
GNVQ/AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	39	25	43
		% retention	72	76	58
		% pass rate	82	84	84
NVQ early years level 3	3	No. of starts	*	61	93
		% retention	*	84	84
		% pass rate	*	75	72

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

107. Teaching is satisfactory or good. Much of the best teaching is in lessons for adult students on childcare courses. In these lessons teachers make good use of the students' experience and they make effective links between theory and practice. They create a very positive and productive environment for adults returning to study. In lessons for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1 and 2, teachers struggle to manage and motivate the students. Classroom management is poor and teachers put too many tasks into one lesson. In level 3 lessons, higher expectations are placed on the students and they respond to the challenge. They are able to evaluate their own work effectively, carry out independent research and have good note taking skills.

108. Staff have extensive vocational experience and almost all are teacher trained. Some staff are not qualified assessors, however, especially in health and social care where a number of NVQ courses are delivered. There is a wide range of placements for the large numbers of students on the full-time programmes. Students see these placements as an essential part of their learning programme. Placements are well managed and there are dedicated staff who monitor their quality and effectiveness. They also negotiate new placements. There is a good but little used specialist

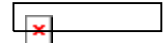
facility at the Clowne campus. At the Chesterfield campus, much of the teaching accommodation used by health and childcare courses is poorly ventilated and too small. Students report that limited access to learning resources is restricting their learning opportunities in college. The provision of computers is limited to a small drop-in facility which is often booked for group use. Students need more independent study facilities than are currently available.

109. Initial assessment of students' additional learning needs is very good. At levels 1 and 2, there is a formal process to identify support needs. On level 3 courses, the process is less formal but remains comprehensive and effective. Almost 30% of full-time students benefit from a wide range of additional support. Students' punctuality and attendance have been identified as a weakness in both health and childcare and a recent attendance procedure has been introduced but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Progress reviews for full-time students are thorough and students are fully aware of their progress in relation to their target grade. They receive good guidance on how to improve and teachers provide detailed written and verbal feedback to assist in the improvement of their work. Overall assessment procedures are well organised and rigorous and are recognised as such by the external verifiers for each programme.

Leadership and management

110. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New managers have recently been appointed in both childcare and in health and social care. A series of new policies and procedures have been introduced in addition to the well-established quality processes that operate across the college. There is a clear focus on quality monitoring. Management of the curriculum and staff development are beginning to improve with the new and more coherent approach adopted by the new managers. Outward collaborative provision is very well managed.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- excellent pass rates

- exceptionally high standard of work

- very good standard of teaching

- exemplary standard of resources

- thorough assessment and monitoring of students work and progress

- very good links with local industry

- wide range of enrichment activities

- broad range of courses

- highly effective leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- there are no significant weaknesses.

Scope of provision

111. The college provides a diverse portfolio of full-time and part-time courses. This includes a first diploma in performing arts, a GNVQ intermediate course in art and design, national diplomas in fine art, graphic design, fashion and clothing, media and drama, GCSE and AS levels and GCE A levels, and a diploma in foundation art and design. There is a good range of part-time evening and weekend provision. Courses covering various aspects of computer-aided design have been developed as part of the CoVE initiative in response to the wider needs of the local community and industry. At the time of inspection there were around 550 full-time and 1,900 part-time students. Some 150 school pupils have attended taster courses at the college as part of a summer school and a further 150 school pupils attend a range of art and design workshops at the Saturday College.

Achievement and standards

112. In 2002/03 the retention rates on most courses were above national averages and the retention rates on the national diploma courses in graphic design and fashion and the AS-level course in fine art were outstanding. Pass rates in most subjects have been well above the national averages for the last three years. The national diploma courses in both media and in fashion and clothing and the first diploma in course in performing arts have had 100% pass rates for the past three years. The pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate art and design course and on the AS-level courses in textiles and art have improved and have been above national averages for the last two years.

113. The quality of the students' work is exceptionally high. Students on the diploma foundation studies course have produced particularly fine examples of three-dimensional drawing and models and students on the national diploma in fashion have produced some very innovative clothing designs for a final major assignment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate art	2	No. of starts	29	24	37

and design		% retention	79	79	92
		% pass rate	78	89	91
Diploma in foundation art and design	3	No. of starts	111	128	113
		% retention	91	90	92
		% pass rate	96	95	98
National diploma in graphic design	3	No. of starts	14	33	30
		% retention	86	82	90
		% pass rate	100	100	96
National diploma in fashion and clothing	3	No. of starts	14	23	25
		% retention	87	96	84
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma in performing arts (acting)	3	No. of starts	30	34	36
		% retention	63	56	61
		% pass rate	95	100	95
OCN creative studies	3	No. of starts	204	236	206
		% retention	87	92	93
		% pass rate	69	76	97

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

Quality of education and training

114. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and use creative strategies to ensure that the students produce the high standard of work demanded. On visual arts courses, there is an emphasis on drawing skills, research and development and the use of a wide range of media. Students are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and very focused on any tasks that they undertake. There are close links with industry and these are used effectively to enhance teaching and learning. For example, students on the diploma in foundation art and design course were set an assignment to design commercial lighting. The assignment had been developed by their teacher in collaboration with a local manufacturer and the students received very useful interim advice on the feasibility of their designs from the company. They presented their final designs to a panel of three company representatives. The students' work was highly praised as bringing originality into a commercial context and three students were awarded cash prizes for their work. Students on the national diploma in fine art are designing sculptural road signs to be sited on the routes entering the Clowne district. The students have researched the local history, industry and culture, which will be reflected in their designs. A local metalwork company has donated materials and will make the successful designs into full size sculptures. By working in conjunction with the Pomegranate Theatre, performing arts students were able to work with professional companies at the Young People's Festival this year. Teachers give excellent individual advice, which is informed by their own specialist knowledge, and they have established a very creative and supportive environment in which the students are able to develop their own individual skills. There is good use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning on all courses.

115. Excellent resources provide opportunities to explore many aspects of visual, performing arts and media in a professional environment. The CoVE initiative has been a significant development and has provided design students with industry standard computer-aided design (CAD) facilities. There has been substantial investment in equipment for lens-based media and for the purchase of CAD cutting equipment used in the fashion industry both of which have had a very positive impact on course delivery. Industry practitioners provide demonstrations and presentations on the use of the equipment, which is part of staff development. All full-time courses have their own well-equipped

and spacious base rooms and excellent displays have been used to give each room a specialist identity. Specialist rooms are available to students on a drop in basis including access to ICT resources, the cyber café and any spare capacity in teaching rooms. The installation of a new sprung floor in a large central studio area has given performing arts students an ideal area for practice. There is good access for students with restricted mobility.

116. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress is very good. Detailed written feedback is given on assignments and individual action plans are effectively used to monitor and improve students' progress. Students appreciate the involvement and feedback from local employers in the assessment of commercially relevant assignments.

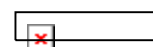
117. An effective industrial liaison committee helps to inform staff about professional practice and strengthens links with the local community. Students participate in a wide range of study visits to London, Glasgow, New York, Barcelona, Paris and Prague. They also visit local companies. Many students gain additional qualifications that complement their main course, for example, in computer design. Key skills are integrated into the vocational curriculum. For example, students on the national diploma in fashion had to devise and cost money-saving strategies for the commercial manufacture of a garment that they had designed. There are good progression routes.

118. Support for students is good. There are regular tutorials and staff have daily contact with students. Students with additional learning needs are identified during induction and support is quickly put in place. Around a fifth of students are receiving support. Students who are under-performing are identified at the progress review boards and they are given additional help and are monitored very closely. The high number of specialist teachers ensures all students have access to relevant careers advice.

Leadership and management

119. Leadership and management are outstanding. There is strong leadership, very good course management and excellent teamwork. Responsibilities are clearly defined and communication is good. Teams work together to produce an accurate and detailed self- assessment report and action plan. Equal opportunities are effectively promoted and care is taken to ensure that assignments are free from stereotyping and offer all students an equal opportunity to achieve. Diversity issues are discussed in tutorials and in lessons when appropriate. For example, equal opportunities were discussed in relation to job advertisements in a media lesson. The CoVE is well managed.

English and humanities



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

Strengths

- good or better pass rates on most courses

- good teaching in social sciences and on the access to HE course

- good use of standardised assessments in English

- good range of provision which facilitates excellent progression
- good pastoral support for full and part-time students
- outstanding management of the access to HE programme.

Weaknesses

- some dull and uninspiring lessons
- inadequate initial assessment and subject-specific guidance for level 3 students.

Scope of provision

120. The humanities provision consists mainly of AS-level and GCE A-level subjects for full-time students aged 16 to 18. Geography, history, government and politics, psychology, sociology and law are offered. Psychology attracts the largest number of students, around 180, and government and politics attracts the least, around 20. GCSE psychology and sociology courses are also available. AS-level and GCE A-level psychology and AS-level law are offered in the evening. The access to HE programme includes four curriculum strands: social studies, English and teaching studies, health and nursing studies and science, technology and environmental studies. There are around 80 full-time adult students and 160 part-time adult students on access to HE courses. The English provision, which caters for around 400 full-time students, consists of AS-level and GCE A-level courses in English language, English literature, combined language and literature and communications. There are around 200 students studying GCSE English.

Achievement and standards

121. Retention rates have improved on most courses and were around or above national averages in 2002/03. Pass rates are generally above national averages and the proportion of high-grade passes is above the national average on most courses. On GCSE English, in 2002/03, the proportion of students obtaining grades A* to C was 17% above the national average. Most GCE A-level and access to HE students go into HE on completion of their courses.

122. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject. They organise their own work and make presentations to peers confidently and competently. Access to HE students show increasing confidence in their newly acquired skills, and participate fully and cogently in discussions. They are able to structure their learning to generate evidence across subject areas. For example, a student in a level 1 creative writing class was able to introduce hyperlinks into a text she had produced to point the reader to background information. This was used as evidence for her level 3 ICT course.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	102	121	147
		% retention	83	78	76
		% pass rate	66	55	63
Access to HE full time	3	No. of starts	84	137	103
		% retention	60	81	75
		% pass rate	98	59	84
AS-level English language	3	No. of starts	61	92	110
		% retention	52	77	82
		% pass rate	97	92	93
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	82	168	216
		% retention	60	77	74
		% pass rate	80	93	76
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	47	89	114
		% retention	70	75	75
		% pass rate	91	91	87
GCE A2 psychology*	3	No. of starts	70	59	97
		% retention	71	81	91
		% pass rate	90	98	91
GCE A2 English language*	3	No. of starts	38	36	67
		% retention	95	78	82
		% pass rate	100	96	95
GCE A2 communication studies*	3	No. of starts	11	21	28
		% retention	91	95	100
		% pass rate	80	100	96

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

* two-year GCE A-level course in 2001

Quality of education and training

123. Teaching is good and schemes of work are well constructed. There is particularly good teaching in social sciences lessons where students work on a variety of activities designed to cater for people with different learning styles. There are extension exercises for more able students. Teaching is at a brisk pace, and relationships within the classes are excellent. Teaching incorporates a sharp focus on examination preparation. In all areas, the better lessons are characterised by lively interaction and students taking responsibility. These lessons are well managed, facilitating active participation without allowing any one group or individual to dominate.

124. There is dull and uninspiring teaching in some lessons where the students are largely passive, and work on repetitive exercises such as copying from text books. Levels of interaction are low, and students find it hard to concentrate. The pace of these lessons is too slow and there is little variety in teaching methods. Although classrooms are generally well equipped, the teachers do not take advantage of this. There is little use of ICT. More able students are not encouraged to think for themselves, and weaker students find it difficult to absorb the information. There is poor punctuality in some lessons, not just at the start of the lesson, but also when they resume after breaks.

125. Most classrooms are well equipped with an overhead projector, television, video, computer, whiteboard, resource files and a good range of text books. Some interactive whiteboards have been introduced recently. Few humanities and English resources are available on the college intranet but history and politics students use the subject intranet to access research data for their coursework examination. There is an excellent video resource bank for humanities subjects in the learning resources centre. Teachers are well qualified. Classrooms are light and pleasant, and there are colourful displays of students' work on the walls. A small number of classrooms are stuffy, and are badly affected by extraneous noise from traffic and from people passing in corridors.

126. Students' work is thoroughly and constructively marked. Staff make supportive comments and suggestions and students understand what they need to do to achieve their goals. Assignment sheets are comprehensive, though some lack assessment objectives. The access to HE provision has clear assessment documentation with evidence of varied, rigorous assessment activities across the programme. Internal moderation procedures for this programme are well documented and rigorous. In English there is good use of standardised assessments. These assignments are set for each module, and all students complete them at the appropriate time. This ensures that all students are working to the same standards, and allows for counter-marking to ensure fairness. There is no initial assessment for AS-level students. Their ability to cope with courses is judged on GCSE results alone. As a result, some basic problems are recognised late, if at all. Students may self-refer or be referred by teachers for additional learning support, if the need is recognised.

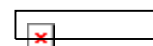
127. There is a good range of programmes, which facilitates progression. The English provision includes combined as well as separate literature and language courses. A full range is offered at all levels in English and at levels 2 and 3 in humanities. Provision is offered during the day and in the evenings, and students can choose between part-time and full-time study. There is a full range of access to HE provision from core modules at entry level to the level 3 programme. The course allows flexibility and good progression opportunities.

128. There is good pastoral support for both full-time and part-time students. There is a comprehensive tutorial system. All full-time students have a personal tutor. Part-time students have a named advisor. Staff refer students to student services where necessary.

Leadership and management

129. Operational leadership and management are good. Quality systems have enabled staff to produce an honest and accurate self-assessment report. There is a system of internal lesson observation but the grades awarded did not accord with inspection findings and were too generous. There are effective strategies for sharing good practice in English. Staff collect resources in common files, so that they are available to everybody. Awareness of equality of opportunity is intrinsic to the whole programme area. The management of the access to HE programme is outstanding. The programme is diverse and complex, effectively meeting a wide range of students' needs, yet it is closely monitored and the co-ordination is excellent.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on key skills courses in communication and application of number

- good pass rates on most programmes
- good teaching that meets the individual needs of students
- effective work with other organisations to extend the range of provision
- strong leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor retention on long courses
- some unsuitable accommodation for learning support
- lack of sufficient detail on some individual learning plans.

Scope of provision

130. The college offers discrete literacy and numeracy courses for adults and for students on other college courses and literacy and numeracy learning support for students on vocational programmes. Discrete literacy and numeracy courses are available on the main site and in the community. The discrete provision consists of 20 part-time literacy and numeracy courses from entry level to level 2 with most students studying at level 1. Around 120 students have been enrolled on long literacy and 150 on long numeracy courses in 2003/04. Most courses take place during the day, with two running in the evening and three at weekends. In addition, some 544 students are receiving literacy and/or numeracy support in 2003/04. This is through in-class support, small groups or one-to-one support. Community provision takes place in a range of venues including local schools and a mental health secure unit. A substantial summer programme attracted nearly 70 enrolments in 2003.

Achievement and standards

131. Retention rates on key skills level 1 courses in both communication and application of number have improved and were well above national averages in 2002/03. Pass rates on these courses are also around or above national averages. The pass rates on long courses in literacy and numeracy are good but the retention rates are low. Students' work is satisfactory or better in both literacy and numeracy. The students develop increasing confidence and self-esteem and they also learn how to work in a collaborative way. Students on vocational courses, receiving literacy and numeracy support, improve their organisational and communication skills and produce good quality work for their vocational portfolios.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Key skills level 1 application of number (one year)	1	No. of starts	637	550	421
		% retention	72	84	93
		% pass rate	42	50	38
Key skills level 1 communication (one year)	1	No. of starts	601	534	435
		% retention	77	83	93
		% pass rate	45	42	46
OCN mathematics and English (one year)	1	No. of starts	41	61	99
		% retention	63	59	54
		% pass rate	81	94	92
RSA English language (one year)	1	No. of starts	89	95	133
		% retention	82	84	74
		% pass rate	84	76	78

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

Quality of education and training

132. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons move at a lively pace and include a good range of activities. Teachers provide additional, challenging tasks for more able students. Teachers manage the groups well and effective co-tutoring in some lessons ensures that all students receive individual attention and remain focused on their work. Teachers constantly check students' understanding, give good verbal feedback and use effective techniques and attractive materials to sustain concentration and interest. For example, in a numeracy lesson, students were highly absorbed in practising mental arithmetic during a number quest competition using a board, dice and scoring sheets. In an effective literacy lesson, students remained focused on an activity using suffixes and prefixes and enjoyed using word chutes and multiple-choice worksheets to extend their vocabulary. Teachers have high expectations of students' achievement and learning. In the best lessons, learning activities are of direct relevance to students' lives. Teachers set learning contexts with meaningful links to students' vocational courses and interests. Students work at their own pace and are actively encouraged to reflect on their learning and share ideas with their peers.

133. In the weakest lessons, activities are either rushed or too slow. Some teachers do not give the students sufficient opportunity to work out answers for themselves. They provide the solution too quickly or they answer their own questions before the students have had any time to think. In the weaker lessons, students spend too much time completing worksheets.

134. Staff are suitably qualified, have relevant teaching experience and appropriate knowledge of their subject. Students have access to a variety of materials. These include well-presented hand-outs, a good supply of dictionaries, appropriate reading books, visual and tactile aids and well-serviced computers and laptops with interactive software. Accommodation for the discrete provision is satisfactory. Learning support sessions, however, sometimes take place in cramped spaces where learning is disturbed by high levels of noise and other students accessing resources. Students with low levels of concentration are distracted when learning takes place in an open-plan area that lacks privacy.

135. The assessment of students' individual needs for literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. The computer-based initial assessment is effective in placing students at the correct level of learning but the subsequent in-depth diagnostic assessment needs further development. The monitoring and review of progress is satisfactory. Teachers give constant verbal feedback in lessons. The marking

of students' work is satisfactory and staff are supporting their students effectively in the building of portfolios ensuring that work meets required standards. They encourage students to reflect on their learning and progress both in lessons and at the timely progress review meetings. Some teachers tend to over-focus on the development of students' personal skills at the expense of assessing the development of literacy and numeracy skills against short-term goals. There are detailed records of daily work in individual learning plans and these are kept in students' files but it is not always clear which objectives have been achieved and where further work is needed. The internal verification of students' work is satisfactory.

136. The college works very effectively with other providers to develop local provision. Effective collaborative working ensures that any gaps that are identified in the local provision are filled. For example, other local providers offer an extensive family literacy programme and the college has now successfully introduced family numeracy in partnership with 17 local schools. Innovative programmes have been introduced in a mental health secure unit and the college has helped a local organisation to develop programmes in rural areas for teenage parents with literacy and numeracy needs. The college also shares its knowledge of the Skills for Life initiatives with partners and offers training for literacy and numeracy tutors.

137. The support for students with identified literacy and numeracy learning support needs is good. Literacy and numeracy support is integrated into vocational courses and the area provides an effective in-class, small group and one-to-one support in response to identified needs. Link tutors ensure communication between the area and college departments. Discrete literacy and numeracy students receive effective support, advice and guidance.

Leadership and management

138. Leadership and management of the area are good. The team has grown very quickly and strong leadership and effective management have ensured that the staff work well together and morale is high. Communications are good. Regular staff meetings and training opportunities have ensured that there is widespread sharing of good practice and teaching materials. Continuous professional development is well managed and resourced. Both full-time and part-time staff are well supported in upgrading their skills through extensive induction, timely observations, peer mentoring, and in-house training. Around 30 staff are due to complete a new level 3 or 4 teaching qualification by the end of the academic year. The managers are working very effectively together to develop and co-ordinate discrete literacy and numeracy, key skills and learning support. Course reviews are rigorous and effective use is made of management information data to monitor quality. All staff were fully involved in the self-assessment process and most strengths and weaknesses were identified in the self-assessment report. Performance data is analysed by gender and ethnicity and teaching materials respect diversity and are presented in formats that are accessible to all.

Part D: College data

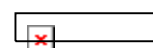
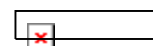


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	32	67
2	41	16
3	25	9



Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	620	469	418	611	900	938
	Retention rate %	64	74	70	63	83	92
	National average %	76	75	76	73	69	70
	Pass rate %	86	82	83	76	59	56
	National average %	65	69	71	66	68	71
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,228	1,464	1,473	1,882	1,761	1,798
	Retention rate %	61	64	68	62	63	60
	National average %	72	70	72	70	68	68
	Pass rate %	79	79	77	66	70	62
	National average %	67	69	71	64	68	72
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,236	2,757	2,321	1,560	1,648	1,619
	Retention rate %	56	67	68	61	56	55
	National average %	67	71	77	69	68	70
	Pass rate %	84	85	81	65	73	74
	National average %	75	77	79	66	69	72
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	11	0	1	275	93	33
	Retention rate %	45	*	100	48	71	76
	National average %	66	73	71	67	67	67
	Pass rate %	100	*	100	83	47	76
	National average %	65	54	53	58	55	56

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

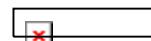
Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 2000 to 2002: College ISR

** numbers too low to provide a valid calculation.*

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



Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	71	26	3	111
Level 2 (intermediate)	60	35	5	63
Level 1 (foundation)	52	39	9	23
Other sessions	80	20	0	10
Totals	66	30	4	207

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