



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

York College

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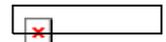
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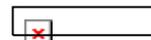
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Basic information about the college

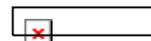


Name of college:	York College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Mike Galloway
Address of college:	Tadcaster Road York North Yorkshire YO24 1UA
Telephone number:	01904 770200
Fax number:	01904 770499
Chair of governors:	Martin Drury
Unique reference number:	130594
Name of reporting inspector:	Patrick Geraghty HMI
Dates of inspection:	19-29 April 2004

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

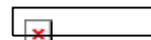


York College was created in April 1999 from the successful merger of York College of Further and Higher Education and York Sixth Form College. It is situated on two campuses, 400 yards apart and approximately two and a half miles from the historic centre of York. Plans are advanced for the building of a new college on the Sim Balk Lane site. This £50 million investment is a key development, both for the city and the sub-region.

The college has approximately 12,000 students of which 70% are adults. There are 3,200 full-time students of which 89% are 16 to 19 year olds. Pass rates at level 3 for the 16 to 19 cohort are significantly above national averages over the three-year period, with an established pattern of year-on-year improvement. Some 3.3% of students are from ethnic minorities which is above the City of York figure of 2.2%. The college employs around 539 full-time equivalent staff. It offers a wide range of courses and levels across the whole spectrum of programmes and is recognised as a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in the rail industry and stonemasonry (joint CoVE partner). The college has extensive local partnerships and has established a reputation within the city and sub-region as a high quality and innovative educational provider. It has a range of programmes and partnerships that seek to address the skills needs of the local population of the sub-region including those who lack basic skills and may be limited in their employment opportunities.

The college's mission is to be 'the leading provider of high quality education and training in the City of York and the surrounding area.achieved by working in partnerships with individuals and organisations to raise expectations, fulfil potential and ensure a confident, economically successful and socially inclusive community'.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged teaching, learning and attainment to be good in six areas and satisfactory in four. The quality of work-based learning was satisfactory in engineering. The college's main strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- support for students

- good industrial links which enhance learners' experiences

- developing community partnerships

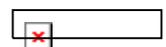
- very high level 3 pass and retention rates
- broad range of enrichment opportunities
- well-motivated students with high progression rates to higher education (HE) and employment.

What should be improved

- management and implementation of key skills provision
- quality of teaching and learning in some curriculum areas
- some aspects of cross-college quality assurance
- pass and retention rates on level 2 provision
- management at course level
- availability of information and learning technology (ILT) for staff and students.

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



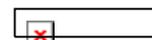
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall

range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4), Very Poor (5).

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Good. Retention and pass rates in advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses are high, as are value added scores in AS-level and GCE A-level mathematics. Teaching is effective in the majority of GCE A-level provision, although some lessons do not address the needs of all students. There is very good progression to HE. There are low retention and pass rates on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses and the management of GCSE mathematics for full-time students is unsatisfactory.
Engineering	Satisfactory. Most courses have high pass rates and retention rates on level 3 programmes are high. However, there are unsatisfactory retention rates at levels 1 and 2, and pass rates in key skills are low. Practical skills are developed across the range of provision effectively, although there is some unsatisfactory delivery of theory lessons. Work-based learning provision is satisfactory. There is good support for students.
Business, administration, management and professional	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on many courses and high retention rates on the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) leisure and recreation course. There are low retention and pass rates on AVCE business and low retention rates on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate leisure and tourism, and AVCE travel and tourism. The area offers a good range of academic and vocational courses with some effective work placement schemes. There is good support for students.
Information and communications technology	Good. There are high and some very high pass rates across courses, although they are unsatisfactory on the national diploma in computing course. There is much good teaching of individual skills and effective use of ILT to enhance learning. In some lessons, there is a lack of challenge for the more able students.
Hospitality, leisure and travel	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates, but low retention rates on many level 2 and 3 courses. The completion of key skills awards is poor. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory or good, but there is insufficient development and consolidation of learning in many practical lessons. There is a good range of additional qualifications and activities for full-time students, effective learning support and good industry links. Courses are well managed, but performance is not reviewed rigorously.
Health and social care	Good. There are high retention and pass rates, and effective use of teachers' occupational experience to enhance learning. In some lessons, there is insufficient focus on individual learning needs and pass rates in key skills are low. The area has developed very good external partnerships and support for students is good. Leadership and management within the area are highly effective.
Visual and performing arts	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on most courses and good standard of work on level 3 three-dimensional design, fashion and part-time craft subjects. Teaching is good in level 3 practical subjects; however, there is much unsatisfactory teaching within the area. Effective partnerships and external links enhance the curriculum. Quality assurance procedures are ineffective.
Humanities	Good. There are consistently high pass and retention rates on most courses. Many GCE A-level students achieve high grades, although poor attendance in some lessons affects the continuity of learning.

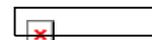
	Much good teaching stimulates learning and motivates students to develop good analytical and oral skills. There is inconsistent rigour in the implementation of quality assurance across the curriculum.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. Pass and retention rates on full-time level 3 programmes are high and many GCE A-level students achieve high grades. There are low retention rates on the GCSE English programme. In modern foreign languages, there is a strong development of higher-order language skills and the use of ILT is highly effective. There is a narrow range of provision below level 3 in English.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. In basic skills, there is much good and some excellent teaching in both the college and community provision. Students demonstrate confidence and independence in their learning and there is effective support for them. The area has developed effective partnerships and collaboration to widen participation. The quality of key skills teaching and learning is inconsistent and achievements are poor.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are good. Governors and senior managers have set a clear strategic direction. Governors are well informed about the performance of the college. Curriculum management is mostly good. Retention and pass rates at level 3 for students aged 16 to 18 have been above the national average consistently. The college has improved some of the pass rates on level 1 and 2 courses for students aged 16 to 18, but has not made significant progress in addressing the retention rates of students on level 1 and 2 courses. The college promotes equality and diversity well. Students benefit from many effective and productive partnerships. Quality assurance procedures are well established and documented clearly. The self-assessment process is clear. However, there are weaknesses in quality assurance at course level. The grading of internal teaching and learning observations lacks clear criteria. A minority of curriculum area and self-assessment reports do not identify key weaknesses. Both the overall management and pass rates for key skills are poor. Financial management is effective and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

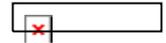
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to social inclusion is good and, to educational inclusion, is satisfactory. The college has close and productive links with its partner schools, and provides college-based taster programmes and bridge programmes through a number of projects for students aged 14 to 16. The college has responded appropriately to the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) legislation. The equal opportunities and diversity committee monitors the impact of these policies carefully and ensures best practice is shared across the college. Staff, managers and governors have undertaken appropriate training in equality and diversity. The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are considered fully, and the arrangements to meet the needs of students who require additional literacy and numeracy support are very good. A thorough assessment of the physical environment has led to detailed action plans for the adaptation of most buildings. Community links are being extended and the college is an active member of many local partnerships. The college has worked with community leaders closely to promote courses to under-represented groups and has been successful in

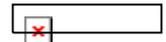
address weaknesses in level 2 provision, but as yet, the data does not indicate a significant and sustained trend towards improvement.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are good. The quality of initial advice and guidance is very good. Links developed with local schools help identify early support requirements. Individual learning support needs are identified from initial assessment and appropriate support is arranged promptly. All students receive a comprehensive induction which they value. There is very good lesson support for students with learning difficulties and or disabilities. Examination support is excellent. The tutorial system is satisfactory. There is a clear framework for tutorial provision; however, the quality of tutorial practice across the curriculum is uneven. Most students receive good support from their vocational subject tutors during lessons. Attendance at some group tutorials is low. Students receive good advice about preparation for and progression to, HE and employment.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- friendly, supportive staff

- good and flexible range of subject options

- additional support

- adult environment and mutual respect

- range of visits and trips

- good facilities

- good examination results
- good library and learning resource centres.

What they feel could be improved

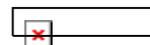
- students' facilities
- key skills
- access to and updating of computers
- lack of car parking space
- having one site rather than two
- tutorials
- timetabling gaps between lessons.

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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

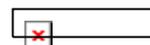


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	60	33	7
19+ and WBL*	77	21	2
Learning 16-18	63	31	6
19+ and WBL*	77	21	2

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. Retention rates at level 3 are well above national averages for all students and demonstrate year-on-year improvement. Pass rates at level 3 for students aged 16 to 18 are significantly high and for adults, they are at national averages. While pass rates at level 2 are at, or just below national averages, there was a significant fall in retention rates in 2003 for all students at this level. There has been a significant improvement in pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 1, over the three-year period.

2. The level of students' attainment is satisfactory or better in 96% of lessons observed. At level 3, this increases to 98%. Students work well in groups and produce written work of a high standard. In many curriculum areas, students demonstrate developing skills in research and analysis, and critical evaluation. In most lessons, students' work is at the level expected for their course. Oral work is strong, particularly in humanities, and English and modern foreign languages.

3. The overall attendance rate in the lessons is 76%. Although this is at the national average, it is well below the college attendance for 2002/03, of 88% and the attendance rate for the first two terms of the current year, at 81%. Attendance is significantly below national averages in humanities, at 69% and visual and performing arts, at 68%.

16 to 18 year olds

4. The college offers a wide range of subjects and courses for full-time students aged 16 to 18. Some 10% of students aged 16 to 18 are following courses at level 1, 23% at level 2 and 65% at level 3. At level 1, pass rates have risen for the last 3 years, to 73% in 2003 which was an 11%

increase on the previous year. At level 2, pass rates were just below national averages, at 68% in 2002, but increased to 72% in 2003. Pass rates at level 3 are significantly above national averages over the three-year period, with an established pattern of year-on-year improvement. There are consistently high pass rates at level 3 across most curriculum areas. AS level and GCE A level were 18% above the national average in 2002. For example, in humanities, pass rates are significantly above national averages with GCE A-level history at 98%, politics 100%, psychology 94% and sociology 99%. Higher grade passes in several curriculum areas are also impressive. For example, in science and mathematics at GCE A level, in 2002, higher grade passes in chemistry were 24% above the national average, in physics 14% and in mathematics 19%.

5. The retention rate on level 1 courses has been below national benchmarks consistently for the three years to 2003. At level 2, in 2002, the retention rate was just below the national average, but fell sharply in 2003, to 64%. Retention rates at level 3 have been consistently and significantly above benchmarks for the sector.

6. The majority of students on work-based learning programmes are modern apprentices in the occupational areas of construction, engineering, hospitality and catering, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Retention rates on these programmes are satisfactory, but few learners have achieved all elements of the full apprenticeship framework. Achievement of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) by work-based learners is satisfactory and most learners who complete their training programme gain the qualification.

Adult learners

7. The college offers a wide range of subjects and courses for adult students. There are currently 28% of adult learners following courses at level 1, 33% at level 2 and 27% at level 3.

8. At level 1, retention rates remain just above national benchmarks, at 72%, with pass rates at, or just below the national average. At level 2, retention rates declined to 64% in 2003 having been 8% above national averages for the two previous years. Pass rates were also just at, or below, national averages during this period. Level 3 retention rates are consistently above national averages and were 6% above in 2002. Pass rates for 2002 were 5% below national averages, at 67%, but increased to 71% in 2003.

9. The level of attainment for students aged over 19 is satisfactory or better in 98% of lessons observed. Adult learners demonstrate good standards of written work, as well as skills in applying practical experience to theoretical concepts. There is good progression on access courses to HE. In community and distance learning activity, the standard of learners' work is at, or above, the level expected for their course.

10. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about students' achievements and standards of work on particular courses.

Quality of education and training



11. Teaching and learning were graded by inspectors in 190 lessons. Teaching is good or better in 66% of these, satisfactory in 29% and less than satisfactory in 5%. Teaching is very good or excellent in 24% of lessons. The highest proportion of good teaching is in health and social care, information and communication technologies, literacy and numeracy and the humanities. The weakest teaching is in visual and performing arts, and engineering. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in business, leisure and travel, health and social care, humanities, and English and modern foreign languages. Learning is good or better in 67% of lessons, satisfactory in 28% and less than

the provision is judged good; 40% of students follow courses where the provision was judged satisfactory.

12. The standards of teaching, learning and attainment on level 2 courses are significantly below those of levels 1 and 3. For example, only 3% of teaching at level 3 is unsatisfactory, compared to 12% at level 2. For attainment, only 2% of lessons at level 3 are unsatisfactory, compared with 12% at level 2. Weaknesses in level 2 provision have been identified in many curriculum areas including: science and mathematics, engineering, business, hospitality and catering, and English.

13. The better lessons demonstrate thorough preparation, with detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. They are characterised by good working relationships between staff and students which promote students' confidence and encourage active learning. In these lessons, students work both together and independently on challenging tasks which promote opportunities for the development of analytical and oral skills, and the use of selective questioning. There is good use of ILT to enhance and develop independent learning. In some vocational subjects, theory lessons were linked to practical sessions clearly, so that they complemented each other. In the work-based learning provision, learners carry out an extensive range of activities and make good progress in developing industrial skills. Teachers are skilled at drawing upon occupational experience to produce interesting case studies, scenarios and examples in health and social care, engineering, business and hospitality. In the best lessons, assignments are designed to allow students to work at their own pace and level.

14. In the weaker lessons, there are insufficient strategies to challenge and extend students. There is also insufficient differentiation in the planning of teaching and learning in schemes of work and lesson plans. The more able students are not provided with additional tasks. In these lessons, students are managed poorly and learning objectives are unclear. In many level 2 lessons, there is a lack of variety in teaching technique, the lessons do not meet students' needs and they fail to engage students. There are few examples of the productive use of ILT to promote and enhance learning. The teaching of key skills is poor, with many lessons having unclear objectives and lesson structures. In many sessions, key skills training is unimaginative and fails to engage learners. In some work-based learning, little use is made of work-related, practical examples and learners fail to see the relevance to their chosen area of work. Insufficient use is made by tutors of the existing knowledge and experience of students.

15. The college has approximately 539 full-time equivalent staff. Staff are well qualified and experienced within their subjects. Some 85% of full-time and proportionate staff have, or are working towards a teaching qualification. There are good opportunities for staff development, although there is no clear measure of impact on teaching and learning from internal or external training undertaken.

16. Accommodation is satisfactory. In most cases, accommodation provides a suitable setting for teaching and learning. The majority of rooms have good subject-related displays and are accessible to students out of timetabled hours, for additional study. Accommodation and specialist resources are of a high standard in construction, the Yorkshire Rail Academy, engineering, three-dimensional art and design, and some aspects of information and communications technology (ICT). Overall, accessibility for those with restricted mobility is satisfactory. Following the SENDA audit, the college is engaged actively in improvements to both sites. There is currently no accessibility to the second floor of the art and design building at Tadcaster Road or the first floor at Sim Balk Site for wheelchair users. Accommodation for outreach centres is good. The learning resource centre is well equipped and has a good stock of books and periodicals for most curriculum areas and in particular engineering, art, modern foreign languages and English. In humanities and science, however, many textbooks are limited and dated. Access to the learning resource centre is good with opening hours extending into the evening and on a Saturday morning. Information technology (IT) resources are good in engineering, ICT, art and are very good in modern foreign languages. There are some poor computing facilities in literacy and numeracy. A developing intranet site and use of Blackboard software are used well, particularly by ICT AS-level and GCE A-level students and within the supporting study provision. Creative use of ILT in many curriculum areas is underdeveloped.

17. All new full-time students, at levels 1 and 2, undertake a systematic initial assessment of their learning needs. Around 40% of the students identified in need of support have taken advantage of

the additional help available to them. Although there is no formal assessment of level 3 students who achieve the entry criteria for full-time programmes, subject tutors monitor initial work and progress closely. In physics, students undertake a diagnostic assessment of their skills in mathematics. There is good and effective monitoring of students receiving additional learning support. On part-time courses, adult students self-assess their levels at entry. On full-time access programmes, adults are encouraged to self-refer for additional support where learning needs are identified through tutorials. There is good monitoring of individual progress for the majority of students and they undertake regular assessments of their progress. Students are set work regularly and, in most cases, this is marked promptly and effectively. In many subject areas, for example, in business, English and science, there are clear schedules of assignments. However, assessments are not planned across full-time GCE A-level programmes sufficiently, so students receive an uneven distribution of assessment work. Although most subject tutors provide prompt, detailed and constructive feedback to students, there is some variation in the overall quality of feedback provided.

18. Students generally receive clear and encouraging guidance, and are aware of their progress and the necessary actions to improve their performance. Students' progress is recorded by individual subject teachers, and full-time students' progress is reviewed thoroughly at regular, scheduled meetings with individual progress review tutors. There is a lack of rigour in some areas in tracking students' progress, for example, individual learning plans for adult learners on ICT programmes are not updated systematically.

19. In work-based learning, there is generally satisfactory assessment and internal verification practice, with regular student reviews and well documented assessment in hospitality and hairdressing. However, there is over-reliance on written evidence in students' portfolios in engineering. Employers are not always involved in the assessment process fully and do not liaise with training staff in identifying and agreeing the most appropriate opportunities for the assessment of performance. There is limited sharing of best practice between work-based learning areas, although this is now improving.

20. The college offers a wide range of academic and vocational provision, which is responsive to local and regional needs. Level 3 students are able to combine a wide variety of subjects and modules at GCE A level which reflect their interests and aspirations. Distance learning programmes in care, provide an effective route to learning for those engaged on shift work in care homes. Within the current full-time offer, there are some gaps in provision at levels 1 and 2 which limit entry or progression, especially on vocational programmes. For example, there is no level 1 or 2 provision in vocational science and the college has been unsuccessful in recruiting students on to its foundation business programmes. There is a strong enrichment programme which is well established in the college and provides an extra dimension for full-time students in most of the curriculum areas. There is a good range of non-course related activities such as sports, including football, basketball, hockey, and tai-chi. Most students appreciate the opportunities offered, and the participation rate by GCE A-level students is 62%. In addition, the college placement office supports many students to obtain valuable course-related work experience, for example, through work as volunteers in primary schools, hospitals and many local manufacturing and service sector companies. College staff are also active in developing many enrichment visits within course areas, such as visits by fine arts students to local art galleries and sculpture parks around Yorkshire. Science students make industrial visits to companies such as Nestle and British Sugar regularly, and there have been numerous overseas visits which included modern foreign language and hospitality students.

21. The college is involved actively in many effective partnerships which increase educational opportunities for potential students. The college has been successful in bidding with partners for additional funding to support a number of imaginative projects. For example, the establishment of a new centre of vocational excellence (CoVE), within the Yorkshire Railway Academy, in September 2003, brings together the college, the LSC, Yorkshire Forward, the City of York Council and leading companies from across the rail engineering sector to provide a national centre for rail engineering training. The centre, located at the National Railway Museum in York, provides valuable training to improve the skills of existing employees and to provide training for new entrants to the industry. In addition, the college has established recently an imaginative joint venture with the York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce to provide training for employers which is managed through the college company, Pure Business Solutions Limited. The college is involved actively on the board of

the Higher York initiative which promotes access to HE, in areas such as sport, business, art and design and creative industries and health studies. There is close co-operation between the college and the City of York Council in building capacity in adult learning.

22. The implementation of key skills delivery is unsatisfactory, as is the monitoring of students' progress in the achievement of key skills. On work-based programmes, the poor achievement of key skills has prevented many learners from completing their framework awards, especially in engineering. The college recognises this weakness in its self-assessment report and has put in place some measures to improve the position. However, there remains considerable variation in the implementation of key skills between different areas of the college.

23. Support for students is good. Induction is managed well in all areas. Students settle into their course quickly and understand their rights and responsibilities. In addition, a well-designed CD-ROM is given to each student at induction, identifying support and guidance available. The quality of student handbooks varies, with good examples in business, religious studies and performing arts courses. Overall, support for work-based learners is good.

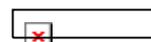
24. The quality and frequency of tutorials across the college are variable. There is a clear tutorial framework and useful resource pack; however, these are not utilised fully by all curriculum areas or pastoral tutors. Individual tutorial provision is very good within health and social care, ICT, business, and literacy and numeracy. In less effective tutorial provision, individual target setting is underdeveloped and attendance is low. Tutorials are observed as part of the college's internal lesson observation scheme, however, very few have been observed this academic year.

25. Learning support is managed well. Individual learning needs are identified before, or at the start of the course and support is organised promptly. Additional individual support provided in the classroom is very good, particularly for those with sensory or hearing impairment. Students who are at risk of leaving their courses are identified and monitored. There is excellent examination support for students. For example, personal assistants are provided for colour blind students, to explain colour within diagrams. Assistants are made available, to act as prompts for students with attention deficit disorder, to enable individual students to remain focused during exams.

26. The college has a clear child protection policy and a manager identified as an initial point of contact. Only a small number of teaching and business support staff have currently attended formal college training on child protection. Recent links have been made with social services to develop and provide support for students with a history of specific support needs.

27. There is a range of good quality, accessible information and guidance available to students, covering counselling services, childcare support, financial assistance and welfare advice. Access to general support and guidance is also made available out of college hours, enabling easier access for part-time students. There is a very good health promotion service. Students applying to HE or to employment receive good, impartial advice and guidance. A number of events are held throughout the academic year, to promote and inform students and parents about progression opportunities. Students value the individual help and attention they receive from academic staff, formally and informally.

Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management are good. Governors and senior managers have set a clear strategic direction for the college through the mission statement and supporting corporate objectives. Governors, managers and staff understand well the strategic planning processes and there is much involvement of staff at all levels in determining and communicating the strategic priorities. The

objectives are supported by a detailed three-year development plan and a clear annual operating plan. Business performance management is used well to set and monitor targets for all sections of the college. Critical stages of the planning processes are monitored closely by an annual activity plan which details key actions on a monthly basis.

29. Governors are well informed about the performance of the college and are committed strongly to its mission. There is an open and honest relationship between the governors and the senior managers; and both understand well their respective roles. Much good use is made of governors' expertise and this is reflected in the composition and membership of the various corporation committees. Governors receive regular and detailed performance reports from each of the four college directorates covering operations, finance, quality assurance and teaching and learning. The governors are aware of many of the challenges facing the college and take a keen interest in supporting the college to make improvements. There is a clear risk management cycle and action plans are reviewed regularly.

30. Curriculum management is mostly good. Retention and pass rates at level 3, for students aged 16 to 18, have been above the national average consistently for each of the 3 years up to 2003. Since the last inspection, the college has made some improvements on the pass rates at levels 1 and 2, for students aged 16 to 18. Progress has been slow. However, the college has used well a range of projects to support students in achieving qualifications. For example, the college has made good use of external funding to raise achievement of level 2 students by providing additional support for those 'at risk' and help with portfolio building, finance and materials. Some 278 students have benefited from this project; retention rates have improved and many of the students have already passed some assessments. Pass rates for 2003, at level 1, were at the national average; an improvement of 9% on the previous year. At level 2, pass rates have improved to just above the national average. The college has not, however, made significant progress in addressing the retention rates of students on level 1 and 2 courses. This weakness was identified in the last inspection. The management of key skills is poor.

31. The college promotes equality and diversity well. The equality policy has been revised to reflect the requirements of recent legislation on race relations and disability discrimination. The equal opportunities and diversity committee which includes representatives from curriculum and support areas, monitors the impact of the policy carefully and ensures best practice is shared across the college. There is a comprehensive annual programme of equal opportunities training, supported by appropriate case studies and teaching materials. Student and staff data are analysed carefully by ethnicity, gender, age, race and disability, and the annual operating plan for equality and diversity identifies priorities for action. The college has been successful in attracting students from minority ethnic backgrounds and has produced leaflets in four representative languages. It has worked with community leaders closely to promote the college to under-represented groups. Much of this work has been supported by a grant to support minority ethnic students' achievements. The college has produced its own training materials for equality and diversity aimed at teachers, students and work placement providers. These 'e-quality' resources provide a clear framework for course tutors and teachers to address issues around diversity. These resources are used by teachers at induction and throughout the course. Retention and pass rates of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are monitored. The retention rate of these students is 92% which is significantly higher than the college's average retention rate of 75% for 2003.

32. Students benefit from many effective and productive partnerships. The college collaborates well with a wide range of local partners in order to meet its strategic objectives. The college is very responsive to the needs of its partners and local employers. There are two CoVEs in the college, one of which is shared with two other colleges in the Southwest. The college is a key partner in 14 to 19 pathfinder developments within York and trains teachers in local schools in the delivery of the applied GCSE. The college has representation on most local committees, including funding bodies, employer groups and the local learning partnership.

33. The college has made much improvement in the management of data since the last inspection. A good range of accurate reports is now available to curriculum managers to monitor and evaluate course performance. Curriculum leaders receive accurate and detailed reports on recruitment, retention and pass rates as part of the effective business performance management process. A new

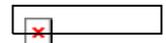
system to track students' attendance electronically has been introduced. Staff monitor and address effectively poor attendance; improvements to attendance at level 2 have been made.

34. The grading of teaching and learning observations lacks clear criteria. This weakness was identified in the last inspection and was acknowledged in the self-assessment report. The college graded a significantly greater number of lessons as good or better than did the inspectors. The college's own grade profile of 87% of lessons graded good or better and 12% satisfactory, makes it difficult for the college to evaluate the impact of developmental strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, the college has a comprehensive system in place for recording and analysing the findings from the observations of teaching and learning. Summaries of strengths and weaknesses are produced which inform staff development of key priorities for the college.

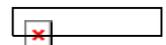
35. Quality assurance procedures are well established and documented clearly. The self-assessment process is clear and enables all course teams to contribute to the overall report. Inspectors agree with most of the grades awarded by the college and many of the judgements. However, there are some weaknesses in quality assurance at course level. A minority of course reviews and self-assessment processes are insufficiently thorough. Both the curriculum area and self-assessment reports do not identify some key weaknesses such as retention rates and do not contain sufficient commentary on the quality of teaching and learning.

36. The college has improved its financial position significantly since the last inspection. The financial management of the college is effective. The college has now moved its financial health category from category C to category B and has made a three-year operating surplus, despite only meeting 96% of its LSC funding target for each of the three years to 2003. Internal budgets are well managed and governors maintain a close oversight of the financial affairs of the college. The college acknowledges in its self-assessment report the problems associated with its current estate and its inability to meet the demand for more integrated learning activities with classrooms of inappropriate size and layout and, poor room utilisation. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates in AS-level and GCE A-level courses

- high value added scores for students on AS-level and GCE A-level mathematics

- effective teaching on the majority of GCE A-level provision

- very good progression to HE.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on GCSE courses
- many lessons not addressing the needs of all students
- unsatisfactory management of GCSE mathematics for full-time students.

Scope of provision

37. There are approximately 1,000 students on science and mathematics courses, with about 80% studying level 3 courses and 20% on level 2 programmes. AS level and GCE A level are offered in biology, chemistry, physics, science, mathematics and further mathematics. GCE A-level mathematics students are able to choose from a wide range of optional units. GCSE courses are available in mathematics, chemistry and human physiology and health. The college also has adult provision with an access course and evening classes in AS-level biology and chemistry. There is an intensive course in GCSE mathematics, offered to students at local Royal Air Force bases.

Achievement and standards

38. Retention and pass rates are high on AS-level and GCE A-level courses. In 2003, pass rates for AS-level mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics were above national averages. High pass rates were achieved in all GCE A-level courses, with many significantly above national averages. Higher-grade pass rates are consistently good across the majority of subjects. For the past three years, students on all advanced level mathematics courses have performed significantly better than expected based on their entry qualifications. There are an increasing number of students taking mathematics and science subjects at advanced level.

39. There are low retention and pass rates on GCSE courses. In 2003, the retention rate on GCSE chemistry was 46%, in mathematics, 61% and in human physiology, 68%, all below national averages. Pass rates are poor, particularly on GCSE human physiology and health, and GCSE mathematics where there is a negative three-year trend. For full-time students aged 16 to 18, this pass rate is even lower, at only 19% in 2003. The AS-level and GCE A-level provision in the evening has poor retention and pass rates.

40. At advanced level, students make good progress in lessons and the work they produce is of good quality. They answer questions confidently and use technical terms appropriately. In science, their practical skills are good. At GCE A level, mathematics students work on problems confidently, showing care and precision in their presentation of solutions. Key skills are well developed within mathematics. The number of students who progress to HE is impressive. Over 80% of GCE A-level students in 2002 and 2003, went on to HE, studying science related courses. Progression from AS level to GCE A level is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	388	378	277
		% retention	72	67	68
		% pass rate	30	31	29
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	171	180	189
		% retention	89	86	83
		% pass rate	76	76	74
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	136	140	157
		% retention	92	80	87
		% pass rate	92	88	74
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	91	85	81
		% retention	97	85	88
		% pass rate	84	78	77
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	*	83	92
		% retention	*	97	99
		% pass rate	*	100	100
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	*	83	66
		% retention	*	96	97
		% pass rate	*	99	98

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

* course not available

Quality of education and training

41. Teaching and learning are effective in the majority of the AS-level and GCE A-level provision in science and mathematics. For example, in one lesson investigating the structure and function of the eye, there was effective use of an electronic whiteboard to demonstrate the changing shape of the lens within the eye as it focused on near and then distant objects. This was followed by a series of practical activities to identify the blind spot, peripheral vision and colour. Students worked well in groups to analyse what was happening inside the eye during each experiment. The students were engaged actively in an exercise which was highly effective in checking understanding. In mathematics, students are well prepared for external examination, through the regular use of testing and practice examination questions. There is an increasing use of ICT within teaching; however, the equipment to support this is limited.

42. Some lessons do not address the needs of all students. In a number of lessons, the tasks set were routine, with little to stretch the more able students or support the less able students. There is insufficient differentiation in the planning of teaching and learning or evidence of such strategies in schemes of work or lesson plans. For example, in one lesson, the teacher failed to conduct any lesson assessment to test the understanding and application of the topics delivered. The delivery was not conducive to any student participation and consisted of students copying notes passively from an overhead transparency and then moving on to the next topic. There is insufficient use of prior achievement to inform the planning of teaching. Teachers do not use value-added data with students as an improvement strategy. Little use is made of initial assessment to plan and inform teaching or to review progress. Reviews do not include the use of target grades. Teaching at GCSE level does not meet students' needs and is often uninspiring. Only 16% of lessons observed at level 2 are good or better.

43. Staff are experienced and well qualified. Teachers demonstrate thorough understanding of specific awarding body requirements and provide students with helpful tips and advice to gain full marks for topics. There is a good range of resources available within science. Teaching rooms and laboratories are well equipped and have interesting and relevant subject materials on display. Science has a range of analytical equipment not normally found in further education (FE) colleges such as an Infra red spectrophotometer, ultraviolet spectrophotometer, gas chromatograph and a high-pressure liquid chromatograph. Technical support is good. Health and Safety are well managed in the area with technicians and teachers working well together to maintain good health and safety standards.

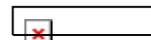
44. Assessment is effective and coursework meets awarding body requirements in full. Marking and feedback commentary is effective. There is regular use of testing taking place within lessons and frequent use of examination material. There are strong working relationships between staff and students, with students well prepared for progression on to university. There is some additional support provided in biology and for access students through a learning assistant and there is in-class practical support from science technicians. There is a drop-in workshop available for mathematics students at lunchtime. Students value the informal support that they receive.

Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Within science and mathematics, the GCE A-level provision is managed effectively; however, there is unsatisfactory management of GCSE mathematics for full-time students. There has been some very poor attendance in lessons during inspection and throughout the year. Of those lessons observed during the inspection, attendance at level 3 was 88%, while attendance at level 2 sessions, was only 66%. Timetabling clashes prevent students attending allocated lessons and this has not been resolved satisfactorily. There is ineffective follow-up of absences. GCSE mathematics has a low priority with staff and students, with the effect that attendance, retention and pass rates are low.

46. The self-assessment process is generally accurate in identifying strengths, but fails to significantly take into account and action the weaknesses around the GCSE provision and in teaching and learning. Weaknesses in teaching and learning, identified through internal observations, have not been addressed fully. Equality of opportunity is good, with teachers aware of individual students' needs.

Engineering



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

Work-based learning contributory grade is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- most courses have good or better pass rates

- high retention rates on level 3 programmes

- effective development of students' and learners' practical skills

- students are motivated and enjoy their learning experience

- good links with local and national employers, enhancing learning opportunities

- effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention rates on level 1 and 2 programmes

- poor delivery of theory lessons

- poor achievement in key skills

- poor health and safety practice in a minority of engineering workshops

- weak monitoring of assessment and students' progress.

Scope of provision

47. Provision in the engineering curriculum area ranges from level 1 to level 4 and includes courses in motor vehicle engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, fabrication and welding, and AS-level and GCE A-level product design. There are 315 full-time students and 80 part-time students enrolled on these courses. There is also a 14 to 16 year old flexible study programme in motor vehicle engineering as well as a number of shorter taster courses. Off-the-job training is delivered by college staff through the college-based managing agency. Modern apprenticeships include engineering manufacturing, vehicle maintenance and repair, mechanical and electrical engineering. The total number of learners in foundation modern apprenticeships is 85, advanced modern apprenticeships is at 83, while there are 90 adults completing modern apprenticeships.

Achievement and standards

48. Most courses have good or better pass rates. There are high retention rates on level 3 programmes. Students on the City and Guilds 4351 computer-aided design (CAD) course, achieved well above national averages in 2002 and 2003, at level 2, as did students on the motor vehicle

repair and maintenance courses at level 1. NVQ courses at level 2 have unsatisfactory pass rates. The delivery of key skills is poor, with no clear objectives or lesson structures established. There is inadequate assessment and tracking of learners' progress. In work-based learning, foundation modern apprenticeship completion rates are low and are affected by poor key skills completions; however, learners achieve their NVQ qualifications. Workshop lessons are well planned and supported with good course material. Students work well on individual practical assignments with clear instructions.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
NVQ engineering manufacture (2 year)	1	No. of starts	60	51	22
		% retention	70	51	55
		% pass rate	79	12	58
City and Guilds 6956 motor vehicle level 1	1	No. of starts	*	32	30
		% retention	*	59	57
		% pass rate	*	68	88
NVQ engineering manufacture (1 year)	2	No. of starts	28	31	**
		% retention	75	52	**
		% pass rate	86	56	**
City and Guilds 4351-01 AutoCAD	2	No. of starts	69	71	38
		% retention	81	80	84
		% pass rate	95	97	91
AS-level design and technology	3	No. of starts	61	59	71
		% retention	89	71	82
		% pass rate	76	88	83
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	30	39	30
		% retention	73	67	87
		% pass rate	82	85	89
GCE A2 level design and technology	3	No. of starts	*	38	30
		% retention	*	100	97
		% pass rate	*	97	79

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

* course not available

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

49. Engineering students and learners enjoy their education and training, and speak highly of their tutors and work-based assessors. Teaching is good in practical workshops and in the theory lessons where students are involved in practical tasks. Students on motor vehicle and welding courses have good practical skills, comparable with those seen in industry. For example, mature students in a lesson on welding, achieved high levels of skill in producing lap joints and pipe welds, and they demonstrated a variety of welding techniques in a relatively short time. Students in motor vehicle

lessons, experience a wide variety of teaching methods which enhance their understanding of engine transmission. In a number of sessions, there is good use of question and discussion formats to engage students.

50. In work-based learning, learners engage in an extensive range of activities and make good progress in developing industrial skills. Work-based learning staff work with learners and their employers closely when preparing individual learning plans. For example, examination success is integrated and celebrated within review structures by work-based learning assessors and employers to act as additional motivation for learners.

51. Some theory lessons are characterised by a teacher-centred approach, resulting in uninspiring and dull teaching and learning strategies which affect students' progress. There are poor standards of students' work in the performing engineering operations (PEO) NVQ level 2 course in the electrical installation wiring unit. In this unit, there is an inappropriate use of equipment as well as a poor level of supervision and poor understanding of different wiring systems.

52. Physical and staffing resources are good. Teaching staff have good academic qualifications and relevant industrial experience which many use to good effect. The large engineering machine shops are equipped with a good variety of machine tools which, although old, are appropriate for purpose. There are well-equipped light vehicle workshops. The Yorkshire Rail Academy is a purpose-built resource for engineering students. Most of the students who use this facility are on advanced modern apprenticeships working within the railway industry. It has been financed through CoVE funding. The academy is very well equipped and forms a modern environment, conducive to teaching and learning. There is a state-of-the-art computer suite for the teaching of CAD and IT, and a well-equipped laboratory for teaching electronics.

53. The adherence to health and safety regulations is generally good; however, two learners in a practical motor vehicle activity were without protective footwear and clothing. In the electrical installation workshop, learners were using incorrect hand skills which were dangerous and unsafe.

54. Students' abilities are assessed on entry and additional support is available to those who need it. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are inconsistent. The internal verification process lacks rigour, with an overemphasis on written evidence, unauthenticated photographs and end verification in work-based learning. However, there is good practice in Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) nationals and motor vehicle courses, although this is not disseminated across the curriculum area. There is good monitoring of work-based learners in the workplace, with an identified staff member assigned to each student. The quality of students' work in work-based learning is monitored closely.

55. There are good links with local and national employers to support and enhance learners' experiences. For example, to provide a practical element to the GNVQ intermediate course, students spend one day a week at the Yorkshire Air Museum, restoring vintage aircraft and gaining a basic aeronautical qualification. The college has been a catalyst in bringing together the national railway companies and providing an education and training base at the National Railway Museum. Strong partnerships also exist with schools and universities which aids students' progression. Work experience opportunities for full-time students are limited.

Leadership and management

56. Management of the engineering curriculum area and the work-based training is satisfactory. Communications are good with regular course team and area meetings. Access to the college intranet and to the management information system data, keeps all staff informed fully. There is good delegation of operational tasks within the area and a good team spirit exists. Teachers are involved fully in the development of action plans. Equal opportunities issues need to be further monitored and reinforced within the work place.

57. In general, the self-assessment is satisfactory. The area's internal lesson observation profile does not reflect inspection grades and is too generous; consequently there is not a rigorous

approach to addressing weaknesses through action planning and the staff development programme.

Business, administration, management and professional



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates on many courses
- good retention and pass rates on AVCE leisure and recreation course
- good range of vocational and academic courses
- highly effective work placements on NVQ administration courses
- good support for individual students.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on AVCE business course
- poor retention rates on GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism and AVCE travel courses
- insufficient attention to lesson planning
- insufficient use of ILT in most business lessons
- poor recruitment to vocational business courses.

Scope of provision

58. There are 250 students' aged 16 to 18 and 422 adult students on business programmes. There are 27 students aged 16 to 18 on leisure courses and 49 students aged 16 to 18 on travel and tourism courses. The college offers a comprehensive range of full-time and part-time business courses from levels 1 to 4. Full-time business courses include AS level and GCE A level in business and economics, AVCE and GNVQ intermediate business, national certificate in business and e-business, and NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 in administration. Part-time management and professional courses are offered in management, marketing and personnel. NVQs are taught at levels 1 to 4 in administration and accounting. Leisure and tourism courses include AVCE in travel and tourism, AVCE in leisure and recreation and a GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism.

Achievement and standards

59. There are high pass rates on many business courses including GCE A-level business and economics, the certificate in personnel practice and the advanced certificate in marketing. AVCE business pass rates are well below national average. Pass rates on NVQ level 3 administration have risen consistently over the last 3 years to well above national averages. The pass rate on level 2 administration has declined below the national average. The GNVQ intermediate in leisure and tourism and AVCE travel and tourism courses, both achieved a 100 % pass rate last year. The majority of business courses have retention rates at, or above, national averages. Retention rates in AVCE business have declined for the last 3 years. Retention rates in GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism and AVCE travel and tourism are below the national average.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate travel and tourism	2	No. of starts	26	16	15
		% retention	69	69	67
		% pass rate	83	100	100
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	**	25	23
		% retention	**	80	83
		% pass rate	**	85	68
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	29	24	46
		% retention	86	83	85
		% pass rate	60	50	59
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	48	58	35
		% retention	92	93	94
		% pass rate	84	94	100
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	87	130	145
		% retention	77	82	86
		% pass rate	88	74	80
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	41	46	53
		% retention	63	96	96
		% pass rate	77	95	98
AVCE travel and	3	No. of starts	*	36	23

tourism	% retention	*	33	52
	% pass rate	*	83	100

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

* course not available

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

60. Teaching is satisfactory or good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Relationships between staff and students are very positive. Staff know their students well. In the best lessons, teachers use their own experience to bring humour and engagement to business theory. For example, part-time students in a personnel lesson, enjoyed learning through sharing the different recruitment practices from their places of employment. In a good leisure and recreation lesson, students worked independently to research aspects of child protection, took pride in recording their findings in a bound unit workbook, and moved round the classroom to share information in small groups. Model answers to class-work exercises are made available on the college's virtual learning environment.

61. The less effective lessons, lack a clear structure and use a limited range of teaching strategies. They are characterised by an over-reliance on the input of the teacher and objectives are not shared clearly with students. Teachers sometimes run out of time to deliver all that they have planned. In a few lessons, the print on overhead transparencies is too small to read easily and is often out of focus.

62. The use of ILT is underdeveloped in teaching and learning. Course teams have carried out an audit and set targets for action which are at various stages of implementation. National certificate in e-business students make effective use of the college's virtual learning environment.

63. The experience of students is enriched by a programme of visits and work placements to relate theory to employment. For example, NVQ students develop a range of business skills by attending a placement for 2 days a week, over a period of six months. Management course students undertake live projects to provide business solutions for local organisations.

64. Induction is well planned and includes visits to local business organisations. Useful handbooks are produced for all courses which give clear information on assessment requirements. Assignment schedules are shared with students and clear deadlines for completion are established. Students' work is marked regularly and returned promptly. Constructive feedback is provided on how to improve grades.

65. Students' progress is monitored effectively. Students have scheduled appointments to meet with tutors regularly. The curriculum leader holds progress review boards to assess the performance of individual business students. Tutorial time is allocated before and after lessons for part-time students. Students value the support they receive and the e-mail and telephone contact outside of lesson time. Good support is given to students with specific learning needs, in particular signers and note takers for hearing impaired students. The learning support unit provides an excellent summary booklet for dyslexic students in business law.

66. Staff are well qualified and many are members of appropriate professional bodies. Accommodation is adequate for purpose. There are no computers in business classrooms and a limited range of teaching resources. The learning resource centre has quiet study areas and is well stocked with up-to-date business texts and periodicals. Business students make good use of these facilities.

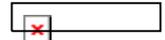
67. The college's own travel agency provides students with a real working environment. Students

aged 14 to 16, from local schools, use it on the applied GCSE course, delivered jointly by college and school staff. The travel and tourism area has a grounded aeroplane which was donated by the Yorkshire Air Museum and refurbished by the college's construction department. It is put to effective use to train learners in aspects of cabin crew procedure.

Leadership and management

68. Leadership and management are good. There are good communications within the department and staff are well supported by their line manager. The self-assessment report identifies strengths and weaknesses accurately. Actions to improve the variety of teaching strategies and the use of ILT have not yet been effective. There is disappointing recruitment to level 1 and 2 courses in business, an issue which the curriculum manager is working with the college marketing team to address. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high proportion of higher pass grades on foundation and intermediate GNVQ courses

- good pass rates on computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and AS-level computing

- much good teaching, developing individual learning skills

- effective use of ILT to enhance learning.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates on national diploma in computing studies

- low attendance and poor punctuality in too many lessons

- lack of challenge for the more able students.

Scope of provision

69. There are 348 students studying full-time ICT courses, with 30 over the age of 18. There are 863 students studying part-time courses, of which, 790 are over the age of 18. The college offers an extensive range of full-time courses in ICT at various levels ranging from basic computer literacy to higher national courses. The college also runs a number of community-based ICT courses such as CLAIT and the European computer driving licence (ECDL). In addition, there are 190 students studying on franchised ICT courses.

Achievement and standards

70. The pass rates for students completing GNVQ and CLAIT courses are high. In the last two years, pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses have been significantly above national averages. The proportion of students who achieve high grades on these courses is very high. The retention and pass rates on the AS-level computing is good, however, the pass rate for the national diploma in computer studies is poor and significantly below the national average. The pass rates on the CLAIT courses are good and above the national average. Retention rates are generally satisfactory.

71. On many courses, students demonstrate appropriate knowledge of key concepts and ideas that are relevant to their level of study. Students are encouraged to manage their own learning and develop good independent learning skills. Attendance at many lessons is low and the average attendance is unsatisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	15	27	*
		% retention	80	70	*
		% pass rate	58	95	*
CLAIT short	1	No. of starts	561	494	375
		% retention	88	90	88
		% pass rate	**	**	**
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	32	53	48
		% retention	72	87	79
		% pass rate	61	91	89
ECDL short	2	No. of starts	16	84	105
		% retention	100	96	89
		% pass rate	100	81	49
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	41	54	50
		% retention	90	83	74
		% pass rate	89	67	76
AS-level IT	3	No. of starts	96	96	90
		% retention	83	82	80
		% pass rate	80	58	63

National diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	29	37	43
		% retention	76	59	67
		% pass rate	68	50	62

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

*course no offered

**data unavailable

Quality of education and training

72. There is much good teaching. The range of learning activities is wide and teachers make good use of the technology available. For example, in one revision lesson, students were given a deck of cards which contained key ICT words. The students were paired to play snap, at which point, they had to test each others understanding of the key ICT words and concepts. Teaching methods are designed carefully to enable students to work independently. Teachers introduce new concepts with well-planned and useful practical exercises. The students tackle their practical tasks enthusiastically; they produce good web page designs and construct databases to an appropriate standard. In one lesson, students were able to evaluate a number of educational software products effectively and prepared well designed presentations to communicate their findings. Activities are planned thoughtfully and suited to the needs of the students. For example, in a computer installation and maintenance lesson on network printers, the key terminology and major possible faults were built up step by step. Students on these courses were able to understand how application support and fault diagnosis operate in the workplace.

73. Teachers know their students and understand their individual learning needs. Most teachers demonstrate good classroom management and appropriate strategies for managing students' behaviour. In a few lessons, poor punctuality and behavioural problems are not challenged sufficiently.

74. The use of ILT is effective in promoting learning. For example, students on the City and Guilds computer installation and maintenance courses, are able to use specialist learning packages to extend their learning and to test their understanding of topics. Teachers use the system effectively to monitor students' progress. Students use the college computer learning system with ease and confidence to access an extensive range of good learning resources including interactive notes, questionnaires and useful additional web-based materials.

75. Some learning materials and lesson activities do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able students. In these lessons, there are no additional materials for extension work and the pace is slow and uninspiring.

76. Teachers are suitably qualified. Staff development is encouraged and many teachers undertake appropriate, continuous and professional development. Accommodation and ICT resources are sufficient, but a number of computer chairs are maintained poorly and the availability of computers out of lesson is unsatisfactory during peak times.

77. Assessment materials are appropriate and include clear assessment criteria. External assignments on vocational courses are effective and marked accurately with helpful written feedback. The assessment of internal assignments and the recording of students' progress on AS-level and GCE A-level courses are inadequate. Students on the access course do not receive timely and effective written feedback on their assignments.

78. The college offers an appropriate range of ICT courses and has developed new courses in web-based design to respond to local needs. Community courses operate from a large number of venues. The community learning centres provide convenient access to pleasant study environments

with high-specification computers. There are few opportunities for adults to access level 3 courses at the community-based centres.

79. Induction is comprehensive. All full-time students at levels 1 and 2 receive an initial assessment to identify their additional literacy, numeracy and language needs. However, the take-up of additional learning support is low. GNVQ intermediate students have insufficient opportunities to become familiar with current industrial practice through curriculum enrichment activities.

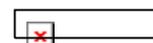
80. Group tutorial activities are well planned, with interesting and useful topics. Individual tutorials are satisfactory. Students' performance and personal objectives are monitored and reviewed well. Students know their target grades and their present progress. However, the action plans arising from progress reviews are not always sufficiently challenging.

Leadership and management

81. Management is effective. Managers maintain close links with students and respond to their concerns swiftly. Communication within the department is good. Target setting and monitoring of courses are well established with clear operational accountability. The performance of courses is judged routinely against appropriate measurable targets. The operation of the internal lesson observation system is inconsistent, with a significant number of staff having no annual observation in the last year. Course evaluations and lesson observations are not brought together effectively to raise standards.

82. The use of value-added data is widespread, but the levels of added value on AS-level and GCE A-level courses over a three-year period have been consistently low. Quality assurance procedures for community courses are satisfactory, but managers are not making sufficient use of management information system data to evaluate or improve the quality of their provision. The self-assessment is detailed and overall, it reflects accurately the position of the department.

Hospitality, leisure and travel



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most level 2 and 3 courses

- good links with industry

- good range of additional qualifications and activities for full-time students

- effective learning support for students.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on many level 2 and 3 long courses
- poor pass rates in key skills
- insufficient development and consolidation of learning in many practical lessons
- insufficiently rigorous programme of self assessment.

Scope of provision

83. There are 103 students aged 16 to 18 and 239 adult students on courses within this area. Full-time courses are run in food preparation and cooking from pre-vocational to NVQ level 2 and for the AVCE in hospitality and catering. Food service is available at NVQ levels 1 and 2. A modern apprentice programme, in several hospitality disciplines, is run at foundation and advanced level. Vocational part-time courses lead to NVQ levels 2 and 3 in food preparation and cooking. There is a good programme of short courses in food hygiene and health and safety, and of recreational cookery courses, particularly the unique 'cook and speak' courses relating to three European countries and available at two levels.

Achievement and standards

84. The pass rate on many long courses is high and has improved markedly over the past three years. Pass rates on NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking, NVQ level 2 serving food and drink, and the AVCE in hospitality and catering have made significant improvements to above national averages. There are poor pass rates on significant short courses. The intermediate food hygiene certificate, the wines and spirits education trust certificate, and the basic pastry cooks and patissiers award are all below national averages. For example, the intermediate food hygiene certificate has been significantly below national averages in two out of the last three years. Retention rates are varied and some are poor on many long courses, at levels 2 and 3. Pass rates on key skills awards are very low with the consequence that few modern apprentices achieve a full framework award.

85. Students aged 16 to 18 are mature, notably in their behaviour and interest in practical work. All students achieve satisfactory or good standards and some are successful in prestigious professional cookery competitions. Pre-vocational students produce good written evidence of their practical work using a framework of proformas, developed helpfully by their tutors. AVCE assignment reports are well presented. Students are able to analyse and evaluate successfully.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ catering and hospitality (preparing and serving food) one year	1	No. of starts	15	*	16
		% retention	80	*	88
		% pass rate	92	*	79

NVQ catering and hospitality (food preparation and cooking) two year	2	No. of starts	59	37	50
		% retention	51	51	58
		% pass rate	80	84	100
NVQ catering and hospitality (serving food and drink-table) two year	2	No. of starts	15	*	21
		% retention	80	*	57
		% pass rate	33	*	92
Food hygiene certificate	2	No. of starts	29	32	15
		% retention	100	91	100
		% pass rate	60	83	60

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

86. Teaching and learning are largely satisfactory or good. A minority of practical lessons are very good. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers provide authoritative information about cuisine and draw successfully on their hospitality industrial experience. Students respond promptly to questions with appropriate knowledge and understanding of food commodities and the hospitality industry. Students respond well when challenged in practical lessons to tackle difficult technical language or demonstrate creativity in the development and presentation of a dish. The mix of ages and backgrounds in many groups helps to bring different perspectives and variety to learning. Adult students in evening cookery lessons are appreciative, particularly when developing their understanding of seasoning and unusual ingredients used in regional European cuisines.

87. Many practical lessons fail to require students to contribute their ideas and develop skills in analysing the quality criteria of cookery methods and finished dishes. A minority of theory sessions are too teacher centred and involve no variety in approaches to learning.

88. Hospitality staff now undertake the teaching of key skills as part of a strategy to aid improvement. Learning materials are put into a vocational context through the use of workbooks produced by hospitality staff. Key skills sessions are staffed generously to provide students with a good level of support. Some use is made of the assessment opportunities from practical work and vocational assignments.

89. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced, and are well supported by a team of technicians and kitchen assistants. Staff have relevant industrial experience which is kept up to date through involvement with partnership projects with industry. All staff have assessor qualifications and most have internal verification awards; those without teaching qualifications are working towards them. There is spacious food preparation accommodation and adequate equipment provision which are well maintained. The college learning resource centre contains a range of texts, videos and trade magazines including good resources on contemporary cuisine and practices.

90. Assessment is well documented and organised systematically. It results in helpful written feedback to students. For example, AVCE tutors use proformas tailored to each assignment brief. NVQ students have frequent portfolio sessions to plan their work and assessment targets, and as a result, they have a good understanding of their progress. Individual tutorials are held regularly; students speak well of their value in discussing their performance, setting targets and formulating plans to catch up with overdue work or unsatisfactory progress.

91. Regular formal workplace reviews for work-based learners are complemented by the informal weekly contact that the assessor arranges while learners are in college. These learners also have

tracking sessions with their NVQ tutor so that their progress is monitored; any issues identified are addressed immediately.

92. There is a good range of full-time and work-based vocational programmes for young people which also prepares mature students for access to the hospitality industry. Programmes are adapted flexibly to meet the needs of individual learners. A responsive range of short vocational courses and innovative recreational 'cook and speak' courses develop skills in Italian, French and Spanish language as well as cookery. The curriculum of the full-time courses is broadened successfully by including additional qualifications in food and work safety, extra cookery skills, and trips and visits including overseas study tours. Links with industry are good. The curriculum area participates actively with local trade forums. It provides all the food hygiene training for industry, locally and runs continuing professional development programmes for employed hospitality workers. Staff work with industry closely to ensure there are work experience and employment opportunities for students.

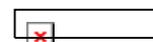
93. There is effective learning and tutorial support for students. Induction programmes are well organised. Support workers effectively help pre-vocational students understand recipes, and weigh and measure accurately. Two support workers assigned to NVQ level 2 students aged 16 to 18, work alongside them in practical and portfolio sessions, and improve their preparation and organisational skills. The support workers interact with students effectively and promote their achievement.

Leadership and management

94. The curriculum is generally well managed. Course leaders ensure their programmes are planned clearly and documented well. Course team meetings are held according to a meetings schedule. The proximity of staff offices helps promote the good informal communication in the curriculum area. Internal verification is managed well. Significant initiatives such as identifying at risk students and deploying advanced tutors have been implemented recently to improve students' experiences.

95. While staff are good in the management of individual students, they do not always have a clear idea of the overall performance of their course, targets set for it and trends over time. Self-assessment produces action points, many of which are implemented, but the process does not always evaluate performance rigorously such as retention rates or it does not question the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Programme self-assessment reports fail to clearly use a strong evidence base and benchmarks. Programme self-assessment does not always involve a team review and analysis of performance.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates across all courses

- good use of teachers' occupational experience to enhance learning

- very good external partnerships

- good support for students
- highly effective leadership and management, leading to continuous improvement.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates in key skills
- insufficient teaching focus on individual needs.

Scope of provision

96. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time provision in health and social care. There are 75 full-time students aged 16 to 18 on courses covering levels 1, 2 and 3. Some 78 adult students are following courses in access to HE with 18 on the access to access course. NVQs in care, promoting independence, and advice and guidance, are offered at levels 2 or 3 and 193 learners are enrolled. Some 48 students are taking the registered managers award and 12 are enrolled on the certificate in community mental health care course. Counselling courses at introductory level and level 3 have enrolled 101 students. Some 35 students are enrolled for first aid at work, paediatric first aid or refresher courses. Distance learning options are offered for courses in safe handling of medicines, occupational health and safety, working with older people, food hygiene and infection control, with 461 enrolled across this range.

Achievement and standards

97. Pass rates are high. They are above national averages on all courses except first aid and access to HE where they are satisfactory. The pass rates for AVCE in health and social care (double award), are particularly high with 100% in 2002 and 95% in 2003. Retention rates are also good and above the national average on most courses. In the counselling and communication courses, the retention rate was 100% in 2002 and 2003. Pass rates in key skills are unsatisfactory, for example, in 2002/03 the pass rate for communications level 3 in AVCE was 28.6%. The curriculum area has recognised these weaknesses and is taking steps to address it, but it is too early to comment on the effectiveness of these strategies.

98. The standards of attainment observed in lessons and in students' work and portfolios are satisfactory or better. Their work shows a developing confidence in the use of ICT. Students on counselling courses acquire new skills quickly. For example, in the first meeting of a counselling course, students were developing listening skills through the use of an imaginative ice breaker. In group work, students work collaboratively and effectively, often taking on the responsibility for managing the task and their own learning. Students have a good awareness of the needs of clients and the professional ethics of the occupational settings. Students taking the registered manager award, NVQs in care or safe handling of medicines have identified improvements in their occupational practices as a result of their studies.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Counselling and communication	1	No. of starts	15	15	15
		% retention	93	100	100
		% pass rate	93	100	87
First aid at work	1	No. of starts	147	76	133
		% retention	97	100	100
		% pass rate	94	95	94
GNVQ intermediate in health and social care	2	No. of starts	19	**	15
		% retention	68	**	87
		% pass rate	92	**	85
AVCE in health and social care (double award)	3	No. of starts	*	17	31
		% retention	*	71	71
		% pass rate	*	100	95

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

* course not available

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

99. Staff make good use of their wide occupational experience to produce interesting case studies, scenarios and examples. In the best lessons, teachers are skilled at drawing upon the occupational knowledge of the students. NVQ students in advice and guidance were asked to describe a situation in which they had given advice while still respecting confidentiality. From this, the teacher enabled them to identify the skills required by working in pre-selected pairs. Through these activities, they were able to identify the competencies required for assessments and how they would be able to demonstrate them. Good working relationships between staff and students are established quickly, promoting students' confidence and encouraging active learning.

100. Teaching strategies do not always take into account the needs of individual students. In some sessions, students working at a different pace are not always provided with additional materials when they have completed the set task. In these sessions, there is a failure to extend students' potential through additional and challenging materials or tasks. Individual student's understanding is not always checked.

101. The accommodation is fit for purpose or better. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified. Teachers on access courses have a wide range of occupational experience which enables them to enrich learning. The majority have teaching qualifications and assessor awards are held where appropriate. There are good opportunities for staff development and occupational updating. Good links between subject and library staff ensure that book stock is good and is increased to meet the demands of new and burgeoning courses.

102. There are robust systems for internal verification and moderation. Work is set regularly and marked to awarding body specifications. Assessment is used to monitor progress for both full-time and part-time students. There is careful assignment planning and individual progress reviews with full-time students. Systems for tracking, monitoring and feedback for distance learners are very good. Contextually-based initial assessment is used for NVQ and distance learners.

103. There are very good partnerships with a wide range of community, occupational and

educational bodies. These have resulted in good progression opportunities for access students through links with the University of York and the York St John College. In response to the employers' needs, specialist provision includes the certificate in community mental health and an innovative distance learning programme. An initiative with local schools is helping to support the provision of vocational GCSEs. Many of the staff are engaged in outside occupational, voluntary or community activities. Full-time students benefit from an interesting programme of visiting speakers and external visits.

104. Support for students is good. Students value the personal support and subject guidance which teachers and assessors provide readily. Full-time students receive a thorough induction and distance learners also have an induction at the college. Students receive a considerable amount of support through individual tutorials. Weekly subject support workshops for AVCE students use individual learning plans for each session. There is a well-structured tutorial programme for group tutorials with full-time students. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

Leadership and management

105. Leadership and management within this programme area are very good. Supportive teams work collaboratively to make improvements in teaching and learning. They are also committed to promoting the best standards in occupational practice. Teams respond to students' concerns quickly and monitor the effects of any changes implemented for their benefit. Staff are aware of targets for recruitment, retention and pass rates, and monitor progress against them. Equal opportunities are promoted actively, partly through the range of specialist speakers and visits to more culturally mixed areas.

Visual and performing arts



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- high standards of work on level 3 three-dimensional design, fashion and part-time craft subjects

- broad range of specialist provision in art, design and craft areas

- effective partnerships and external links that enhance curriculum delivery.

Weaknesses

- o low retention rates on the national diploma in fashion and design craft

- o too much unsatisfactory teaching

- o poor attendance and punctuality in a significant number of lessons

- o ineffective quality assurance procedures.

Scope of provision

106. There are 762 full-time and 1,035 part-time enrolments. The majority of part-time students are aged over 19. There is a small community-based provision offering short courses. Enrolment has increased from 2001/02 to 2002/03 by approximately 13%.

107. The college provides a range of courses in art and design, and performing arts at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. The majority of full-time courses are at level 3 and include three-dimensional design, crafts, fashion and clothing, graphic design, dance, performing arts in acting and production, music technology and art and design. Part-time courses are available in both the day and evening, with subjects including ceramics, silver smithing, millinery, printmaking, leaded glass painting and dressmaking. Many of these courses are offered at levels 1, 2 and 3.

Achievement and standards

108. There are high pass rates on most courses. On the AS-level fine art, music technology and the diploma in foundation studies art and design courses, pass rates have been above the national average consistently for three years. Retention rates are satisfactory or high on the majority of full-time courses. Retention rates were low on the national diploma in fashion and clothing course in 2002/03 and the national diploma in design crafts has declined by 10% each year for the last three years to below national average. Adult students achieve well in academic subjects, however, they achieve less well on some short courses. AS-level and GCE A-level students make insufficient progress, based on their predicted grade outcomes. There is poor achievement in key skills.

109. The standard of work on level 3 three-dimensional, fashion and part-time craft courses is high. Students' ceramics and three-dimensional outcomes, demonstrate a sophisticated use of material. There is a good standard of portfolio work across most courses and particularly good sketchbook work within three-dimensional and fashion.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	25	25	25
		% retention	88	96	84
		% pass rate	82	88	81
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	*	55	47
		% retention	*	96	96

		% pass rate	*	96	91
AS-level art studies/fine art	3	No. of starts	100	97	94
		% retention	84	88	86
		% pass rate	81	94	94
AS-level drama	3	No. of starts	26	50	39
		% retention	69	88	100
		% pass rate	89	91	87
AVCE art and design (double award)	3	No. of starts	*	27	32
		% retention	*	93	56
		% pass rate	*	76	94
AS-level music instruments technology	3	No. of starts	22	35	31
		% retention	77	80	84
		% pass rate	88	86	81
Diploma in foundation studies	3	No. of starts	100	108	105
		% retention	93	86	93
		% pass rate	96	98	98

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

* course not available

Quality of education and training

110. The quality of teaching is varied. The majority of unsatisfactory teaching is at level 2. Much teaching at level 3 is unchallenging and does not sufficiently extend students' critical thinking, organisational skills and use of specialised terminology and appropriate new technology. On level 3 practical and adult lessons, teaching is mostly good or better. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate a range of teaching strategies to enhance learning, students are engaged actively and sessions build on students' prior knowledge successfully. In one part-time lesson for adults, students were working enthusiastically with very lively drawings, photographs and artefacts from visits to local museums. They were guided carefully by the enthusiastic teacher who was able to encourage the class to use specialised terms to develop subject skills, as well as draw upon their previous experience. In one well-planned lesson, students discussed preparation for employment in the theatre and used a fabricated curriculum vitae to make suggestions on how to improve the format for their own applications as actors or technicians. The handout was an excellent basis for discussion with the tutor drawing on his own broad experience of the theatre to provide a strong vocational relevance. In one silver smithing and jewellery lesson, a teacher used extensive subject knowledge and humour to introduce students to new processes, health and safety requirements and detailed observational skills.

111. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching. In these lessons, students are managed poorly, learning objectives are unclear and students are not stretched or supported sufficiently. For example, there was no introduction to, or recap of learning objectives, in one computer design lesson. The lesson planning was inappropriate to the needs of the students, who were unclear about what they were learning, for how long the project was running; they did not have the advanced skills required to develop their knowledge of the software. In one performing arts lesson, the teacher was unable to manage students' behaviour effectively. The session was planned poorly and did not engage students' attention.

112. During the inspection week, students' attendance was low, at 68%. There was poor punctuality

in a significant number of lessons which affected teaching and learning.

113. Accommodation and specialist resources are good in three-dimensional subjects and foundation art and design. Overall, accommodation in music and performing arts is satisfactory, however, many studios in music are too small for large groups and the changing facilities for performing arts are unsatisfactory. A spacious drama hall provides good space for dance, although there are insufficient wall mirrors. The learning resource centre is well stocked with specialised books and periodicals.

114. Assessment, monitoring and verification are satisfactory. Most full-time and part-time students receive much effective verbal feedback and encouragement regarding their progress, although, teachers' written comments are sometimes too brief and lack the appropriate advice for students to progress with their work. Formal reviews are infrequent and students are unclear about assessment processes.

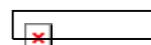
115. The range of craft and art and design courses, provides good opportunities for progression, from taster days and level 1 courses to national and higher national diplomas. Most full-time students on level 1 and 2 courses progress to other full-time courses and many students progress from national diploma courses to HE courses within the college. Opportunities for enrichment are good and contact with outside agencies is extensive. There are many examples of successful live projects, work with local and national organisations and museum and gallery visits in the United Kingdom and abroad. Some very lively work was produced by students on a national diploma in design crafts course when they worked at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust. BTEC national diploma performing arts students are collaborating with foundation diploma and national diploma three-dimensional design students in a professional production in York of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The curriculum area provides good workshop facilities for the 'green apples' programme for school children, in extending their educational goals. The facilities supply extensive courses for students aged 14 to 16, enrolled through other areas of the college.

116. Support for students is good. Individual lesson support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective in supporting learning, particularly for students with hearing impairment. The quality of tutorial and pre-entry guidance varies across the curriculum. Support for students wishing to enter vocationally-related employment is underdeveloped. Students speak highly of the accessibility of tutors out of lesson time.

Leadership and management

117. The overall management and leadership of the curriculum area is satisfactory. Teachers speak highly of the support they receive from their immediate line managers, for example, some time is allocated to plan and deliver external activities which enhance teaching and learning directly. Course team organisation and responsibilities are not sufficiently clear to staff. Quality assurance is ineffective. Agreed weaknesses from college course observations are not actioned systemically through individual development. Data is not used by most course teams to improve learning. For example, data on punctuality and attendance is not addressed successfully at course level. The monitoring of lesson plans, schemes of work and internal verification is ineffective which impacts upon students' learning. Equality and diversity are well promoted through the wide variety of community-based assignments. Resources are well managed and deployed effectively.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses
- consistently high pass rates and high grades at GCE A level
- much good teaching which stimulates and motivates students
- good development of analytical and oral skills.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance
- unsatisfactory integration of access pathway course into humanities provision
- the implementation of quality assurance procedures is inconsistent.

Scope of provision

118. There are approximately 1,330 enrolments. Most of these are full-time day students aged 16 to 19 on advanced level courses.

119. A wide range of humanities courses is offered and includes critical thinking, general studies, government and politics, history, law, philosophy, psychology, religious studies and sociology. There is an access to HE pathway course in humanities. Some subjects provide part-time evening adult courses and there are GCSE courses in law, psychology and sociology.

Achievement and standards

120. There are very high retention rates on most courses. These have been sustained well on GCE A-level programmes over the past two years, particularly in history, law and politics. Most students achieve their predicted grades. There are outstanding results at AS level in critical thinking, history and the social sciences. At GCE A level, pass rates have been consistently high and well above national averages. On 15 of the 21 courses provided in 2002/03, pass rates were significantly higher than national averages. High-grade pass rates were significantly higher in 11 of them. Adults on access to HE courses generally fulfil their potential and attract good offers to a range of universities.

121. Most students acquire good learning skills and demonstrate a sound understanding of new knowledge which they use confidently. Standards of written work are high and oral competencies are well developed. There is a clear emphasis across subjects on the development of critical analysis and evaluative skills. Many students progress to HE. Attendance during inspection was poor at 69%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE A*-C sociology	2	No. of starts	23	*	23
		% retention	61	*	61
		% pass rate	79	*	64
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	142	156	160
		% retention	94	88	93
		% pass rate	96	93	98
AS-level philosophy	3	No. of starts	*	36	62
		% retention	*	75	81
		% pass rate	*	74	86
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	217	318	267
		% retention	82	82	87
		% pass rate	88	77	77
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	118	99	116
		% retention	81	99	98
		% pass rate	92	98	98
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	60	53	62
		% retention	65	100	98
		% pass rate	95	94	92
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	81	71	75
		% retention	70	96	91
		% pass rate	81	99	99

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

122. There is much good teaching. Most lessons incorporate challenging tasks and there are high expectations of students. In a politics lesson on devolution, students displayed mature understanding of political issues and rose to the challenge of discussing them. Good use is made of contemporary examples to give meaning to concepts. This was observed in a GCSE lesson on conformity and Zimbardo's prison experiment. There was excellent use of 18th century art and literature to explore aspects of society and gender by adult learners on the access to HE humanities course.

123. A significant feature of learning is the widespread opportunity for the development of analytical and oral skills. Most lessons engage students in the examination of source material and analysis of salient points. This is common in history. For example, good investigative and evaluative skills were tested in lessons on Gestapo policing methods and on life in Britain in the 1930s, in which video clips were used as source material. In many lessons, student participation is spontaneous. Good questioning techniques enable students to exercise their oral skills.

124. Lessons have clear objectives, though plans are not well developed and rarely address

intended learning outcomes, key skills, or differentiation. Lessons which are dominated by too much teacher-led discussion are the least effective. Poor attendance at some lessons affected the quality of group dynamics in learning. There is no use of IT by students in the classroom and reference to it as a source of information is minimal. Although there are few planned approaches for dealing with differentiated learning needs, most lessons actively engage all students in learning. Resources are used effectively.

125. There is a good level of resources to support learning. Staff are well qualified and deployed effectively. Rooms contain appropriate audio-visual equipment to aid learning and many have well-planned wall displays. Good use is made of photocopied handout material. Some subject courses have well-developed handbooks. Classroom use of IT is limited, although some progress has been made in law and psychology in the use of intranet websites. There is evidence of improvements to the quality of book stocks in the learning resource centre and students speak highly of the help they receive from library staff. Original texts for the social sciences are limited in both centres. Adult students on the access to HE humanities course and students on evening courses, use the Tadcaster Road site and are unable to share the wider range of humanities resources centred in the Sim Balk Lane site.

126. There are inconsistencies in the assessment and monitoring of students' progress. Regular assignments are set. Marked work is recorded and discussed with students. However, the quality of marking and feedback varies within and between subjects. There is no agreed common policy on a timescale for the return of work. Initial assessment of students' abilities does not take place. Targets are not set and predicted grades are not used with rigour to measure performance. Good liaison between subject and progress tutors is used effectively to discuss students' progress.

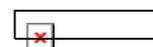
127. Progression from AS level to GCE A2 is variable. There has been a general decline over three years, particularly in the social sciences. Many students go on to subject-related courses in HE and permanent employment. Good offers are made to adult students on the access to HE humanities course from a wide range of universities. Students are given very good guidance and support. They find staff easy to approach and can readily obtain help with personal and learning problems. Additional learning support is also provided, sometimes on a one-to-one basis by progress tutors who liaise well with subject staff.

Leadership and management

128. Some aspects of leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Humanities has a curriculum leader who is responsible for the structure of the curriculum area. Responsibility for subjects or courses is delegated to staff within the structure. Their roles and responsibilities are undefined in job descriptions. The quality and rigour of day-to-day course management varies and there are different models of key teaching and learning practices such as lesson plans, schemes of work and marking and assessment strategies. Some of these are ineffective and lesson plans are generally poor. Inconsistencies impact on students' learning experiences. Best practice is not always shared within and between subjects. The access pathway in humanities is part of the curriculum area structure and has a course leader. This provision is not integrated into the humanities area and access staff do not participate in humanities meetings.

129. Action and development plans arising from self-assessment lack quantifiable targets. Proposed action lacks detail and appropriate milestones for long-term projects. Few of the targets set after self-evaluation in 2002 have been reached. Monitoring of leadership performance is not robust enough.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates and high retention rates on full-time level 3 programmes
- high proportion of high grade pass rates on level 3 programmes
- good teaching and learning in many lessons
- strong development of spoken language skills in modern foreign languages
- very effective use of ILT in modern foreign languages to enhance learning
- good recruitment to full-time level 3 modern foreign language programmes.

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on GCSE English programmes
- narrow range of teaching strategies to meet students' needs
- narrow range of provision below level 3 in English.

Scope of provision

130. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time programmes in English and modern foreign languages. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and follow full-time advanced level courses. There are 369 students studying full time on advanced courses in English in addition to 42 part-time adult students. Some 138 students are studying full time on modern foreign languages courses. A further 66 students on full-time courses are studying English GCSE in addition to 30 part-time adult students. There are also 193 students studying on part-time courses in modern foreign languages in the evening.

Achievement and standards

131. Pass rates are very high for full-time students. There are very high pass rates and high

retention rates on full-time level 3 programmes. The proportion of higher-grade passes is impressive. GCSE Spanish pass and retention rates are high. Retention and pass rates at GCSE are low. There is good progression to university.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	156	203	113
		% retention	59	72	68
		% pass rate	63	45	44
AS-level German	3	No. of starts	21	50	33
		% retention	95	76	88
		% pass rate	80	74	90
AS-level French	3	No. of starts	59	46	44
		% retention	90	87	89
		% pass rate	96	90	95
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	39	72	73
		% retention	74	82	81
		% pass rate	97	97	97
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	94	66	57
		% retention	74	100	98
		% pass rate	96	100	98
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	118	76	76
		% retention	78	96	93
		% pass rate	95	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

132. Teaching and learning are good in many lessons and all lessons observed were satisfactory or better. The best lessons demonstrate a variety of learning activities to promote students' understanding and to develop their discursive and evaluative skills. For example, in an AS-level English language group, the teacher used pair work in which students deconstructed the ways in which documents about a dispute between a college and the students' union used language to persuade students to different points of view and actions. All students contributed to the feedback session using linguistic terminology with particular confidence and competence. In an English language and literature lesson, students played a decision game with quotations on written slips of paper which led to an excellent exercise on the differences between a 19th century and 20th century diary. Teaching in part-time lessons is satisfactory in both English and modern foreign languages, with tutors having a good rapport with adult students. However, the range of resources used in the classroom is often limited.

133. In English lessons, the lack of specific learning objectives on most lesson plans contribute to an overall lack of focus, variety and pace in some classes. In addition, most schemes of work are lists of topics without an indication of method, resources, key skills development or differentiation. Insufficient attention is paid during the planning stages to addressing individual learning styles and ability levels. This means that some lessons are too reliant on teacher input at the expense of active student learning. For example, in an AS-level lesson, a 40 minute section involved the teacher

reading and expanding on a handout to the group with only occasional requests for students' input. In another lesson, the more able students finished the group task 10 minutes before many of the others and were not given opportunities to extend their learning. There is insufficient sharing of good practice and resources across advanced level evening and daytime lessons.

134. All teachers demonstrate an excellent or very good command of their subject. There are good resources and accommodation is adequate. The library stock is particularly good and the use of ILT in modern foreign languages is very effective. English rooms have little ICT equipment, although one networked computer suite of 30 machines is available if pre-booked. There is very effective use of ICT with full-time modern foreign language students. Teachers engage and stimulate students by integrating the use of computers effectively into lessons through the careful use of current video clips, audio materials, Internet materials and television recordings from other countries. In addition, the use of ICT resources allows individuals to progress at their own rate.

135. There is good monitoring of students' progress on full-time courses. Moderation arrangements on level 3 courses are good and cross-college standardisation on GCSE English courses is improving. Feedback from external moderators is very good. Advanced level students' progress against target grades is discussed, and recorded, and an action plan is devised in twice-termly progress reviews. Most work is annotated closely and returned promptly, although this is inconsistent in English. There is good recruitment to full-time level 3 modern foreign language courses.

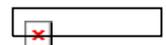
136. There is a limited range of English provision below level 3. Some students are unable to follow a GCSE English course because their vocational timetable clashes with the scheduled English lesson. There is no appropriate progression provision for students who have achieved grades E to G in GCSE English.

137. Support for students is very effective. Students value the accessibility and approachability of the staff and one-to-one tutorials are very good. Staff value the college's attendance and retention officers and educational care officers, who provide significant and speedy support when a need is identified.

Leadership and management

138. Leadership and management are inconsistent. There is insufficient consistency in quality assurance procedures. Advanced level full-time courses are well managed, but level 2 English provision across sites and part-time modern foreign languages provision are not well integrated into college systems. The management of key skills is unsatisfactory. The English team teach on the access course, but lines of communication are unclear between subject and pathway management.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- some excellent and much good teaching, meeting needs of individual students in literacy and numeracy lessons

- students are confident and independent in learning

- effective support for students

- effective partnerships and collaboration to widen participation.

Weaknesses

- inconsistent quality and poor achievement of key skills

- insufficient sharing of good practice between key skills and basic skills teams.

Scope of provision

139. There are 457 students enrolled on basic skills literacy and numeracy courses in both the college and the City of York provision. Some 133 students receive additional learning support for literacy and/or numeracy. There are 1014 students enrolled on the key skill in application of number course and 982 on the key skill in communication course.

140. The inspection covered courses in literacy and numeracy from entry level to level 2. Courses are timetabled within the college, in community settings and on employers' premises. There are collaborative franchise arrangements with York City Council and health and social services to run family literacy and numeracy and related courses in schools and community settings. Inspection also covered learning support for literacy and numeracy, and key skills at level 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

141. Achievements on discrete literacy and numeracy courses are good. Most students achieve their personal learning goals and many gain external accreditation. Key skills achievements are poor, although there are indications of some improvement in the current year. Achievements by students on franchised City of York Football Club programmes were not recorded on the college data system in 2002/03, although, there was satisfactory achievement in a range of external qualifications. Changes in management procedures have been instigated so that students' achievements are reported accurately in the current year. Students' work in discrete basic skills lessons is good and they are satisfied with their progress. Teachers in City of York franchised provision set challenging targets for students on basic skills courses and offer three different accreditation options to students.

142. The very low achievement of key skills qualifications has prompted some improvements to approaches such as flexible on-line assessment for work-based learners. Improvements in key skills delivery and achievement are not monitored systematically.

Quality of education and training

143. Most teaching of discrete literacy and numeracy lessons is good or better and some is excellent. There is effective and detailed planning for individual students, based on detailed initial assessment, leading to the successful achievement of individual learning outcomes. In the best lessons, teachers are purposeful, dynamic, exciting and engage students. Well chosen materials

and activities motivate students to learn. Students gain confidence through learning which relates to their own lives and experiences. In the better key skills lessons, work links to the vocational area and builds on students' prior knowledge. For example, a hair and beauty lesson used naturally occurring opportunities in salon work to practice and reinforce numeracy and communication skills. Teachers in basic skills lessons, in college and outreach centres, make effective use of a good range of materials and approaches including those derived from the Skills for Life initiative.

144. Opportunities to share good practice between basic skills and key skills staff are missed and students' learning opportunities are diminished. For example, a key skills numeracy lesson on calculating areas was teacher centred, passive and provided few opportunities for practical learning. By contrast, a family numeracy lesson in the community dealt with the same topic flexibly and centred on the students. The teacher used a range of learning materials so that students gained confidence and undertook a variety of graduated learning tasks; making progress, asking questions and seeking help when needed. Key skills lessons make little use of the Skills for Life materials. Weaker key skills lessons are dull, slow paced, teacher centred, and cover knowledge and skills which students already have.

145. Staff who are teaching and supporting basic skills literacy and numeracy have good skills and are qualified sufficiently. Accommodation for basic skills in the city centre, at college and in outreach centres is satisfactory.

146. Teachers of basic skills literacy and numeracy courses use college tutorial and review schemes to monitor progress effectively. Teachers monitor learning support well and collaborate with tutors. The learning support co-ordinator maintains effective and up-to-date records of support for students. Tutors in City of York franchised work check progress well. Monitoring of key skills is devolved to curriculum areas and course teams, and is inconsistent. Some teachers monitor performance and achievement well, in other areas, planning is poor and progress is not monitored. Initial assessments are not generally used to plan the teaching and learning of key skills. There is no central monitoring of key skills teaching, learning and achievement.

147. The college works in partnership with many organisations to widen participation and meet community needs. Examples include lessons at the city centre Future Prospects centre, work on local employers' premises, family literacy and numeracy work in local schools and other franchise partnerships, and collaboration with health and social services. These partnerships are effective in reaching new learners, although lines of responsibility and quality control are not always clear.

148. A good and thorough induction enables basic skills discrete students to become aware of their own learning and learning styles. In community settings, induction is offered flexibly to new students joining at different times in the year.

149. Learning support is good and addresses the needs of students effectively. A good and comprehensive range of learning support is available for students who need it or who have disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Staff provide good support in and out of lessons. Support staff are well used and effective although some teachers do not plan for them. Individual support lessons are well structured. Students feel they are on the right programme. Some areas are slow to return initial screening results.

Leadership and management

150. The responsibility for management and co-ordination of the areas covered in this inspection is divided between five different college managers. Discrete courses in literacy and numeracy, both in college and in the community, are well managed. Managers ensure that staff teams adopt a consistent approach and maintain a high standard of service to students. Staff meetings and quality assurance processes are used effectively. The self-assessment report and quality assurance processes have prompted critical reflection and enabled action to be taken to make improvements. There has been good or satisfactory progress on the majority of issues. The college is making good progress in implementing the Skills for Life curriculum initiative.

151. There are weaknesses in the management of key skills. Responsibility for key skills lies with curriculum areas. The quality assurance self-assessment process has identified very low achievement of key skills. Progress to improve key skills is not monitored consistently and the key skills lessons are not co-ordinated centrally. Whilst there is some evidence that achievements of key skills are improving, the inconsistent delivery and lack of effective monitoring prevent the college from mapping this progress.

Part D: College data

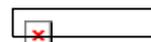
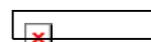


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	10	28
2	23	33
3	65	27
4/5	0	3
Other	2	10
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in Autumn 2003

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,264	814	9
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	122	216	1
Engineering, technology and manufacture	347	233	3
Business administration, management and professional	351	776	5
Information and communication technology	1,664	750	11
Retailing, customer service and transportation	292	533	4
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	944	1,479	11

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	288	941	5
Health, social care and public services	605	848	6
Visual and performing arts and media	1,244	143	6
Humanities	1,819	355	10
English, languages and communication	4,626	499	22
Foundation programmes	483	183	3
Unknown AoL	43	982	4
Total	14,092	8,752	100

Source: provided by the college in Summer 2004

* figures have been rounded and may not total 100%

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003*	2001	2002	2003*
1	Starters excluding transfers	775	537	718	1,677	1,223	1,201
	Retention rate %	67	72	70	72	72	72
	National average %	75	76	**	69	70	**
	Pass rate %	56	62	73	57	72	70
	National average %	69	71	**	68	71	**
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,449	1,646	1,478	1,284	1,846	1,821
	Retention rate %	71	71	64	76	76	64
	National average %	70	72	**	68	68	**
	Pass rate %	69	68	72	72	64	69
	National average %	67	71	**	68	72	**
3	Starters excluding transfers	5,685	5,209	4,945	1,658	1,609	1,536
	Retention rate %	76	84	86	73	76	76
	National average %	71	77	**	68	70	**
	Pass rate %	87	84	87	73	67	71
	National average %	77	79	**	69	72	**
4/5	Starters excluding	2	0	40	108	152	295

	transfers						
	Retention rate %	100	0	65	77	74	69
	National average %	73	71	**	67	67	**
	Pass rate %	100	0	92	51	48	63
	National average %	54	53	**	55	56	**

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

* college (2003)

** data unavailable

Sources of information:

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

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

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	66	31	4	110
Level 2 (intermediate)	59	28	12	49
Level 1 (foundation)	79	21	0	19
Other sessions	75	25	0	12
Totals	66	29	5	190