



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards
in Education

Peterborough Regional College

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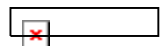
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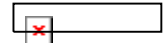
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Basic information about the college

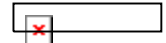


Name of college:	Peterborough Regional College
Type of college:	Further Education
Principal:	Don Lawson
Address of college:	Park Crescent Peterborough PE1 4DZ
Telephone number:	01733 767366
Fax number:	01733 767986
Chair of governors:	Martin Fisher
Unique reference number:	130613
Name of reporting inspector:	Tony Nasta
Dates of inspection:	19 th April 2004

Part A: Summary

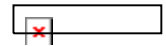


Information about the college



Peterborough Regional College is a large college, with a range of further education (FE) and higher education (HE) courses, that serves the city of Peterborough, a unitary local authority, and surrounding areas. The main campus is in a residential area about half-a-mile from the city centre and there are three smaller sites where management, accounting, information technology (IT) and basic skills courses are offered. Courses are offered from pre-entry to HE level and there is provision in all 14 of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) areas of learning. The numbers of students on courses in land-based industries and retailing are very small. In 2002/03 the college enrolled approximately 5,760 full-time and 12,700 part-time students. Work-based learning is substantial, approximately 400 learners, especially in construction, engineering and hairdressing. The college has two centres of vocational excellence (CoVE) in construction and manufacturing in conjunction with other colleges in the region. Through co-operation with local schools, the college is expanding vocational provision for students aged 14 to 19, and there are 170 pupils in the 14 to 16 age range attending vocational courses at the college. The college's mission is to 'raise the aspirations and achievements of learners and widen participation in high quality education and training within a caring organisation'.

How effective is the college?



Students benefit from good teaching, guidance and learning support. Through strong partnerships with local employers, schools and community groups, the college has successfully extended access to education and training in its local community. Nine out of the twelve curriculum areas and leadership and management were judged to be good. Three were judged to be satisfactory. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- high pass rates on most full-time courses

- responsiveness to the needs of students with low prior attainments

- generally good teaching

- very effective partnerships and collaboration with schools, employers and community organisations

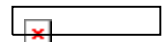
- o good management of curriculum areas
- o excellent communication of strategic direction to both internal and external groups.

What should be improved

- o levels of student retention on many courses
- o teaching methods to stretch students
- o use of targets to monitor and improve student performance
- o analysis at a college-wide level to improve the curriculum and overall standards.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Good. There is much good teaching of science and mathematics. Leadership and management are effective and there are high pass rates on many courses. The marking of students work is comprehensive and rigorous, but target setting is underdeveloped.
Construction	Good. Retention and pass rates are high on many courses. The quality of students' written and practical work is good. Theory and practice in many lessons are well integrated. Internal verification is rigorous. Information technology is not sufficiently incorporated in the curriculum and there is inadequate use of targets and milestones in

	work-based reviews. The provision in work-based learning is satisfactory.
Engineering	Good. There are good pass rates on many courses. However, there is low completion of foundation modern apprenticeships for work-based learners. Teaching and learning are good. Accommodation and equipment provide a stimulating base for learning. There is good management of the programmes and learners but the use of individual learning plans is underdeveloped. The provision in work-based learning is satisfactory.
Business administration, management and professional	Good. There are high pass rates on many courses. Most teaching is good or better, but a few lessons lack variety. There is strong support for students, and many progress to higher levels in college. Management is effective and helps to improve standards and the quality of provision.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on full-time courses. Adult learners develop good practical skills. Teaching is sound; all students receive good individual support, but some students are not sufficiently challenged. Management is sound; assessment is satisfactory, although monitoring of students progress in community courses is ineffective.
Hospitality and catering	Good. Teaching and learning is of a high standard with well managed courses provided from entry level to HE. There are high pass rates and good retention rates on most programmes with students acquiring good skills. Support for learning is good and there is good integration of students with disabilities. Pass rates are low on a few courses and there is a need to improve the use of action-planning to monitor student progress.
Leisure, travel and sport	Good. The course offer is broad. Retention and pass rates on most courses are good. Students are enthused by teaching in practical classes where they are encouraged to demonstrate initiative and leadership. The opportunities for students to extend their personal skills and social skills are enhanced by excellent links with industry.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Curriculum leadership is good. There are high retention and pass rates on most full-time courses. Monitoring of student progress is rigorous including very thorough feedback. The hairdressing salons need to be updated to meet demand and future requirements. Key skills are not sufficiently integrated into teaching and learning.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses. Much of the teaching promotes good independent learning, personal confidence and practical skills, but there is some poor planning and management of lessons. There is good pastoral and academic support for full-time students. The development of staff skills is inadequate and assessment is underdeveloped on some courses.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Students who complete their courses generally achieve their learning goals with pass rates at or above national averages. Student work in some areas is good and there are some highly productive links with employers and the cultural industries. Retention is low on several courses. Class sizes are small and this restricts the range of teaching and learning methods.
English for speakers of other languages	Good. There is a rigorous system of initial and diagnostic assessment. Individual learning plans are used effectively giving students a clear sense of purpose. There is low attendance in many lessons.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Students benefit from good management, guidance and

	teaching. Their confidence and capability is significantly improved. The range of courses is wide and growing - both at the college and in the community. Whilst there are many examples of well-integrated literacy, numeracy and key skills development, the response of some vocational areas to developing these skills is weak.
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How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are good. The college has made good progress since the last inspection. A newly established and strong senior management team provide a clear strategic direction for the college. There is very effective collaboration and partnership working. Internal and external communication is very good. Strategies to improve pass rates have had some success especially on full-time courses. Provision has expanded for students aged 14 to 16 and there has been a sharp increase in the number of students taking basic skills courses. Management information is good and meets the needs of the curriculum by producing timely and informative reports. Strategic planning is comprehensive and well researched. Management of the curriculum is good in most areas. Much of the teaching and learning is good and the college has less unsatisfactory teaching than the average for FE colleges. However, only a small proportion of teaching is outstanding. The college self-assessment report is comprehensive, but the application of quality assurance procedures to secure improvements at a college-wide level is not sufficiently thorough. Some targets are insufficiently defined and there is insufficient analysis of data to secure improvements. Some class sizes are small and deployment of some staff is inefficient. Financial management is effective.

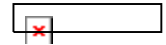
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Working collaboratively with a range of partners, the college plays an important role in serving the needs of the local community and fulfils its mission to widen participation. There is a wide range of courses to promote progression opportunities in most curriculum areas. Partnerships with local schools are effective and there is a wide range of courses for students aged 14 to 16 in many areas of the college. The college is focused on working with under-represented groups, and is successful in increasing its community-based provision. Other actions to widen participation are in place, such as classes specifically designed to meet the needs of mainly Pakistani women. The range of courses offered by the college at all levels provides clear progression routes for most students. The college has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy and action plan, and a race equality policy which comply fully with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Data on the academic performance of different minority ethnic groups and economically disadvantaged groups is monitored at some levels of the college, but actions to address weaknesses are insufficient. Support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities are good. However, at the time of inspection, students with restricted mobility are unable to access some parts of the college.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Guidance and support for students are good. Support arrangements are well planned, accessible and used extensively. Informative material is produced in various community languages and is sensitive to equality and diversity issues. There are very good links with external organisations like the Connexions Service to consolidate the very comprehensive range of services for students. Full-time and part-time students receive very good guidance about careers education and preparing for HE and employment, and they have access to health and financial advice, counselling and welfare support. The college induction programme is thorough and the initial assessment process contributes to the early identification of students' needs to ensure support arrangements are in place. Teaching staff and additional support staff communicate effectively to provide appropriate additional support to meet the identified learning and support needs of students. The tutorial programme is satisfactory, but insufficient use is made of effective target setting and one-to-one tutorials. There are college policies and procedures to monitor punctuality and attendance, and these are supported by attendance monitors who ensure reporting takes place. Appropriate policies and an operational Child Protection Group monitor and respond to child protection issues.

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

- welcoming and friendly atmosphere

- respect between teachers and students

- range of advice services

- learning resource centre and the library

- wide range of courses

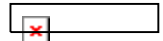
- clean and tidy environment.

What they feel could be improved

- more social and eating space

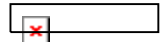
- the speed with which assessed work is returned
- access to Forward House for physically disabled students.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



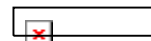
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	67	30	3
19+ and WBL*	68	27	5
Learning 16-18	64	33	3
19+ and WBL*	68	28	4

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. Peterborough Regional College offers a wide range of courses that can be studied full time and part time. Courses are offered in all 14 of the LSC areas of learning, as Table 2 in Part D of the report shows. Taking patterns of retention and pass rates at a college-wide level, the key indicators show that pass rates are above the averages for FE colleges at level 3 and also for full-time students on level 2 courses. However, pass rates on level 1 courses for students aged over 19 are below the national average and have been for the last three years. Patterns of student retention are at or close to the national averages, although there was a fall in retention in 2003. When the performance of the college is analysed over a four-year period, there has been a substantial improvement in students' achievements.

2. Across the college as a whole the levels of retention and achievements of students from Asian British (Pakistani, Indian and Chinese backgrounds) is substantially lower than that of students from white British backgrounds. Within Peterborough as a local education authority (LEA), the same pattern of achievement is reflected in the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results of local schools, where students from Pakistani backgrounds have significantly poorer results than those from white British backgrounds.

3. Standards of attainment are highest at entry and level 1. In the former inspectors judged 81% of attainment to be good or better. They are lower on level 2 (57%) and level 3 (61%) courses, where in many instances students were not fully challenged by the teaching methods. This is reflected in the low proportion of students achieving merit and distinction grades in many curriculum areas. The overall attendance rate was 79%, slightly above the national average for FE colleges. It was highest, at 86%, on construction courses and lowest on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course at 57%.

Students aged 16 to 18

4. About 45% of students, as measured by student full-time equivalents, are in the 16 to 18 age range. Students generally make good progress. Pass rates are above the national averages on GCSE, general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level), general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) and national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses. They are below the national averages on 'other vocational' qualifications such as first certificate and diploma courses.

5. At the time of the inspection over 200 students were pursuing full-time advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and GCE A2 courses. Pass rates on both AS-level and GCE A2 courses have improved over the last three years to above the national averages for FE colleges. In 2003 the GCE A-level pass rate was 91% and in several subjects, there was a 100% pass rate. Students were less successful at AS level where the overall pass rate was 80 percent. There is a low continuation rate from AS level to GCE A2, only 53% in 2003, well below the corresponding average for FE colleges.

6. In most curriculum areas, students are well prepared for progression to work and employment. For example, in construction, engineering, business administration and hospitality they develop good occupational skills through working with modern equipment in workshops and simulated work environments. On many courses, links with employers are good and students develop good vocational skills through work experience. For example, in performing arts, students work closely with the local theatre company and in dance, students achieve high levels of skill and dexterity. Standards of full-time student attainment are generally good across the college and in all cases at least satisfactory.

7. Students are generally highly motivated and able to work independently. Achievements in key skills are well above the national averages, especially at level 1. Levels of internal progression are good in many curriculum areas with students progressing from foundation and intermediate to advanced courses and also from FE to HE. The college does not systematically analyse the pattern of destinations to HE and employment.

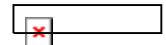
Adult learners

8. About 12,500 adults were enrolled in 2002/03. Through close co-operation with the local community and local work-based training providers, the college is increasingly attracting adults who have had little previous success in formal education. Many have never taken a qualification before coming to the college and have poor skills in literacy and numeracy. As a result of good teaching and guidance, levels of self-confidence and capability are substantially enhanced. Students gain confidence by taking foundation level courses in the community, for example, in ESOL, and then progress to higher levels of study at the main college campuses.

9. Levels of success in achieving qualifications are mixed. On level 1 courses both retention and pass rates are below the national average. This particularly reflects the poor achievements of information and communications technology (ICT) courses in 2003. The college has addressed the issue by changing the qualifications on offer and the arrangements for managing the community provision. On level 2 and level 3 courses, retention rates were below the national averages, in contrast to pass rates, which were above the national averages in both 2002 and 2003. In-year retention for 2003/04 has improved.

10. The standard of work of most work-based students is good and most learners are gaining good practical skills. The achievement of advanced modern apprentices is generally satisfactory. However, for the foundation modern apprentices in construction and in engineering, achievement, as measured by completion of the full modern apprenticeship framework, is low.

Quality of education and training



11. Teaching is consistently good. Inspectors observed 228 lessons where 67.5% of teaching was good or better. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was half of the national average for general FE colleges and there was no unsatisfactory teaching in seven out of twelve areas. The quality of learning and attainment showed a similar pattern of grades. Teaching was particularly good in hairdressing, science and maths and literacy and numeracy. The best teaching occurred in practical lessons and was taught by part-time teachers with adult students working towards level 3 qualifications. Teaching for students at AS level and GCE A level was good. Students learnt best on level 2 courses and demonstrated good attainment at entry level and level 1 lessons.

12. The most effective lessons are well planned with clear objectives, which are reinforced with students throughout their learning. Teachers use open and direct questions skilfully to manage the students learning and extend their understanding. Some teachers use role-play, presentations and games effectively to help students think creatively about a topic and work collaboratively with their peers. Level 3 students in hospitality gain supervisory experience by working with key stage 4 pupils. Business students presented a successful conference in the college. In construction, theory and practice is well integrated and relevant to the workplace. The use of workshops and realistic work environments in hairdressing and hospitality are particularly effective.

13. Teaching and learning materials are mostly well produced and appropriate for students with a wide range of abilities. Materials demonstrate equality of opportunity and diversity to students. Most teachers are knowledgeable and competent and successfully convey an enthusiasm for their subject to the students. Students value the friendly and approachable teachers. The experience of adult students is used to broaden and reinforce learning. Students' progress is frequently checked throughout the lesson and teachers are mostly responsive to the students' feedback. Learning and attainment is evaluated effectively in most lessons and actions agreed for subsequent independent study. Action plans in some curriculum areas are not sufficiently detailed and individual learning plans are underdeveloped. Whilst students are generally successful in gaining key skills qualifications, there are some areas where key skills are not sufficiently integrated such as sport and travel and work-based assessment in hairdressing.

14. Although teaching is mostly good, inspectors observed few examples of outstanding teaching

that fully challenged students. Some teachers do not involve students sufficiently or take account of their individual needs. The teaching is not always sufficiently focused on providing challenge to the most able students. Students working in groups do not maintain enough interest, fail to focus on the activity or do not have enough adequate tasks to extend their learning. Some curriculum areas, such as construction, engineering and business, do not make good use of IT.

15. The college's main campus is in a residential area, close to the city centre. A nearby annex, Hightrees House, is used for visual and performing arts and financial and management courses are run in a leased building, Forward House, some 3 miles from the main campus. Use is also made of two community centres for IT, ESOL and basic skills courses. College accommodation across most curriculum areas is attractive, clean and well maintained. In many teaching areas, the display of students' work enlivens the environment. There are a good range of security and facilities staff to help to maintain a secure and safe environment. Significant improvements have been made to the estate since the last inspection, for example, the number of mobile classrooms has been reduced. However, sports and public services students still have some lessons in mobile classrooms with poor décor and external noise and distraction. Most parts of the campus have satisfactory access and facilities for people with mobility difficulties. There are some exceptions, for example, the science laboratories and parts of Forward House.

16. In general, specialist equipment is of adequate quality and effectively used. In engineering there are good resources in the mechanical, electrical and motor vehicle workshops. There has been significant investment in industrial standard equipment for students who study in media programmes. The college has used some of the funding for developing a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in construction to update resources for construction students. The library is well-stocked with a satisfactory range of newspapers, trade magazines and journals. However, in hairdressing, the salons are in need of updating to bring them to current industrial standards. There is a well-equipped nursery providing crèche facilities for staff and students at the main campus.

17. The ratio of students to computers is currently 5.4:1 which is adequate, and most teaching staff also have access to their own computers. However, students in sports, public services, leisure and travel do not have sufficient access to computers. The college intranet provides access to some teaching material, a range of information for the students and to policies and procedures for staff.

18. Teaching and support staff are generally well qualified. The college employs 168 full-time teaching staff, and 48 staff who teach on a part-time fractional basis. There are also 207 teachers who are employed on an hourly basis. Although the college has a substantial in-house teacher training programme, the proportions of teachers who have achieved nationally endorsed initial teaching qualifications is low. Currently 54% of the full-time teachers and 34% of part-time teachers are fully qualified. Another 30% of full-time and 10% of part-time teachers are studying for a nationally approved teaching qualification.

19. Assessment is fair and thorough in most areas. Students clearly understand the assessment criteria for their course which is reinforced through the course handbook and well-written assignments. There are well-considered policies and procedures for assessing and monitoring students' work. Internal verification is rigorous and staff make good use of the feedback from awarding bodies. Most assignments are marked promptly and returned with useful comments and guidance on improving the student's performance. In engineering, art and design, health and social care, some feedback is less useful to students. It is not always given in a timely manner and it does not always identify how students can improve their work.

20. Students' progress is effectively monitored in most areas. Full-time students, and increasingly part-time students, have frequent opportunities to review their performance and agree action plans. Parents and employers value the regular reports that they receive on the students' progress. Target dates are regularly discussed with students at course workshops, tutorials and progress reviews. In science and maths a new system of monitoring and action planning is being piloted which combines assessment grades and agreed actions. In electrical installation an internet based NVQ assessment system is being piloted to reduce the need for a paper based portfolio. Target setting and the use of individual learning plans is not sufficiently detailed and measurable in many areas, for instance science and mathematics, engineering and construction work-based learning.

21. A wide choice of courses is offered to enable students to achieve appropriate qualifications. The college provides students with a variety of attendance modes, for example, full time, part time, day, evening, work-based learning and Saturday classes. There are clear progression opportunities from entry level through to HE in most curriculum areas. For example, progression is good in business administration and engineering. However, there are low levels of progression to employment for full-time motor vehicle students and progression for AS-level students to GCE A2 qualifications in science and mathematics is low.

22. Collaboration with the local community and employers is good and the college is working in partnership with a broad range of organisations to stimulate local economic development and tackle social exclusion. It has a good relationship with local schools, and 170 year 10 and 11 pupils attend the college on the Increased Flexibility (IF) programme to gain vocational qualifications in 7 different curriculum areas. A strategic aim for the college is to extend its links with under-represented groups, and continue to be proactive in increasing its community based provision. Effective links to widen participation are in place, such as classes to meet the needs of mainly Pakistani women, and basic science for students with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities. Open days, taster sessions, newsletters, and promotional visits are used to raise the profile of the college and promote its courses. Graphic Design students developed flyers for the college's involvement in the local Asian Mela.

23. The college's marketing team work closely with curriculum managers to ensure courses meet local demands and that they are promoted well. Local needs are well researched to develop a profile of the area and direct marketing activities. Publicity materials are sensitive to equality and diversity issues, available in different community languages and in Braille, and are aimed at encouraging people to overcome adversity. The college and most curriculum areas provide students with a broad range of enrichment activities, including fund-raising initiatives, food hygiene, first aid, drama and deaf-awareness courses and extensive use of outside activities to enhance student learning opportunities and employment prospects.

24. The college provides good, impartial pre-entry advice and guidance to students to ensure they are enrolled on courses appropriate to their abilities and career aspirations. Support arrangements are well planned and responsive to the breadth of need. The college's 'Information Centre' has been awarded external kite-marks for the range and quality of advice. There are very good links with external organisations that consolidate the very comprehensive range of services for students. These include good partnership arrangements with Connexions that enhance the college's own services of advice and guidance. The range of services provided by the college include: careers education and guidance, preparing for HE and employment, health advice and counselling, financial advice, welfare support and additional learning support. All of these services are well publicised, easily accessible and used extensively. However, data on students' progression and destinations to HE and employment are not collected or analysed as part of routine college-wide monitoring and evaluation.

25. The pastoral and academic support is good across all curriculum areas. Subject teachers are supportive of their students, give freely of their time and provide good on-course guidance. Many teachers have or are currently undertaking basic skills qualifications to enhance their support for students. Personal 'Learning Coaches' are employed by the college to help students organise their learning, set targets and identify priorities, and also to support staff with their tutorial tasks. Staff providing support services are qualified and experienced members of a dedicated team who liaise effectively with teachers and personal tutors.

26. Student induction is thorough and particularly comprehensive for full-time students. It is well structured and enables students to be familiar with college systems and course requirements. Induction also takes place in course or subject areas and is systematically followed up through the tutorial system. The initial assessment of students usually takes place during induction, and involves all full-time students and those part-time students attending the college for more than 8 hours per week. Students are screened for additional learning and/or additional support needs such as literacy, numeracy and key skills or, if disclosed, support for other needs including dyslexia, sensory and mobility needs. Part-time students attending the college for less than 8 hours a week can refer themselves for screening and/or access the range of additional support services which are provided

in the college or at outreach centres. The early identification of students' needs ensures that support arrangements are in place from the beginning of their courses.

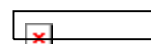
27. The college provides a wide range of good additional support to meet the identified learning and support needs of students. This includes one-to-one support, on-course support and support classes for literacy and numeracy, key skills, and discrete basic skills courses. There are good support arrangements for students with sensory impairments and those with specific learning difficulties, for example, students working towards hospitality qualifications. A thorough risk assessment is undertaken prior to students joining the course and support is provided through the effective use of carers, signs, modified equipment and learning materials being produced in Braille together with the use of a Braille machine to record evidence in portfolios.

28. The tutorial programme is satisfactory. In some curriculum areas it is well embedded, but in engineering and construction the organisation and delivery of tutorial support is inconsistent, and insufficient use is made of one-to-one tutorials to monitor students' progress. Individual action planning and reviews for students are effective in some areas, but in science, mathematics, hospitality and engineering, teachers do not set effective targets for assessing student progress and achievement.

29. College policies and procedures are in place for monitoring student punctuality and attendance. Students are well informed of the requirements through the induction process and the information contained in the college diary. For most curriculum areas punctuality and attendance is well monitored, but in science and mathematics and ESOL current arrangements are not effective. Three attendance monitors have been employed recently to ensure procedures for reporting are being carried out. Frequent and accurate reports are copied to each programme area manager and, where appropriate, letters are sent to parents and/or employers. A 're-engagement' policy exists to support those students identified as needing help to overcome the difficulties contributing to their continual lateness or absence.

30. The college has in place appropriate policies and procedures for addressing child protection legislation. A designated member of staff is responsible for child protection issues and a Child Protection Group is operational within the college to monitor and respond to the needs of vulnerable young people.

Leadership and management



31. Leadership and management are good. Strategic planning is systematic, comprehensive, widely researched and closely linked with local needs and national educational agendas. The college has a strong, newly established senior management team. The current principal has been in post since June 2002. Vice-principals for curriculum and business development and planning, have recently been appointed. Middle management has been re-organised and strengthened by the creation of programme area managers and curriculum team leaders. Although it is too early to judge the impact of the new arrangements, staff appreciate the clear lines of responsibility and accountability of management at all levels that have arisen from the re-organisation. Internal and external communication is very good. Meetings are frequent and effective at all levels. Senior managers are open and responsive. The college is accredited as an Investor in People.

32. Management at curriculum level is generally good and provides a clear direction. In a minority of cases, managers are slow to set a coherent strategy for sustained growth, especially where existing student numbers are low. Many curriculum areas have strong external links and are involved in effective partnerships to widen participation and meet local needs. Good examples of this include visual and performing arts and hairdressing and beauty therapy.

33. Governance is effective. Governors are committed and enthusiastic sponsors of the college.

There is a good range of skills and experience. Governors are involved in setting the strategic direction of the college and have a good understanding of the key educational objectives. There are good relations between governors and the principal and senior staff. The college has an independent clerk. In most cases governors ensure there is systematic monitoring of college performance; a lack of such monitoring was a weakness that was identified in the last inspection report. Governors recognise that there has been insufficient monitoring of particular aspects of student affairs such as the students union or recognition of the drop in the retention and pass rates of minority ethnic students. There is an active search committee, although there are a number of vacancies on the board that remain to be filled. Induction and development programmes for governors are available but these do not always meet individual needs. The average governor attendance for 2002/03 was 72% which falls short of the target of 85%.

34. Quality assurance arrangements have improved since the last inspection. The self-assessment process is understood by all staff. Data on students' achievement, retention and attendance, including national data, is used in making judgements. Students' views are gathered systematically and in many areas their concerns are acted upon. In engineering there is a strong focus on responding to students' views and improvements in the curriculum area have been made as a result. Many curriculum areas carry out this process thoroughly and are sufficiently self-critical to bring about continuous improvement. However, there is a lack of rigour in self-assessment in some curriculum areas. Weaknesses identified by self-assessment are not always addressed through action plans and agreed actions not always specific or time related. There is insufficient analysis of whole college data and subsequent target setting lacks rigour. For example, the college makes little effective use of value added data.

35. Management information in the college is good. Curriculum managers have confidence in the reports produced. The director of management information attends college management meetings to ensure that anomalies in data are resolved promptly. Staff have on-line access to management information and most regularly review performance against key targets. A spreadsheet has been produced for planning purposes, which brings together information at course, programme area and whole college level which integrates details on pay and non-pay, and income to aid financial and curriculum planning.

36. Staff development and appraisal are generally effective. Staff are now appraised annually. Where this is carried out effectively, targets are set for performance and individual training needs are identified. In a minority of cases staff appraisal is less effective and the process lacks rigour. The college has recognised the deficiencies in the appraisal process and is taking measures to ensure a more coherent assessment of performance and individual training needs. Arrangements for staff training and development are generally good. There is an annual programme of training opportunities. However, there is scope for improving the identification and response to the training needs of middle managers, given the substantial changes to their roles.

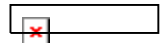
37. Teaching and learning are good or better in many areas, including, hairdressing and beauty therapy, science and mathematics and hospitality and catering. However, in many classes, inspectors noted the most able students were not sufficiently challenged. Most teachers work well in teams, produce high quality teaching materials and share good practice. The vocational training unit for modern apprentices is well integrated with the curriculum areas. A placement officer works closely with work-based assessors to co-ordinate initial assessment and progress reviews. The college has an established lesson observation process and all teachers are now observed annually. The grade profile for teaching and learning awarded by the college was significantly higher than the judgements made during inspection.

38. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. The college is compliant with equal opportunities legislation. Policies and guidance documents are readily available on the college intranet. Work to address the access requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act is planned and an initial audit has been undertaken. Measures for dealing with racial and sexual harassment, bullying and student grievances are clear and well understood. Teaching materials have been audited for stereotyping and bias. Positive promotion of equal opportunities occurs frequently in the curriculum, but especially in visual and performing arts, health and social care, business, information communication technology and construction. Recruitment activities, retention rates and student achievement are

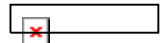
monitored by gender, ethnicity and disability, but subsequent action to tackle weaknesses is inadequate.

39. Management of the college finances is effective. Financial expenditure is carefully monitored and governors and managers receive monthly reports on financial matters. The capital bid process is established and understood by all staff. Inspectors judged that the college provides satisfactory value for money. Class sizes are small in some areas and this is associated with some inefficient deployment of staff. The college has made progress in expanding provision in response to national and local priorities and improved pass rates.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- generally high pass rates
- much good teaching and learning
- high standard of students' work
- comprehensive and rigorous marking of students work
- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- inadequate use of target setting and monitoring of students work
- low student attendance.

Scope of provision

40. There are over 360 student enrolments. The majority of students, around 66%, are on full-time courses and 58% are aged 16 to 18. GCSE qualifications may be taken in biology, science and mathematics and AS-level and GCE A2 subjects in biology, human biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, and AS-level environmental science. An access (science) course provides progression to HE for adult students. A full-time national certificate in applied science course is available and a six-week course in microbiology is offered in the evening.

Achievement and standards

41. Pass rates are generally good. The high pass rates on the GCSE biology course have been consistently above the national average for the past three years. Pass rates are also high on GCE A2 subjects, although student numbers are low. Pass rates for AS-level subjects are more mixed. AS-level mathematics has steadily improved and is above the national average, but AS-level chemistry has fallen and is now below the national average. Generally, retention rates are around the national average. The retention of students on the access to HE course is low, but pass rates are high for those who complete the course. Progression rates from the access to HE course are high and most students gain a place at university, other relevant college courses or employment.

42. The standard of students' work is good. For example, during a GCE A2 chemistry lesson, students carried out titrations with great precision to calculate the percentage purity of iron in iron sulphate. Students on the national certificate in applied science course used microscopes with dexterity and skill to identify different stages of ovulation. Students of mathematics work methodically through the problems they are given. They are capable of assimilating information and applying it in different contexts. Students demonstrate safe experimental technique in their practical work and they are fully aware of the risk assessments associated with laboratory procedures. Students' attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was low at 73%. Punctuality was generally satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Certificate of achievement in mathematics	1	No. of starts	54	68	40
		% retention	74	84	90
		% pass rate	70	72	78
GCSE mathematics (Grades A*-C)	2	No. of starts	146	120	170
		% retention	64	74	67
		% pass rate	48	53	55
GCSE science (Grades A*-C) *	2	No. of starts	21	19	23
		% retention	90	63	87
		% pass rate	47	42	40
GCSE biology (Grades A*-C)	2	No. of starts	14	18	26
		% retention	71	89	73
		% pass rate	80	75	84
AS-level human biology	3	No. of starts	11	30	21
		% retention	82	87	81
		% pass rate	55	81	53

AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	15	21	18
		% retention	80	90	83
		% pass rate	66	63	53
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	39	32	42
		% retention	70	69	67
		% pass rate	46	77	79

GCSE science double award in 2002/-3

Quality of education and training

43. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and explain mathematical concepts carefully. They use questions effectively to monitor students' understanding. Students' skills of presentation are developed well. For example, in an AS-level physics lesson on nuclear and particle physics, the teacher skilfully elicited further information from the students' to help them to develop their analysis and presentation. Effective use is made of diagrams and other learning aids. For example, in a GCSE lesson on Pythagoras theorem, rhymes were used to help students to learn formulae. Students are encouraged by teachers to work collaboratively and they work well together. The rapport between teachers and students is strong and encourages learning to take place. In the less effective examples of teaching, there is insufficient opportunity for students to become involved and the needs of the most able students' are not given enough attention. The use of ICT is not always fully exploited.

44. Teaching staff are well qualified and confident in their subject knowledge. Science technicians provide good support for laboratory work by carrying out risk assessments thoroughly, and they have provided training for teaching staff in this process. The college has four well-equipped science laboratories, with sufficient apparatus for the courses offered. Two laboratories lack network points, however, making it difficult to gain access to the Internet and college intranet. Currently, learners with restricted mobility have no access to the science area. However, access is to be improved by building a new walkway. The learning resources and library centre has a restricted and somewhat dated book stock for science and mathematics.

45. Comprehensive schemes of work, with assessment criteria, are in place for all courses. These are all shared with students. Internal moderation and verification procedures are robust. Written feedback to students provides clear advice for improvement. Correct solutions are provided for mathematical problems, to consolidate learning and provide alternative ways of analysing problems.

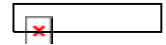
46. Personal tutors report regularly on the progress of students. Parents are contacted by letter or telephone if there is a disciplinary problem, poor punctuality or non-attendance. Personal tutors set individual targets for GCE A-level students, based on their prior GCSE achievement and subject teachers provide reports on the current progress of learners to personal tutors. However, this target-setting process is not detailed enough and action plans do not have specific, measurable targets. Students receive good advice and guidance on careers. They are well informed by tutors when making their applications for HE.

47. The department offers a broad range of GCSE and GCE A-level courses. Vocational courses are available for full-time learners at level 3, but there is no vocational science provision at levels 1 or 2. A certificate of achievement in mathematics course is offered as a preparation for GCSE mathematics, and the results of this latter course have steadily improved over the previous three years. Response to particular community needs is good. An introductory science course is offered to pupils from local schools and small groups of pupils are taught in the college each week. A basic science course is provided for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed management team are setting a clear direction and have a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observations take place for each teacher annually, from which professional development activities are set-up. There is no formal mechanism, however, for sharing good practice. Communication with staff is good and action plans are reviewed regularly. Some courses have small class sizes, leading to provision that is not cost-effective. Managers are addressing this issue of low enrolment by collaborating with schools and planning to set up alternative courses, mainly at levels 1 and 2.

Construction



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

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

Strengths

- generally high pass rates

- good retention on many courses

- good standard of students' work

- good integration of theory and practice in many lessons

- rigorous internal verification.

Weaknesses

- insufficient application of IT to support teaching and learning

- inadequate use of targets and milestones in work-based reviews.

Scope of provision

49. Construction craft courses are offered at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced levels.

They include NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in carpentry and joinery, plumbing and electrical installation. Technician and professional courses are also offered and include GNVQs, national and higher national certificates and the Chartered Institute of Building programmes. Currently, 67 learners aged 16 to 18 and 23 adults are studying full-time, and 155 learners aged 16 to 18 and 349 adults are enrolled on part-time courses. There are 218 foundation and advanced modern apprentices and provision for school pupils aged 14 to 16. In June 2003, the LSC awarded funding to a partnership of Peterborough Regional College, Cambridge Regional College and Isle College to develop a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in construction. In the first year this funding has enabled the upgrading of equipment, for example, the incorporation of automatic braking systems and the establishment of a regional electrical test centre.

Achievement and standards

50. Success in achieving targets and the standard of students' work are generally good. Although the pass rates on many courses are high, they have declined on a few courses. For example, the pass rates on the NVQ 2 installing electrical installation and equipment, NVQ 2 wood occupations and national certificate in building studies have been well above the national averages over the last three years. In contrast, the pass rates on the City and Guilds 2360-05 electrical installation part 1 theory and the GNVQ in construction and the built environment have declined. Across the many qualifications run by the college, the vast majority of students are successful. Retention rates on many courses, with the exception of technician courses, are good. Students' attendance has been consistently good and during the inspection week it averaged 86%.

51. The achievement of the advanced modern apprenticeship (AMA) Framework is generally satisfactory. Of the 42 AMAs who started in 2000, 20 have now completed the framework. Of the 37 AMAs who started in 2001, 6 have already achieved the framework and several others are on target to achieve it. The achievement of the foundation modern apprenticeship (FMA) framework is low. However, of the 31 apprentices who started in 2000, 16 gained NVQ 2 qualification. Similarly, 35 apprentices of the 58 who started in 2001 gained this award.

52. Students work well in lessons, they develop a range of hand skills and produce good practical work that meets industrial standards. For example, electrical installation students, used drawings and specifications to install and test electrical switchgears, lighting circuits and alarm systems. Students' portfolios and written assignment work are of a good standard. Portfolios of evidence contain a good range of evidence, including photographs and witness testimonies from employers that are cross-referenced to performance criteria and assessment plans.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
City and Guilds 2360-05 electrical installation part 1 (theory)	1	No. of starts	15	18	15
		% retention	100	72	100
		% pass rate	67	69	53
NVQ installing electrical systems and equipment	2	No. of starts	33	38	36
		% retention	67	68	78
		% pass rate	95	96	100
NVQ wood occupations	2	No. of starts	57	52	40
		% retention	32	60	65
		% pass rate	100	100	89
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	19	29	56
		% retention	47	62	73
		% pass rate	78	17	78

GNVQ (Int.) construction and the built environment	2	No. of starts	5	13	12
		% retention	100	85	75
		% pass rate	100	82	56
National certificate in building studies	3	No. of starts	12	16	25
		% retention	50	63	52
		% pass rate	100	90	100
National certificate in civil eng	3	No. of starts	24	13	17
		% retention	50	69	35
		% pass rate	100	89	83

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

Quality of education and training

53. Teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Most lessons are well planned. Learning outcomes are specific and shared with students. A variety of teaching methods is used. The quality of teaching for adult students is better than that for the 16 to 18 age group. Teachers draw effectively on adults' experience of work to enrich learning. There is good integration of theory and practice. Teachers make references to the current building legislation and codes of practice. They regularly check students' progress and understanding. Practical activities are well organised and relate closely to situations found in the workplace.

54. There is insufficient application of IT in lessons. Very little specialist computer software is used to support teaching and learning. However, there are exceptions to this. In one lesson students on the national certificate in civil engineering differentiated several mathematical functions and used the 'Autograph' computer software to check their answers.

55. Assignments are marked thoroughly and students receive constructive and helpful feedback. For practical tasks, students have workbooks that clearly specify the standard of the work that must be achieved. An Internet-based NVQ assessment and tracking system has been piloted in electrical installation, allowing a paperless portfolio of evidence. Whereas on-site assessments are satisfactory, work-based reviews are unsatisfactory. There is inadequate use of targets and milestones in the review process. Internal verification is rigorous and helpful feedback is provided to assessors. Assessment practice is improving as a result of internal verification.

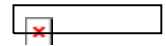
56. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and employers. There are good opportunities for students to progress to employment and HE. School links are good. A partnership has been established with a local secondary school to offer the GNVQ intermediate qualification for year 10 students. Support for students is satisfactory. All full-time students have initial diagnostic assessment in communication and application of number. Induction programmes incorporate health and safety issues. Key skills, in the main, are integrated well to the vocational context. The quality of tutorial support is inconsistent. Although tutorials are timetabled, they do not take place in all areas of the provision.

57. Human and physical resources adequately support the provision but there are insufficient teachers in carpentry and joinery. Most teachers are vocationally well qualified and have either achieved or are undertaking training towards teaching qualifications. Some have assessor and verifier awards. The construction area has a good range of workshops. Health and safety risk assessments are carried out and reviewed annually. There are adequate textbooks in the library but some are dated and refer to codes of practice that have been long superseded.

Leadership and management

58. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Recent changes in the curriculum management structure resulted in the appointment of a programme area manager with responsibility for construction, engineering, mathematics and science and two curriculum team leaders - one for electrical installation and the other for construction. There are regular and minuted team meetings. Course review and evaluation reports are well written and frequently monitored. The self-assessment report was accurate in its identification of strengths and weaknesses. Staff development is effective. Teachers promptly access the opportunity to undertake teacher training and occupational updating in industry. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient monitoring of student questionnaires or achievements by gender and ethnicity.

Engineering



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- good teaching and learning

- good accommodation and equipment

- good management of students and programmes

- effective links with employers.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory completion of foundation modern apprenticeships

- under-developed use of individual learning plans

- lack of work experience on full-time programmes.

Scope of provision

59. Engineering courses include motor vehicle service and repair, fabrication and welding, manufacturing, electrical and electronics and computer servicing. Programmes are offered for both craft and technician students from levels 1 to 5. At the time of the inspection there were 350 students aged 16 to 18 and 639 students aged 19 and over, 278 attended full time and 711 part time. There were 42 advanced modern apprentices and 39 foundation modern apprentices. Eighty-four students aged 14 to 16 attend engineering programmes in motor vehicle servicing and manufacturing from seven local secondary schools. Engineering is based on the main college site and is supported by 18 full-time and 8 part-time teachers.

Achievement and standards

60. Students' achievements in engineering are good. Pass rates are significantly above national averages on most programmes and have improved over the last three years. Completion rates of modern apprenticeship frameworks are satisfactory for advanced modern apprentices and are unsatisfactory for foundation modern apprentices. Too many work-based students complete after their expected finish date. Retention rates are better than those normally seen in this programme area.

61. Manufacturing students work competently and safely from drawings and produce work within the expected tolerances. They check the accuracy using a variety of measuring instruments before submitting their work for assessment by the teacher. Electronics students competently use multi-meters and oscilloscopes for testing circuits. Motor vehicle students make good use of manufacturers' data in fault diagnosis and servicing of motor vehicles. Some students have difficulty dealing with fundamental mathematical equations. Most students have good IT skills and make effective use of computers in their studies and in the submission of assignments. Students are encouraged to work independently and to provide support for their peers. Students develop strong personal skills and enjoy good working relationships with their teachers and fellow students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Full-time motor vehicle programme*	1	No. of starts	23	31	28
		% retention	78	94	79
		% pass rate	94	56	86
NVQ performing engineering operations (one year)	2	No. of starts	10	68	69
		% retention	80	79	91
		% pass rate	88	100	89
GNVQ intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	13	13	12
		% retention	69	85	75
		% pass rate	67	55	67
City and Guilds 4351-07 computer-aided draughting and design (one year)	2	No. of starts	73	64	66
		% retention	70	88	77
		% pass rate	67	70	84
National certificate in engineering (two year)	3	No. of starts	44	55	30
		% retention	41	75	83
		% pass rate	83	90	88

National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	18	10	16
		% retention	61	60	56
		% pass rate	64	100	89

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

* NVQ 1 vehicle service replacement in 00-01, City and Guilds 6956 Progression award in 01-02, IMI Award in vehicle maintenance and repair from 2002/03 onwards.

Quality of education and training

62. Teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons carefully and link the class activity effectively to assessment and to the development of key skills. Teachers set learning in context by effectively reviewing previous work and clearly setting objectives for the lessons. Teachers extensively question students during lessons to check their learning and ensure all students are fully involved. Teachers make appropriate changes to activity during lessons in response to student feedback. In a very good motor vehicle technology lesson the teacher introduced and explained the theory of ignition coil operation. Students then moved to the laboratory and workshop where they identified the components on real vehicles and applied the theory of transformers. In general, teachers make good use of a range of learning aids. However, there is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons.

63. Students are encouraged to work independently through the extensive use of classroom exercises, project work or practical exercises. Teachers give good individual attention to students, who make good progress in lessons. Practical work is carried out to industrial standards and teachers make good reference to the students' work experience. In a first year national diploma in electronics lesson, students demonstrated very good skills in using technical manuals and industry-standard test equipment to assemble and check a personal computer.

64. Resources are good. Classrooms are generally well furnished and equipped. Workshops have been updated and equipped to a good standard. For example, the machine workshop is equipped with ten new lathes and four new milling machines. The electronics workshops are equipped with new digital oscilloscopes and microprocessor equipment. There is a good motor vehicle workshop. All students benefit from significant donations of specialist equipment from industry. The learning resource centre provides a good learning environment with access to computers and textbooks. Engineering students do not use this resource enough. All full-time staff are well qualified with relevant occupational experience and appropriate vocational qualifications. Most full-time teaching staff hold or are working towards a teaching qualification. Part-time teachers are less well qualified.

65. There are well-designed assignments with clear performance criteria. Most students' work is marked promptly and returned with feedback that helps students' progress. However, some feedback is inadequate and does not indicate to learners how they can improve their performance in the future. Internal verification takes place regularly. Students use digital photographs as good evidence of their competence in the workplace. Students' progress is not rigorously reviewed against an individual learning plan and action plans from reviews do not always have clear short-term targets for completion.

66. The range of engineering programmes is satisfactory. Students are enrolled on level 1 foundation awards through to level 5 HE programmes with good progression from level 3 to HE. Some full-time students progress into employment as the qualifications undertaken can be used as the technical certificate requirement of the modern apprentices. However, the progression into employment for motor vehicle students is low. The college also provides specialist short training courses for employers.

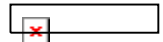
67. Students receive an initial screening test to identify additional learning needs. There are weekly tutorials to help students with their coursework. Tutors do not use the tutorials effectively to review students' progress against agreed targets. Work-based students receive regular reviews in the

workplace but there is insufficient target setting to monitor and aid progress.

Leadership and management

68. Management and leadership of the curriculum area are good. Course teams meet regularly to review course and student performance. The team use the annual course review to set targets for improvement and produce the self-assessment report. Good use is made of student feedback to inform the planning and there is a strong culture of continuous improvement. Many of the teachers are working towards teaching qualifications and developing their skills to work with the group of students aged 14 to16. Some teachers have developed their technical skills through attendance at courses held by manufacturers. Inspectors agreed with much of the college's self-assessment of the engineering curriculum area.

Business administration, management and professional



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- good teaching

- wide range of provision and good progression routes in college

- strong support for students

- effective management of the curriculum area.

Weaknesses

- narrow repertoire of teaching and assessment methods in a few classes

- insufficient use of ICT on management and professional courses.

Scope of provision

69. Full-time courses are provided in business studies and business administration. Part-time students can also study in these subject areas, as well as in accounting and finance, management and specialist professional programmes. A distinctive feature is the offer of courses for trade union officials and shop stewards. Both full-time and part-time students can take courses from foundation to advanced level. For example, full-time students can study course from level 1 to level 4 in business administration. In 2003/04, about 400 full-time and 1,400 part-time students were enrolled, including a small number of modern apprentices and pupils from local schools, aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

70. Pass rates are high on many courses. For example, pass rates on GNVQ foundation business studies and NVQ2 business administration have been above national averages for the past three years. There have also been good pass-rates on many part-time management and professional programmes, for example, the certificate in management, NVQ4 accounting, and the advanced certificate in marketing courses. Retention rates on most courses are generally satisfactory. A number of individual students have achieved particularly high regional pass rates in the certificate in marketing diploma and in Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) accounting.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation in business	1	No. of starts	7	18	11
		% retention	57	72	82
		% pass rate	100	77	89
NVQ level 2 administration (one year)	2	No. of starts	35	40	23
		% retention	86	85	83
		% pass rate	77	82	89
NVQ level 2 accounting (one year)	2	No. of starts	92	67	58
		% retention	80	76	86
		% pass rate	76	94	70
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	41	42	50
		% retention	71	88	80
		% pass rate	76	86	88
Certificate in management	3	No. of starts	25	21	31
		% retention	88	95	77
		% pass rate	86	100	100
NVQ level 4 accounting (one year)	4	No. of starts	30	14	21
		% retention	87	86	90
		% pass rate	54	100	74
Advanced certificate in marketing	4	No. of starts	11	20	16
		% retention	91	55	88
		% pass rate	30	73	50

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

71. The standard of students' work is good. Many students develop keen critical and analytical skills. They are able to evaluate complicated case studies and to present their findings logically and coherently. Written work is well organised and presented, and portfolios are systematically organised with relevant vocational materials used as supportive evidence.

Quality of education and training

72. Teaching is generally good. Teachers plan their work carefully, take into account the particular needs of individuals and use a variety of methods to stimulate student interest. Student peer support is used to enhance learning. For example, a group of business administration students organised a very successful business conference attracting the local mayor and speakers from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Adult students make good use of workplace experience to link theory to current practice especially on management, professional and trade union courses. Teachers encourage students to analyse their roles as consumers. For example, in a marketing class, students learnt how branding affected the price of two similar products, one with national recognition and another without, bought at a local market stall. The business centre provides a good environment for improving the practical skills of business administration students. Many work independently and gain experience of supervising others. In a few lessons, teaching is dull and does not sufficiently challenge more able students. Insufficient use is made of ILT in management and professional lessons. Teaching methods do not reflect the uses of ILT in industry.

73. Most teachers are well qualified with suitable professional and teaching qualifications. Full-time teachers have had little recent commercial updating but part-time teachers are very often able to bring in fresh professional experience into the curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory. The main site has good rooms with strong subject identity, which stimulate student interest. There are satisfactory classrooms at both sites with a suitable stock of books and periodicals.

74. Arrangements for assessment are satisfactory. Written work is returned promptly and students value the detailed, constructive comments made by their teachers, which show them how to improve. Good use is made of individual action plans to help full-time students in business administration to organise themselves better. Internal verification procedures are rigorous and thorough, and have been commended by external verifiers, and moderators on GNVQ business programmes. The effectiveness of questioning and checking on student comprehension in lessons is more variable. Some teachers have a narrow repertoire of teaching and assessment methods.

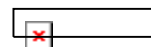
75. There are good progression opportunities. Full-time business students can study from foundation to advanced levels. Finance is taught from introductory bookkeeping to advanced accounting levels. Students are able to progress through different stages of management and trade union education programmes, as well as studying for specialist professional qualifications in marketing, personnel management, and purchasing and supply.

76. Students benefit from good tutorial support. Individual needs are recognised through comprehensive initial advice and diagnostic screening, which takes place at induction. There are many examples of additional support arrangements being provided in the area. For example, students with mobility, hearing impairment, second language, and severe motivational issues are all being very successfully helped to achieve their first qualifications.

Leadership and management

77. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear agenda for improvement that is understood by all teachers. Targets for improvement are set using quantitative data from the management information system (MIS) and perceptual data from students' views and other sources. Course teams meet regularly to discuss progress being made and the self-assessment process is thorough. Staff morale is good, reflecting good support from management.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on full-time courses
- good support for individual students
- good development of skills for community students.

Weaknesses

- insufficient pace of learning in a minority of lessons
- poor preparation for employment for full-time students
- ineffective progress monitoring of community students.

Scope of provision

78. There are 352 full-time students on ICT courses, which include GNVQ foundation and intermediate programmes, AVCE courses in information and communication technology (ICT), AS-level and GCE A2 examinations. There are 1,287 students on part-time courses ranging from City and Guilds IT level 1, computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), to level 2 NVQ using the Microsoft Office suite of software. Key skills training in IT is delivered within the college's key skills unit. Courses take place at the main Peterborough campus and two satellite centres, Blenheim Court and the Corn Exchange.

Achievement and standards

79. There are high pass rates on full-time courses. For example, all AVCE and GNVQ courses have rates well above the national averages. Most courses have retention rates close to the national average. The standard of students' work observed in lessons and in students' files was satisfactory and often good. The GNVQ foundation students used PowerPoint to produce presentations incorporating both sound and pictures. Intermediate students produced good interactive packages and advanced students designed complete websites for use by a local school. Most students have a

positive attitude to study and usually arrive at lessons on time. However, many students do not attend regularly enough.

80. Part-time students quickly gain good skills in basic IT applications and there is a high pass rate on the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) business software course. Most community courses have pass rates in line with the national average, but on some courses the pass rate has been poor. For example, at one centre, only a quarter of the students passed the City and Guilds IT course.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation ICT	1	No. of starts	16	28	31
		% retention	56	71	77
		% pass rate	67	100	100
NCFE business software applications	1	No. of starts	93	120	47
		% retention	82	76	79
		% pass rate	97	76	92
CLAIT/new CLAIT	1	No. of starts	351	322	115
		% retention	71	62	69
		% pass rate	63	62	68
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	57	40	43
		% retention	77	98	86
		% pass rate	64	90	89
AVCE ICT subsidiary	3	No. of starts	249	150	116
		% retention	69	79	78
		% pass rate	38	69	86
AVCE ICT single award	3	No. of starts	55	59	58
		% retention	71	81	74
		% pass rate	77	92	81

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

Quality of education and training

81. Most teaching is well planned and responsive to the needs of individual students. However, in some lessons the pace is too slow. The best lessons are well structured and use a variety of methods to maintain students' interest. For example, one lesson included team-teaching, crosswords, role-play and a selection activity. In a revision lesson, students worked in pairs to produce answers to specimen questions and to mark specimen answers against an examiners' mark scheme. Students worked with interest and perseverance and made good progress.

82. In the less effective lessons, teachers allowed too much time to complete an activity and students became restless and bored. These lessons often started well with a clear explanation of the topic, but the rate of learning slowed once students started work on the computers. Teachers often became engrossed in the work of an individual student or small group and paid too little attention to what was happening in the rest of the class.

83. Resources are satisfactory. Teachers with recent industrial experience, such as project management and software development, draw upon this to enliven learning. In one session, the teacher divided the students into small project groups, each with their own team leader. The students who took the role of the team leaders monitored the pace of the work of others in their group and regularly reported it to the teacher. Accommodation is satisfactory. Computers have industry standard software and there are adequate printing facilities in all computer rooms. The use of ergonomic equipment is not systematic. For example, students are not offered wrist-support or foot-support. The satellite learning centres are generally well decorated, professional and well organised.

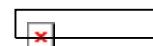
84. Assessment is satisfactory. Assignments have very clear grading criteria with guidelines about how to achieve key skills. Teachers indicate errors clearly and often give students constructive verbal feedback on marked work. Adults on community courses have realistic mock assessment exercises that prepare them for their final assessment. However, some students have developed an over-reliance on teachers' guidance and many adult students do not complete their coursework. The monitoring of students' progress on community courses is ineffective. It is not adequately checked and recorded and students do not have effective action plans. Students' progress is not discussed thoroughly during review meetings, and regular targets are not set.

85. The range of programmes available is good in meeting the needs of local students. Progression routes are available from entry-level courses up to level 3 and above. Links with industry are not used to enhance the learning of full-time students. For example, there is no work experience for full-time students on vocational courses. Many project briefs are developed without sufficient reference to local industry and commerce. Support, guidance and induction arrangements are good. Students value the high level of tutorial support that they receive.

Leadership and management

86. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Within the last eighteen months there have been significant improvements in the management of the community courses. The qualifications on offer have been reviewed and changed and more choice of options is available for adult students. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and there is a regular programme of teaching observations. However, the grades awarded internally are too generous. Management information is available, but is not used effectively. There has been no attempt to evaluate students' progress in terms of value-added analysis. There is insufficient sharing of good practice, resources and expertise between staff. For example, there is not a systematic approach for teachers to update their knowledge of current industrial practice.

Hospitality and catering



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

Strengths

- good pass rates on AVCE, NVQ level 1 and 2

- good teaching and learning

- good resources for learning
- comprehensive support for learners.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rate for certificate in professional cookery
- inadequate action planning.

Scope of provision

87. Catering and hospitality courses are offered to both full-time and part-time students from entry level to level 3 with progression available to HE in hospitality and leisure or travel management. NVQ courses are available in both food preparation and service at levels 1 and 2 and food preparation and hospitality supervision at level 3. The AVCE in hospitality and catering is provided at level 3. Part-time courses are offered in sugarcraft, professional cookery, food hygiene and for the licensed trade. There are 135 students aged 16 to 18 and 21 adults on full-time programmes. There are 12 students aged 16 to 18 and 134 adults on part-time programmes. Good links exist with local schools and 17 pupils in the 14 to 16 age range attend college to gain practical experience and work towards NVQ level 1 achievement in food preparation and cooking.

Achievement and standards

88. There are good pass rates on most courses with excellent pass rates on ACVE advanced NVQ level 2 in food service and level 1 in food preparation. The NVQ food and drink manufacturing provided during 2002/03 also achieved retention and pass rate at 100% as did the NVQ level 1 preparing and serving food which pupils at key stage 4 study at college. Retention at NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking has declined to below the national average. The pass rate for the certificate in professional cookery has consistently been poor. Completion rates for modern apprentices have been poor with only four students achieving their full framework. Retention rates have recently improved.

89. Students make good progress into employment or higher-level courses. They achieve a good level of practical skills in both food preparation and food service. All are aware of the required standards, which are closely monitored by teachers. Good social skills are developed both by working within the college restaurant and kitchen, and periods within industry. The development of both personal and vocational skills is good. Students on sugarcraft courses produce high standards of work and, in one session, demonstrated the production of wired sugar flowers. Students have been successful in a number of competitions reaching the regional finals of a national cookery competition and achieving awards for sugarcraft at a national exhibition.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ catering and	1	No. of starts	37	24	32

hospitality - food preparation and cooking		% retention	65	71	81
		% pass rate	79	82	100
NVQ catering and hospitality - serving food and drink	1	No. of starts	24	19	27
		% retention	63	79	89
		% pass rate	93	100	88
NVQ catering and hospitality - food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	27	29	12
		% retention	85	93	67
		% pass rate	87	70	88
NVQ catering and hospitality - serving food and drink	2	No. of starts	10	20	8
		% retention	90	75	100
		% pass rate	78	80	100
Certificate in professional cookery	2	No. of starts	37	31	37
		% retention	68	71	78
		% pass rate	64	64	52
AVCE double award hospitality and catering *	3	No. of starts	9	14	6
		% retention	89	71	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

*GNVQ Advanced in 2000/01 changed to AVCE 2001 to 2003

Quality of education and training

90. Teaching and learning is good. Lesson objectives are fully shared with students and frequently evaluated. Students' additional learning needs are effectively identified and students are helped to achieve the necessary standard. Students at different levels of competence work together in the kitchen and restaurants. Level 3 students will often undertake the supervisory role in order to gain experience of managing others. Assignments set are industry relevant, well presented and thoroughly marked by teachers with good comments on how to improve. AVCE students displayed a good use of learning technology when presenting the final stage of an assignment for a themed evening in the restaurant. Individual learning plans do not fully identify all the students' learning activities or set identifiable targets for use in progress reviews.

91. Industry-standard equipment enables students to develop a wide range of skills. The food service area provides a good working environment for students and includes the college restaurant and the 'pantry' food outlet. Both are highly popular with students, staff and other customers. Teachers are well qualified and have substantial industry experience. Several have benefited from periods of industrial updating as part of their professional development. Some resources have been modified to enable students with both visual and physical disabilities to attend college. Learning materials are clear, well produced and used effectively in teaching.

92. Students are assessed and monitored well. They have a good understanding of the assessment process. On NVQ courses, they are closely involved in determining when assessment should take place. Internal verification of both theoretical and practical work is thorough.

93. Courses range from entry level through to HE. Students pursue several additional qualifications to enhance the skills they can offer employers. Students experience a wide range of enrichment activities during their studies. They are involved in a variety of events which include supporting

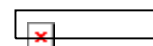
recognised chefs from industry at the East of England hospitality event and providing catering at large local events. They also take part in a range of industry visits, which help to support their knowledge of the industry.

94. Students receive good pre-entry guidance. Initial assessment is good and identifies additional learning support needs, which are well resourced through specialist assistants in lessons or in discrete groups. There is good communication between support staff and vocational teachers. Some students with visual impairments are particularly well supported. A thorough risk assessment takes place prior to joining and support is provided by the effective use of carers, signs and learning materials being produced in Braille and equipment modified for their use. These students also have the use of a Braille machine to record evidence within portfolios. Students identified with Irlen syndrome have learning materials produced on coloured paper for easier management. In one example the NVQ logbook has been enlarged for easier reading. Teachers closely monitor students at risk of failure through poor attendance and good support is provided through a personal coach.

Leadership and management

95. Leadership and management of the curriculum are good. Curriculum team leaders have fortnightly meetings and there are monthly course team meetings to review retention and achievement. Meetings are well recorded and actions are closely monitored. Students' attendance is monitored daily and quickly addressed by teachers. Course reviews are part of a formative process throughout the academic year and contribute to the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report was comprehensive and included the whole programme area. Staff new to the college are well supported by a mentor and have frequent reviews of their performance.

Leisure, travel and sport



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on level 1 programmes
- very good retention on most courses
- good teaching of practical activities in sport and public services
- highly effective links with employers
- good development of personal and social skills.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on full-time sport programmes
- poor teaching accommodation in some sport areas.

Scope of provision

96. There are 168 full-time and 23 part-time students. There are 70 students on sport courses, 36 on public services and 62 on leisure and travel and tourism. As well as studying for a range of NVQ, first diploma and national certificate and diploma courses, all students are given the opportunity to take additional qualifications, for example, the community sports leader award (CSLA) or travel agency certificates. Some of the practical activities are taught off-site utilising specialist facilities. There are currently seven key stage 4 pupils attending a weekly sports programme. Higher certificate and diploma courses are also offered in travel and tourism. Students are supported by ten full-time and four part-time teachers, a travel manager and sports technician.

Achievement and standards

97. Pass rates for level 1 courses have been consistently above the national averages for the last three years. In 2002/03 the foundation leisure and tourism course had a 100% pass rate with high grades at 34% above the average. The NVQ in sport and recreation also has very high retention. The AVCE in both leisure and recreation and travel and tourism achieved 100% pass rates in 2002/03. Retention and pass rates have steadily improved over the last three years in public service courses and are now above the national average, with 100% pass rates on the national diploma course in 2003. Retention is at or above the national average on almost all courses. The full-time sport courses have poor pass rates, which are declining on the NVQ sport and recreation level 2 and progression award. Retention and pass rates on all short courses are good and most are above the national averages.

98. Students have good levels of attainment. For example, sport and public service students organise an induction for their peers with very positive feedback. Travel students display a good understanding of industrial and commercial standards. They produce good portfolios and gain valuable practical experience in the travel shop at the college. Students have good interpersonal skills and understand the importance of being courteous and considerate in their dealings with those they encounter in coaching or service roles.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Foundation leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	17	15	15
		% retention	76	73	80
		% pass rate	100	91	100
NVQ sport and recreation	1	No. of starts	23	45	19
		% retention	26	80	74
		% pass rate	83	81	93
Travel agents certificate	2	No. of starts	66	53	47

- primary		% retention	77	68	87
		% pass rate	65	64	59
Community sport leaders award	2	No. of starts	29	35	15
		% retention	62	97	93
		% pass rate	72	50	64
GNVQ leisure and tourism *	3	No. of starts	53	*	*
		% retention	51	*	*
		% pass rate	67	*	*
AVCE leisure and recreation	3	No. of starts	**	29	26
		% retention	**	59	62
		% pass rate	**	29	100
AVCE travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	*	22	32
		% retention	*	59	66
		% pass rate	*	100	100

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

*students from this course transferred to the AVCE programme

** course did not run

Quality of education and training

99. There is much good practical teaching in sport and public services. In the best lessons the teachers allow the students to take the lead. For example, in an NVQ sport and recreation level 1 class, the students delivered a fifteen-minute activity for their peers. The students evaluated the performance sensitively and suggested improvements based on sound knowledge of the topic. Teachers plan thoroughly and make excellent use of the resources available. Complex concepts are taught successfully. In a health and fitness class the teacher explained that the pathway of the blood was like a road system, where the wider vessels were like motorways allowing the blood to travel faster, in contrast to the capillaries, which are like B roads with single lanes and slower travel. In a public services lesson the students planned a route and had to navigate in pairs. There is much team teaching in these practical activities and effective learning and assessment. The four new mini buses have allowed greater opportunities for practical activities.

100. Teaching on the GNVQ foundation level leisure and tourism course is very good. In one lesson students were given the challenge of researching and planning a visit to London, by investigating attractions, transport, and making choices based on cost, time and convenience. Teachers make effective use of the students work experience in lessons and in assessment. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not clarify the aims of the lesson sufficiently and students are not clear about what is expected of them. In some travel lessons the assessment criteria are not adequately reinforced with students and those with a wide range of ability are not managed effectively.

101. Resources are mostly satisfactory although there is some poor accommodation in mobile classrooms used for teaching sports theory. There is a well-equipped sports centre. A local travel company runs the college travel agency and the classrooms contain lively and colourful displays of student work. The sport and public service staff team in particular have a broad range of specialist qualifications, which has enabled them to offer an excellent enrichment programme. There are not always enough dedicated computers for students in this area. However, students are encouraged to develop their IT skills.

102. Most assignments are accurately assessed to meet awarding body standards and feedback is

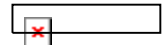
clear and constructive. Some feedback does not identify how students can improve the standard of their work. The college is currently piloting new individual learning action plans, which are mostly well used. In some courses the initial assessment of students is not used to plan the learning effectively. There are good links with employers and local partners. They are encouraged to contribute to the curriculum. Sport and public services have very strong links with local schools and deliver practical sessions for the pupils on a regular basis. In one excellent session, first and second year national diploma students worked together to deliver athletics coaching to some 100 pupils between the ages of 5 and 8 in order to fulfil the requirements of the NVQ sport and recreation qualification.

103. Students receive good support both in lessons and tutorials. Learning mentors provide good individual help to students where appropriate. Personal and social skills are well developed among the students. Progression between levels is currently at around 30% but students are also able to gain employment or transfer across to other provision within the college.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management of the curriculum are good. Course teams communicate effectively through well-documented monthly meetings and frequent informal discussions. These contribute to the annual course review and the self-assessment report. Achievement and retention data are regularly reviewed. There is good quality assurance of the area, for example, through use of a lecturer's record book. The programme area manager monitors effectively and regularly sets clear targets for staff. Risk assessment is rigorous for staff and students. Staff are particularly successful at setting and achieving high standards of behaviour from the students during lessons. The curriculum has been effectively reviewed and changed to respond to the needs of students and employers.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most full-time courses

- much good or better teaching

- comprehensive feedback on students' work

- effective communication with parents and employers

- good curriculum leadership.

Weaknesses

- insufficient assessment in the work place
- deficiencies in accommodation.

Scope of provision

105. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in hairdressing, beauty, and holistic therapies from level 1 to level 3. There are about 550 students including 70 modern apprentices. About 55% of the enrolments are for students that are aged 19 or over. Full-time courses range from NVQ levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty and holistic therapies. Part-time courses are offered in a range of holistic therapy courses and NVQ levels 2 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty therapy. The college has 33 students aged 14 to 16, from local schools, attending vocational options.

Achievement and standards

106. Retention and pass rates are high, especially on full-time courses. Achievement and retention for work-based learners is satisfactory with 42% of trainees achieving the full modern apprenticeship framework in 2002/03. Practical skill development is excellent; it is well planned and supports individual progress and achievement. Many students complete their course early. Students gain valuable skills through working with a good variety and number of clients in the college salons. There are high levels of progression to higher qualifications or employment. The progress of trainees is constrained by insufficient assessments in the work place. This is due to a shortage of qualified work-based assessors.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ 1 hairdressing (one year)	1	No. of starts	29	29	46
		% retention	86	83	80
		% pass rate	100	100	100
NVQ 2 hairdressing (two year)	2	No. of starts	35	35	26
		% retention	74	86	73
		% pass rate	100	97	95
NVQ 2 beauty therapy (one year)	3	No. of starts	54	53	63
		% retention	70	79	81
		% pass rate	95	93	86
NVQ 3 beauty therapy	3	No. of starts	18	24	26
		% retention	89	83	77
		% pass rate	100	95	100
Body massage diploma	3	No. of starts	45	45	45

		% retention	64	67	67
		% pass rate	100	93	93

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

Quality of education and training

107. Students are stimulated by well-planned and interesting teaching. Teachers have high expectations and use a variety of teaching styles and a good range of learning resources to support individuals' needs. In practical classes there is very good individual support and guidance to help students acquire high levels of skill. In hairdressing, students carry out a variety of tasks such as tinting, permanent waving, cutting, setting and blow-drying. They are constantly reminded of relevant vocational standards and the expectations of employers and clients. Commercial timescales are used to monitor the completion of tasks. Questioning techniques are effective in engaging all students and in checking their understanding. Although the teaching team stress the importance of developing key skills, opportunities to link the assessment of key skills into the vocational context are often missed.

108. The hairdressing accommodation no longer reflects current industry standards. There are insufficient salons to meet the demand for courses. In hairdressing there is a waiting list of modern apprentices. There are a good range and variety of consumable resources. Library stocks are adequate for hairdressing but there is limited range and number for beauty and holistic therapy. Teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date knowledge of current industry practice. Most have recent experience of work in salons. Each year most teachers have opportunities to update and develop new or existing skills.

109. The assignment schedule is well planned and understood by students. Internal verification and assessment procedures are rigorous. On hairdressing courses, teachers monitor and review students' progress particularly well. There is clear guidance regarding how students may improve and achieve. Feedback on written work and assignments is very detailed. Students understand what they have to do to improve, and they are praised for effort and achievement. Students' portfolio evidence is well organised and of good quality. Homework is set on a regular basis. Enrichment opportunities include visits to hairdressing and beauty trade events and fundraising events.

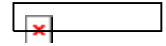
110. Initial diagnostic assessment is effective and valued by the students. The results of screening are used to inform staff of individual student needs and preferred learning styles. Students' attendance is good and they are punctual. Lateness is dealt with effectively and there are good strategies to ensure that students start work immediately. Students value the good support and guidance subject teachers give them. Reviews of individual students' progress are carried out effectively. They are detailed and give set deadlines and clear guidance for improvement.

111. The tutorial system is good. Parents are well informed of students' attendance and progress. There are good links with employers. Many employers provide good quality work experience for full-time students.

Leadership and management

112. Leadership and management are good. There is clear direction from the programme area manager and effective deployment of resources. Students' progress and achievements are monitored thoroughly. Actions from previous inspection reports have been addressed. Course review and evaluation are thorough and there is rigorous monitoring of standards. The course teams meet formally once a month and there are weekly informal meetings to discuss students' attendance and progress. Part-time teachers are well integrated into the teams and encouraged to attend meetings.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most full-time courses
- much teaching which promotes independence and good practical skills
- effective pastoral support.

Weaknesses

- some poor planning and management of lessons
- underdeveloped assessment strategies
- inadequate development of staff skills.

Scope of provision

113. There are full-time and part-time courses in health and care, early years, counselling and First Aid, which lead to qualifications from entry level to level 3. At the time of the inspection, there were over 1,600 students enrolled on courses including about 300 aged 16 to 18 and about 1,300 aged 19 or over. There are vocational courses for school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

114. Pass rates on full-time courses for students aged 16 to 18 are high, and some are 100%. The number of high grades, achieved by students, is above the national averages on the GNVQ foundation health and social care course, the AVCE in health and social care and the certificate in childcare and education. Pass rates on the access to social care have declined. Pass rates for part-time and short courses are generally good. Retention rates are generally good for full-time courses. However, on childcare and early years courses, there is a more mixed picture. Retention rates are close to the national averages on many courses, but they have declined on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma in childcare and early years and on the Awarding Body Consortium (ABC) certificate in care. Retention is also poor, at 20%, on the NVQ 2 Care course.

115. There is good progression from level 3 courses to HE, professional training and employment. There is also good progression from the level 1 courses to more advanced FE courses. On all courses, students develop a wide range of personal, social and professional skills that meet their occupational needs. Students on most level 3 courses develop sound skills in research, analysis and critical evaluation and most develop the capacity to apply theories to practice. For example, students on courses in early years, developed a good critique of Bowlby's theory of bonding and attachment by considering various cultural differences in childrearing and their experiences on work placements.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	14	13	10
		% retention	57	85	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	9	19	14
		% retention	67	74	86
		% pass rate	100	93	92
ABC certificate in caring for people	2	No. of starts	19	14	22
		% retention	84	86	82
		% pass rate	88	92	89
AVCE (double award) health and social care	3	No. of starts	33	19	13
		% retention	45	68	62
		% pass rate	93	92	88
Access certificate to health professions	3	No. of starts	16	13	16
		% retention	75	62	88
		% pass rate	92	100	93
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	33	29	36
		% retention	85	79	75
		% pass rate	96	83	100

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

Quality of education and training

116. There is much teaching that promotes good independent learning, personal confidence and practical skills. Most lessons are planned to include a variety of activities to develop, consolidate and assess learning and meet a variety of learning needs. Paired and group work is skilfully managed. Good links are made to course assessment criteria. In many classes teachers develop students' ability and confidence to speak clearly and develop well-reasoned arguments. In most classes students worked hard and developed and consolidated their learning. However, teaching in a significant minority of lessons is ineffective. Students' progress in lessons is not monitored, inappropriate teaching and learning activities are chosen and, on a few occasions the management of behaviour is poor. Key skills are not well integrated into teaching and learning.

117. Existing teachers are very well qualified in their occupational area and most have, or are working towards, an initial teacher training qualification; NVQ assessors are appropriately qualified and new staff are well supported and mentored. However, high staff turnover has resulted in a lack of breadth in the vocational skills and knowledge base of the team. This is in part overcome by a well-managed programme of visiting speakers. There is also a shortage of teachers with the level 3

teaching qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Most teaching rooms are well equipped but there is limited access to classroom computers for students in childcare and early-years courses and this is hindering the choice of teaching methods. Access to many classrooms is poor for disabled students. Resources for classroom use are adequate and the library has a good stock of appropriate texts and journals.

118. Assessment practices are generally satisfactory. However, the quality of feedback on students' work varies from good in many case to inadequate in a few; some teachers provide detailed written information on the strengths and weaknesses of the work and how improvements could be made. In other cases, the feedback is too scant and, on occasions, too late for students to learn from their mistakes.

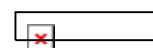
119. The range of provision is adequate and has evolved in response to local priorities and demands. There are strong partnerships with local organisations, for example, the NHS Workforce Development Task Group. The extensive work placements are well managed. A range of appropriate enrichment activities that enhance the students' employability include fund raising initiatives and first aid and deaf awareness courses.

120. Students enjoy good pastoral support. Teachers have a good knowledge of individual students and the progress they are making on their courses. Target setting is used well to direct students towards improving performance. There is excellent co-ordination between the curriculum area and the college's central support services, for example, the preparation of assistants to help students in the classroom.

Leadership and management

121. Leadership and management at curriculum level are satisfactory. Curriculum managers have been imaginative in sustaining standards given the difficulties in recruiting appropriate staff. Frequent and regular team meetings ensure good communication and involvement of staff in planning, target and objective setting. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are thorough. However, there is inadequate planning for the development of staff skills. For example, the skills required to promote the use of ILT in lessons, assessment practices and the use of value-added data.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- good standards of student work and performance

- productive links with employers and industry.

Weaknesses

- low levels of retention on several courses
- poor punctuality and low attendance in some lessons
- the adverse impact of small numbers on teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

122. The college offers a good range of course across the area of learning. Provision is primarily at level 3 with some provision at level 2. The college's range of courses in art and design has had low recruitment over the last few years. There are about 550 enrolments on full-time courses and about 250 on part-time courses. There are 440 enrolments of students aged 16 to 18 and 354 adult enrolments. Part-time courses include a range of craft, design, media and performing arts activities.

Achievement and standards

123. Student achievement is generally good across the area of learning. For example, the pass rates on most media courses and on the national diploma in performing arts have been consistently at or above national averages. In 2003 pass rates were good for most other courses. Student retention is improving on some courses such as the national diplomas in design and performing arts and on the GNVQ intermediate in media. However, retention remains low on several courses where it has been below national averages for the last two years.

124. Dance students attain high standards of performance and discipline. Students demonstrate good levels of attainment in interior design, graphics and photography. Students on media courses also produce some good work. The quality of student work on art and design courses is variable with some very good drawing on AS-level and GCE A2 course and on the diploma in foundation studies in art and design. In a few of the observed lessons, student work was unsatisfactory. Punctuality and attendance were poor, with students sometimes missing important elements of introductions, demonstrations and project briefings. The area has developed a range of very good and productive links with the cultural industries, employers, the professional theatre and publishers. For example, students studying photography benefit each year from working with a national photographic magazine where much of their work is published. Major productions are produced at the local theatre and the artistic director is a member of the course team. Students on the performing arts courses have also won stage management awards at the national student drama festival.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ inter. media	2	No. of starts	16	15	16
		% retention	75	73	88
		% pass rate	100	91	93
First diploma performing arts	2	No. of starts	22	34	13
		% retention	77	65	69

		% pass rate	100	82	89
GCE A2 media	3	No. of starts	13	11	10
		% retention	85	100	60
		% pass rate	91	100	100
National diploma design	3	No. of starts	36	31	39
		% retention	50	45	64
		% pass rate	89	79	88
National diploma foundation studies	3	No. of starts	9	5	12
		% retention	89	80	75
		% pass rate	100	50	100
National diploma media	3	No. of starts	36	32	38
		% retention	61	78	67
		% pass rate	95	96	95

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

Quality of education and training

125. Much teaching and learning is satisfactory with some very good work observed in dance, media and art and design. Teaching is well planned with detailed schemes of work. In art and design much teaching and learning is carried out through assignment and projects that introduce students to a good range of topics. Project briefs have well defined aims, objectives and learning outcomes. Not all contain useful assessment criteria and the quality of project and assignment sheets is not consistent across the area of learning. In a few of the observed lessons learning outcomes were not fully shared with students and there was insufficient focus on learning and attainment. In several lessons students were not adequately challenged or motivated to learn and a few students were sometimes allowed to disturb and disrupt lessons. The small number of students in many classes has an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Often there was insufficient interaction, experiment and challenge for students. Teachers make good use of hand-outs and visual aids to support learning.

126. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory. The college has made substantial investment in specialist resources for courses in media with a professional standard of equipment available to students. There are good dedicated areas that support teaching and learning in the performing arts. However, inadequate soundproofing disturbs lessons. Students on art and design courses have access to a satisfactory level of specialist resources with good general studio space. Specialist facilities in photography are adequate. However, there are very limited facilities for ceramics and printmaking. Students make use of the Internet to research and investigate ideas for assignments. Teachers are well qualified, with most having both teaching and professional art and design qualifications. Students also benefit from part-time teachers and visiting speakers from industry. For example, courses in performing arts benefit from the input of professional actors, directors and musicians who bring up-to-date influences to the student experience.

127. There are clear procedures for assessment and for the internal verification of courses. Tutorials are used effectively to give students feedback on how to make progress and there are regular reviews of portfolios. Feedback from teachers is mostly helpful to students. Some assignments and project briefs do not contain clear assessment criteria. Progress records are not always sufficiently detailed. The area is developing student files that include individual learning plans and these are helping students to identify their progress. However, they do not include specific targets for individual students and sometimes the reviews are too infrequent.

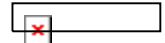
128. Students are well supported throughout their time at the college. They speak positively about

the individual support they get from their teachers. There is good learning support for students who have additional learning needs. Students receive good advice on opportunities for progression and preparation for interviews.

Leadership and management

129. Management of the area is satisfactory. Recent changes in the management structure have improved the effectiveness of communication in the area. The course team are reviewing the range of provision as some courses have very low numbers of students. Regular team meetings enable staff to contribute to the process of decision-making. Most teachers are familiar with target setting for student recruitment, achievement and retention. The college system of lesson observation has resulted in grades that are generally more generous than those given by inspectors. The self-assessment report did not clearly identify strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are aware of the process of self-assessment but there is insufficient open and critical discussion about the quality of teaching and learning. The area is widening participation through a range of evening classes and part-time provision that meets demands from the local community.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- rigorous system of initial and diagnostic assessment
- effective and consistent use of individual learning plans
- teaching materials that promote equality of opportunity
- good student progression
- good academic and pastoral support for learners
- good curriculum management

Weaknesses

- low attendance

- insufficient challenge for more able learners

Scope of provision

130. ESOL classes are offered on the college's main site, at a satellite centre, in several workplaces and at a number of community venues. Courses are offered in the day and evening and provision ranges from preparatory classes for learners without literacy skills in their own language through to upper intermediate and advanced (level 2) classes. Classes are also available in IT, writing and numeracy. The majority of students take Pitman examinations or study for a college certificate. At the time of inspection there were 360 learners enrolled, approximately 90% of whom were over 19.

Achievement and standards

131. Achievement and standards on ESOL programmes overall are good, with high retention and above-average pass rates in external examinations. The goals of individual learners are well defined and enable students and teachers to assess progress and achievements. Students' self-confidence and life-skills are improved as a result.

132. There are high levels of student progression through the range of ESOL courses and then onto mainstream programmes. Assessment procedures ensure students are studying at the right level. They distinguish effectively between students who have poor literacy skills generally and those who have a high level of educational attainment, but are new to English.

133. The quality of students' work is good. However, in some classes, students had no system for organising their work and had large piles of unsorted notes. There is a pattern of irregular attendance amongst many students, which was reflected during the inspection week with a poor overall attendance of 57%.

Quality of education and training

134. There are very good relationships between staff and students, which helps students to succeed. Students develop good independent learning skills and are highly motivated. Teaching is sensitive to students' needs and aspirations. Students see a close link between what they learn in class and what this enables them to do. One student reported to her teacher that she had made an appointment to see her doctor after the previous day's lesson on this topic, having not had the confidence to do this before the lesson.

135. Individual learning plans are well developed and inform planning. Full-time teachers are suitably qualified in ESOL and have received training in the core curriculum. However, most part-time teachers lack the level 4 generic teaching qualification. Skills for Life materials are embedded into schemes of work. However, some teaching is over-reliant on the plans included with the materials, to the detriment of the strongest and weakest learners.

136. All schemes of work are mapped to the national standards for 'Skills for Life'. There is a good selection of simplified readers with accompanying cassettes available to students in the learning and resources centre. There is a small but well equipped self-access facility that ESOL students currently share with English as a foreign language students. All materials used reflect the cultural diversity of the learners and promote equality of opportunity.

137. Initial assessment and on-course assessment are very good. There is a robust and effective system for monitoring student progress. Assessments are moderated internally and useful feedback on marking is given to teachers. Satisfactory assessment, the achievement of personal learning goals and a minimum of 70% attendance form the basis of achievement of college certification.

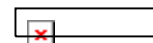
138. Programmes and courses are very good at meeting the needs and interests of learners. There is a responsive and increasing programme of workplace and community programmes to meet local demand. Students are able to enrol upon the courses throughout the year. This flexibility meets the needs of the increasing number of asylum seekers in the area. There are women-only classes for those who seek this option, such as some Pakistani and Afghani women in the city. Local employers are positive about the courses. One manager said that some of her employees were now able to access company training and development for the first time in fifteen years. The college has received funding through the basic skills agency to pilot a 'Build Up' course for learners who are qualified construction workers in their own country but cannot currently find employment because of their poor English language skills.

139. Learners receive very good advice and guidance. They have good access to effective pastoral support. Information is available in a number of languages. There is a daily drop-in session where students can get help in filling in forms. Students may also be referred to the college welfare officer or college counsellor. ESOL learning support is available to students on non-ESOL programmes. Uptake is currently very small but no students on mainstream programmes were observed to be experiencing language difficulties in their classes.

Leadership and management

140. There is good management of ESOL provision. Curriculum management has been effective in achieving significant improvement in both the quality and range of courses on offer although insufficient progress has been made in improving attendance and punctuality. Roles of the full-time teachers are well defined and there is good management of a very large team of part-time staff. There are regular meetings, good planning and a useful in-house staff development programme. Workplace and community provision is managed from one of the satellite centres but there is good communication and effective sharing of good practice.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good attainment in many courses

- very good specialist teaching

- good specialist facilities

- wide and growing range of provision

- growth in self-confidence and capabilities of students

- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient links between some vocational areas and specialist teachers and managers
- deficiencies in accommodation and equipment.

Scope of provision

141. At the time of the inspection, there were about 450 students on discrete literacy and numeracy courses. Both adults and students aged 16 to 18 receive support to improve their reading and writing and in 2003 there were about 1,500 enrolments that included some 1,200 full-time students taking key skills courses, and about 300 other students receiving learning support. A director of basic skills and learning support is responsible for strategic development and there is a programme area manager and course team leaders for literacy and numeracy.

Achievement and standards

142. Both communication and application of number are well above national benchmarks on key skills at level 1. There are also high pass rates in the certificates in adult numeracy and adult literacy. During their studies many foundation students become more confident in applying their own literacy and numeracy skills to their main vocational area. Students make good progress to more advanced courses which they previously thought beyond them: of the 108 full-time students requiring most support in 2003, 67% successfully completed or continued in their vocational studies. However, there is scope for increasing the numbers of both students aged 16-18 and adults gaining external qualifications to accredit their achievements in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of education and training

143. Teaching right across the 'Skills for Life' curriculum is very good. Teachers demonstrate exceptional expertise in supporting individual students, for example, those with Irlen syndrome, dyslexia, or hearing impairment. In one adult evening lesson, profoundly deaf Vietnamese students were extremely well taught about differences between British sign language (BSL) and common words like 'the' and 'it'. Expert and sensitive teamwork between the BSL signer and teacher, ensured that students could explore complex ideas using highly-structured literacy techniques.

144. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects, and many are specialist practitioners and lead national training in 'Skills for Life'. Students gain much confidence through their learning. For example, in one class, a teacher worked skilfully to improve reading strategies. An individual student worked through a recent newspaper football report, and expressed delight when the results of basic techniques such as putting black print on grey paper and blue-tack over problem words enabled him to locate meaning through the context of the story. In another successful lesson, hairdressing students were primed to correct a numeracy assignment. They worked successfully in small groups, self-correcting their projects. A skilfully coded marking scheme enabled them to identify and rectify errors.

145. There is a lack of communication between some vocational teachers and specialist literacy and numeracy staff. As a result a minority of students identified as needing learning support do not receive help. There are also instances where there is poor liaison over key skills assessment, for example, in construction, where students had been entered for key skills tests without the knowledge of specialist staff.

146. Accommodation in the main site key skills centre is spacious, light and well-equipped. Off-site provision is on the top floor of the Corn Exchange near the city centre. Although the location and the relaxed ambience attract students from the community, there is a lack of private meeting space for counselling and advising individual students.

147. Screening to assess student literacy and/or numeracy needs is well managed and provides students with support throughout their courses. Of the 546 students identified for support in 2003, 415 received specialist support. Once on course, individual learning plans setting out clear targets for learners are well maintained. These are also used by staff to inform the nature of support offered to individual learners.

Leadership and management

148. Leadership and management are good. Teachers feel supported by curriculum team leaders. There is clear direction in the breadth and growth of courses, both on-site and off-site, and the high level of specialist knowledge among colleagues is well channelled into innovative forms of new provision. However, the development of literacy and numeracy skills is less advanced in some curriculum areas because of the lower priority given to the 'Skills for Life' agenda by some vocational teams. There is extensive training of staff, for example, teacher training at levels 3 and 4 to create a pool of 'Skills for Life' practitioners in Peterborough and the surrounding region.

Part D: College data

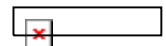
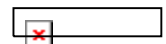


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	34	39
2	31	23
3	29	16
4/5	0	3
Other	6	19
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18	19+	Total
	No.	No.	Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	694	317	5
Land-based provision	49	20	0
Construction	224	300	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	403	977	8
Business administration, management and professional	309	1,432	9
Information and communication technology	728	2,203	16
Retailing, customer service and transportation	4	66	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	517	464	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	205	305	3
Health, social care and public services	395	1,467	10
Visual and performing arts and media	469	350	4
Humanities	275	416	4
English, languages and communication	407	873	7
Foundation programmes	607	402	6
Other	472	3,106	19
Total	5,758	12,698	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
1	Starters excluding transfers	658	570	564	1,684	1,151	2,021
	Retention rate %	71	71	79	76	66	73
	National average %	76	75	76	73	69	70
	Pass rate %	66	78	69	61	75	51

	National average %	65	69	71	66	68	71
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,393	1,175	1,048	2,024	1,639	1,449
	Retention rate %	73	69	73	70	69	68
	National average %	72	70	72	70	68	68
	Pass rate %	64	72	76	71	77	74
	National average %	67	69	71	64	68	72
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,129	1,789	1,285	1,314	1,273	1,239
	Retention rate %	64	65	78	71	65	72
	National average %	67	71	77	69	68	70
	Pass rate %	69	72	80	68	73	82
	National average %	75	77	79	66	69	72
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	587	355	304
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	70	75	72
	National average %	*	*	*	67	67	67
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	64	44	56
	National average %	*	*	*	58	55	56

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

Sources of information:

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

2. College rates for 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)	68	27	5	98
Level 2 (intermediate)	66	31	3	67
Level 1 (foundation)	67	31	2	49
Other sessions	71	29	0	14

Totals	68	29	3	228
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