

Epping Forest College

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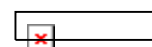
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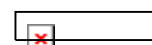
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Basic information about the college

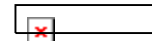


Name of college:	Epping Forest College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	David Butler
Address of college:	Borders Lane Essex IG10 3SA
Telephone number:	0845 120 4809
Fax number:	020 8502 8610
Chair of governors:	Roger Neville
Unique reference number:	130677
Name of reporting inspector:	Vivien Bailey HMI
Dates of inspection:	26-30 April 2004

Part A: Summary



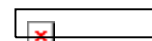
Information about the college



Epping Forest College is a general college of further education (FE) located on a single 36 acre site in the Epping Forest area of West Essex, adjacent to the towns of Loughton and Debden. The college provides some of its courses in the community, located mainly at local primary schools. The college's catchment area is West Essex, but it attracts many of its 16 to 18 year old students from East London boroughs, in particular Redbridge and Waltham Forest, owing to good public transport links. The college has 110 full-time teachers, 150 part-time teachers and around 245 administrative and support staff. The college's budget was approximately £12.4 million in 2003/04, of which, 84% was provided by the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), with additional small incomes from the local education authority (LEA) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The senior management team was formed in June 2003 with the appointment of two new vice principals to support the principal, who joined the college early in 2001.

The college has over 4,420 LSC-funded students, of whom, 1,910 are full time. Approximately 90% of full-time students are aged 16 to 18. There are also 97 students aged 14 to 16 engaged in learning at the college. The college provides a wide range of courses, covering 14 areas of learning, although provision is small in 2 areas. The majority of full-time students follow courses leading to qualifications at levels 2 and 3. Overall, enrolments at entry level and level 1 have increased in the current year. There are some higher-level courses in business and education, with well-established links with Anglia Polytechnic University. Despite apparent affluence in the college's surrounding area, there are pockets of social deprivation indicated by four wards where levels of poor literacy and numeracy significantly exceed the average for Essex of 22%. The large recruitment of students from East London boroughs, representing over 70% of the total number, means that the college has an ethnically diverse body of full-time students, in marked contrast to the population of both the local area and the part-time student group. Those students who declared themselves to be of minority ethnic background make up 37.2% of the full-time cohort. In addition, 48% of the college's 16 to 18 year old students live in areas of high economic disadvantage, compared with 28% nationally. Around 15% of the students aged over 19 also live in these areas. Local school attainment, including schools in Waltham Forest, is below average at key stage 4. Unemployment rates are lower than the national average in the Epping Forest area, but higher in the East London boroughs served by the college, especially for people of minority ethnic origin. Local residents work mainly in the service sector. Many commute to work in other areas, especially London.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be adequate. Much work has been done by the management team and governors to improve the college's financial position, restructure the organisation and begin to raise achievements. Retention and pass rates have been in line with or below national average, but there are some early indications of improvement.

Of the 11 curriculum areas inspected, one was judged by inspectors to be good, eight were judged as satisfactory and two as unsatisfactory. Provision is good in sports, leisure, travel and tourism. It is satisfactory in science and mathematics; business, administration and professional studies; information and communications technology (ICT); health and social care; visual and performing arts and media; humanities; English and modern foreign languages; and foundation programmes. It is unsatisfactory in construction and in engineering, although there is a contributory grade of satisfactory for provision in motor vehicle studies. The proportion of lessons in which teaching is good or better was below the average for FE colleges in 2002/03. Guidance and support for students are good. There is good practice in the monitoring of students' progress. Learning support is well resourced and generally effective. There is some inconsistency in the quality of tutorials. The main

strengths and areas for improvement are set out below.

Key strengths

- clear strategic direction
- effective management of change
- good staff morale
- good support for students
- effective widening of participation
- improved retention rates in the current year
- enrichment opportunities
- good student induction
- friendly, relaxed and safe atmosphere.

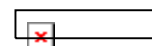
What should be improved

- pass rates and proportion of high grades
- proportion of lessons with good or better teaching and learning
- use of individual learning plans

- punctuality of students
- quality of and access to accommodation
- students' key skills and basic skills.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

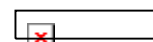


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Teaching is generally good and students acquire good practical skills. There is good use of information and learning technology (ILT). Pass rates are low, although students' achievements are in line with their previous attainment. There is insufficient focus on developing key skills and additional support is not instituted early enough.
Construction	Unsatisfactory. Too much teaching is unsatisfactory or uninspiring. Pass rates on courses are low and key skills are developed and managed inadequately. There has been insufficient focus on improving weaknesses in provision. Students with additional learning needs are well supported. There are good and productive links with industry, and good provision for 14 to 16 year olds.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Unsatisfactory. General engineering contributory grade: unsatisfactory. Motor vehicle studies contributory grade: satisfactory. There are low pass rates on most courses, except for some in computer-aided design (CAD) and motor vehicle studies. There is a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, although teaching and skills development on 14 to 16 year olds courses and motor vehicle courses are good. Attendance and punctuality are poor. There are good resources for motor vehicle provision, and partnerships with schools and employers are highly effective.
Business, administration, management and professional studies	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on most full-time courses and on national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 accounting courses. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, and students develop good

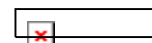
	personal and business skills. Individual pastoral and learning support are good. The range of courses is limited for part-time students.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. Most of the teaching is satisfactory or better, with good teaching on the intermediate course and high pass and retention rates on the advanced vocational certificate in education (AVCE) course. Insufficient attention is given to more able students and planning of additional learning support. The facilities in community venues are inadequate. There is effective monitoring of progress.
Sports, leisure, travel and tourism	Good. There are high and improving pass rates in advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) sport, games and recreation. There is a high proportion of good teaching. Students' progress is monitored effectively and they have access to a good range of subject-specific enrichment activities. Most courses are managed effectively, and attendance and punctuality are improving.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. There are high pass rates on most full-time courses, but low pass rates on intermediate general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) programmes. There are high retention rates on most childcare courses, but low retention rates on full-time health and social care courses. There is good monitoring of individual progress through the tutorial programme. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, although a shortage of specialist teachers affects learning adversely.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Courses at levels 1 and 2 have pass rates significantly above the national average. Pass rates and/or retention rates for several advanced GCE courses in art and media are below average. Teaching is satisfactory or better, but too much is uninspiring. Progression is good and improving, and there is good tutorial support and an extensive programme of enrichment activities to enhance learning.
Humanities	Satisfactory. Pass and retention rates have been low, but are improving, with good recent results in some subject modules. Most teaching is good or better, but questioning techniques are often ineffective. There is effective support and monitoring of students' progress, although target setting is not specific enough. Students' punctuality is often poor.
English and modern foreign languages	Satisfactory. Retention rates on many courses have been low, but the rate in the current year has improved considerably. Pass rates on advanced English literature and French courses are low, but pass rates on part-time modern foreign language courses are high. Teaching is satisfactory or better, but there is an over-reliance on English in some modern foreign language lessons. The monitoring of students' progress is effective.
Foundation programmes	Satisfactory. There are high retention rates and good progress by students in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), but low pass rates in application of number and communication skills at level 1. There is much good or better teaching. There is insufficient development of skills in learning support and key skills provision. The range of programmes in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes is limited, but is being developed.

How well is the college led and managed?



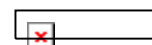
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and senior managers have led the college successfully through a difficult period of change. They have improved the financial position of the college, and restructured its staffing and management effectively. They are providing clear strategic leadership and have created good staff morale. They are working with the staff and governors to continue the re-shaping of the college's curriculum in order to improve retention rates, pass rates and the quality of teaching and learning, and to redevelop the college's site. Some early indications of improvement were evident during the inspection. Most weaknesses identified at the last inspection, in 1998, have been addressed successfully. The college has made considerable progress in developing its management information system which is now good. In the three years up to 2003, student retention rates were low, but these have shown significant improvement in the current year. Pass rates up to 2003 have shown some improvement, although overall, they remain at, or below, national averages. Governors demonstrate commitment to their work with the college, and have business skills and other experience which are relevant to the needs of the college. They receive insufficient critical analysis of data to help them monitor progress against the college's educational performance targets. Curriculum management in most areas is satisfactory. Comprehensive quality assurance policies and procedures were introduced from September 2003. The college's self-assessment report which draws on course reviews, provides a realistic evaluation of the college's provision. There is a commitment to widening participation and supporting diversity. The college is developing and providing courses within the local community and has good relationships with employers in some curriculum areas.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. There is a strong commitment at all levels to widening participation and promoting learning to all who wish to benefit. Courses are offered from entry level to higher education (HE). The college's provision includes programmes aimed specifically at students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and at 14 to 16 year olds through its links with local schools. There has been a sharp increase, to 31%, of the proportion of students coming from economically disadvantaged areas; this has risen to 48% amongst 16 to 18 year olds. An increasing proportion of full-time students commute to the college from East London boroughs. The student community is ethnically diverse and the proportion of minority ethnic students is significantly higher than that in the local population. There are policies and action plans relating to race and diversity, and the college is complying with its responsibilities under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. All staff and governors have undertaken staff development on the significant elements of these policies. Statistics on students' participation and achievement by ethnic group and gender have been developed, and the college has begun to use these data to plan for improvements. The college is also taking action to comply with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Access for people with mobility difficulties has improved, but is still restricted in some parts of the college. There has been an audit of facilities and an action plan, due to be completed by September 2004, is out for tender. The provision in basic skills is satisfactory. Discrete programmes for adults are effective. The college has developed new community-based provision and is taking steps to increase the range of programmes.

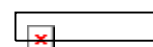
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students receive good guidance and support. Pre-entry information, advice and guidance are very effective and are valued by students. The arrangements for the selection and placement of students

an initial assessment for literacy, numeracy and dyslexia during induction. The induction process is effective and students appreciate the experience as an aid to adjusting to their new environment. Much induction continues over the first half term so that students absorb and remember the information. Pastoral and academic support are good in most areas of the college. Additional learning support is well resourced and generally effective, although there is not always an adequate focus on skills development. A team dedicated to working with students who are at risk of leaving is providing effective support to reduce drop out. There is good practice in the monitoring of students' progress by tutors. Group tutorials also support students with their college work. There is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of tutorials and target setting, but students have access to good advice and guidance on progression to employment and HE. There is a good nursery on site which provides places for students' children.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- friendly, helpful and approachable staff
- relaxed and friendly college atmosphere
- good subject and pastoral support
- open access to good IT (information technology) facilities
- good library facilities for coursework and careers or HE information
- good car parking
- wide variety of cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

What they feel could be improved

- availability and condition of toilets

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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 LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the LSC. The LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

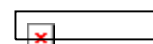
Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	55	37	8
19+ and WBL*	54	39	7

Learning 16-18	51	41	8
19+ and WBL*	50	43	7

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).

**the college does not provide work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. The college offers courses at all levels, from entry level to HE courses. There is a wide range of full-time and part-time vocational programmes which include courses in all areas of learning, although provision is small in two areas. Most of the students aged 16 to 18 study full time. They follow programmes chosen from the good range of AS-level and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses, general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses in mathematics and English or four other subjects, or vocational programmes leading to the AVCE, first and national diplomas and NVQ. Most adults are enrolled on vocationally-oriented courses, NVQs and other short or long courses, for example, in IT.
 2. Inspectors analysed college data on students' achievements. Data for the years 2000/01 to 2001/02 show that the college's retention rates at most levels were in line with that of the middle 50% of general FE and tertiary colleges, in some cases after declining from a position in the top 25%. The exception was at level 1 for students aged 19 and over, where retention rates were in the bottom 10%. Pass rates over the same period present a more complex picture. They were in line with those of the middle 50% of colleges at level 1 for all students and at level 2 for students aged 16 to 18. However, pass rates were in the bottom 25% for students aged 19 and over at level 2 and in the bottom 10% for all students at level 3. The college's analysis of achievements by minority ethnic groups suggests that it is enabling high pass rates amongst students of Bangladeshi origin in some curriculum areas.
 3. Students' attainment was good or better in 48% of the lessons observed which is about 5% below the national average for general FE and tertiary colleges in 2002/03. Attainment was less than satisfactory in just over 8% of lessons, which is broadly in line with the average.
 4. The overall attendance rate in lessons observed by inspectors, at 73%, was slightly below the national average of 76%. The highest attendance rates are in lessons in visual and performing arts and media, science and mathematics, and sports, leisure, travel and tourism, all in the region of 80%. Attendance rates are particularly low in engineering. Students' punctuality is poor in engineering, construction and humanities.
- 16 to 18 year olds**
5. In 2003/04, the largest proportion of enrolments by students aged 16 to 18, at 45%, was on level 3 programmes, although this would include multiple subject enrolments. A further 34% of enrolments were on level 2 courses and 21% on entry level or level 1 courses. The largest proportions of enrolments were in humanities, English, foundation programmes, ICT and business.
 6. Between 1999/00 and 2001/02, retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 on long courses were broadly in line with national averages at levels 1, 2 and 3. Retention rates on short courses were well below average. The college's data for 2002/03 shows that retention rates improved at level 1 to above average, and those for 2003/04, suggest that retention rates during the current year have increased significantly. The overall in-year retention rate was 84% at the time of the inspection,

compared to 75% for 2003/04.

7. Pass rates between 1999/00 and 2001/02 were generally in line with national averages for levels 1 and 2, with an improvement at level 1 over the three years. Pass rates for this age group were well below average at level 3 with a significant decline since 1999/00. Pass rates on short courses were also below average. The college's analysis of pass rates, incorporating data from 2002/03, indicates an improvement in that year at both levels 2 and 3, bringing them broadly in line with national averages. At level 1, overall pass rates were brought down to well below average in 2002/03 by four courses where students did not complete in the established timeframe, or because of particular problems which are being resolved.

8. When considered by qualification type, retention rates between 1999/00 and 2001/02 were mainly in line with the average for most qualifications at levels 1 and 2, but declined to below average at level 3 for AS level and GCE A level, and GNVQ and precursor qualifications. Pass rates were low at levels 1 and 2 for NVQs, although numbers were not high overall. At level 3, there was a low pass rate on AS-level and GCE A-level courses in 2002. This apparent decline was affected by the college's policy at that time that students should not accept grades at the end of their AS-level course, but wait until they had completed a two-year GCE A-level programme. This had the effect of depressing pass rates. The college's data for 2002/03 generally shows a rise in pass rates in AS-level courses in that year, as the policy was abolished.

9. Using college data for 2002/03, inspectors found examples of high retention and pass rates on some courses. Retention and pass rates are high on CAD motor vehicle and electronic systems courses, and on the AVCE course in ICT. There are high pass rates on foundation and intermediate GNVQ and AVCE courses in business, and NVQ level 2 accounting; on the AS-level course in sports, games and recreation; on most full-time courses in health and social care; on level 1 and 2 courses in art and design, performing arts and media; and on GCE A-level geography and philosophy courses. Retention rates are high on the diploma and certificate courses in childcare and education. In 2002/03, there was evidence of value being added to students' achievements, above what might have been expected from prior attainment, in AS levels and/or GCE A levels in biology, philosophy, and sports, games and recreation. In the same year, an above average proportion of high grades were achieved in 13 qualifications, 5 of which were in art and design or media subjects; others included biology, business, ICT and leisure and recreation.

10. Despite these successes, there are poor retention and/or pass rates on many courses, particularly in construction and engineering, but also on most AS-level and GCE A-level courses in science and mathematics, humanities and English literature, and on some intermediate GNVQ courses, as well as others. There were poor pass rates in key skills qualifications in application of number, communication and ICT in 2002/03.

11. Students' attainment was good or better in 46% of lessons which was about 7% below the national average in similar colleges in 2002/03. It is less than satisfactory in about 10% of lessons which was broadly in line with the national average. Examples have been identified by inspectors of good development of students' knowledge and skills in biology; motor vehicle studies; business; sports, leisure, travel and tourism; childcare courses and English, amongst others. Young people aged 14 to 16 are developing vocational skills, motivation and study skills, both on discrete programmes in construction and engineering, and also where they are integrated into provision for older students in other subject areas.

12. The college's curriculum allows for good progression between levels of study. There is a good rate of progression to HE from the sixth form centre, at 81%. Overall, 56% of students who completed level 3 programmes progressed to HE in 2003.

Adult learners

13. In 2003/04, the largest proportion of enrolments by students aged 19 or over, at 40%, was on level 1 programmes, with a further 25% on level 2 programmes and 23% on level 3 programmes. The largest proportions of enrolments were in ICT, English and modern foreign languages and

business.

14. Between 1999/00 and 2001/02, retention rates for students aged over 19 on long courses were well below average at level 1, but in line with the average at level 2 following an improvement over the three years. At level 3, there was a decline in retention rates over the three years, to about the average. The college's data for 2002/03 indicates an improvement in retention rates at levels 1 and 2, bringing them above average and that average retention rates have been maintained at level 3. The college's data for 2003/04 suggest that overall retention rates during the current year have increased to 87%, compared to 81% in 2002/03.

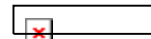
15. Pass rates from 1999/00 to 2001/02 at level 1 improved, but were below average at all levels, particularly at level 3. Pass rates were also low on short courses. Pass rates for level 4 courses were in line with, or above, the average. The college's data for 2002/03 show that pass rates for adults remained well below average at levels 1, 2 and 3.

16. When considered by qualification type, retention rates between 1999/00 and 2001/02 were below average on level 1 non-NVQ courses; at level 2, they dropped to below average on NVQ courses; and at level 3, they were above average on NVQ courses. Pass rates were below average for most qualification types and levels, except GNVQs and precursor courses at level 2.

17. Using college data for 2002/03, inspectors found high pass rates on part-time modern foreign language courses, and high retention and pass rates on discrete adult basic skills courses. There were low pass rates on the part-time diploma in childcare and education.

18. Students' attainment is good or better in 52% of lessons which is 10% below the national average for similar colleges. The proportion of lessons where attainment is unsatisfactory is about 6% which matches the national average.

Quality of education and training



19. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 189 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 55% of lessons, satisfactory in 37%, and unsatisfactory in 8%. Grades for learning followed a similar pattern; it was good or better in 51% of lessons, satisfactory in 41% and unsatisfactory in 8%. However, attainment was graded as good or better in less than half of observed lessons, at 48%, satisfactory in 43% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 9%.

20. The overall standard of teaching is lower than the average for general FE and tertiary colleges inspected in 2002/03, when 63% of lessons were graded good or better and 7% unsatisfactory. The overall standard is also lower than that observed at the time of the last inspection, undertaken by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), in November 1998. Of the 96 lessons observed in that inspection, teaching was good or better in 60%, satisfactory in 36% and less than satisfactory in 4%.

21. There are marked differences in the quality of teaching and learning by level of course. They are of a higher standard in intermediate and advanced level programmes. At level 3, teaching was good or better in 57% of lessons, compared to 53% at level 2 and 41% at level 1. At level 1, the proportion of lessons with unsatisfactory teaching rose to 15%. There is little difference between the standard of teaching and learning in lessons attended predominantly by students aged 16 to 18, and those for adults. Lessons taught by full-time staff are of a higher standard. Almost one-third of lessons are taught by part-time staff. Of these, 48% are good or better compared with 58% for full-time staff. In general, lessons which mix theory with practical activities are more successful; teaching is good or better in 65% of these mixed lessons, compared to those which are predominantly theory (53%) or practical lessons (43%).

22. The standard of teaching and learning is uneven across curriculum areas. Teaching and learning are most effective in science and mathematics, on motor vehicle programmes and 14 to 16 discrete provision in construction and engineering; sport, leisure, travel and tourism; English; humanities and foundation programmes. In the most successful lessons, the work is planned thoroughly with clear learning objectives which are matched to group and individual student needs carefully. The pace of learning is judged well and students are stimulated and encouraged to think for themselves.

23. In construction and engineering, there are too many unsatisfactory lessons. In business, IT, health and social care, visual and performing arts and media, and modern foreign languages, there are too few lessons in which teaching is good or better. Teachers in these areas demonstrate a good command of their subjects, but in many lessons, students are not engaged fully in their studies to make the progress expected of them. They are not prompted sufficiently to extend their understanding, or given enough direction and support when it is required. Many of these lessons are dominated by the teacher, characterised by a lack of pace, have infrequent checking of learning and do not use sufficient variety of learning activities to meet the needs of all students. Poor punctuality affected learning adversely in lessons in construction, engineering and humanities. In its self-assessment report, the college recognises the need to develop ILT in the classroom and a cross-college development group of staff has been established. There is good use of ILT in science and mathematics and foundation programmes, but it is under-utilised in construction and sport, leisure and travel.

24. Assessment policies and procedures are clear, comprehensive and helpful to staff and students. These include the policy on internal verification, the NVQ assessment handbook, the initial assessment handbook and course handbooks for students which cover assessment procedures. A new assessment handbook to accompany the assessment policy is being developed. Internal verification procedures are applied thoroughly in most areas of the college. External moderators' reports are rigorously monitored centrally and actions to address the issues raised are completed on time. Internal verification is particularly robust in the business area and assures a high standard of assignments and helpful feedback to students.

25. Students receive mainly detailed and supportive feedback; this helps them to improve their future work, which they value. However, in a few instances, feedback is detailed insufficiently and too many assignments occur at the same time. Students' progress is monitored effectively in English; humanities; health and social care; sports, leisure, travel and tourism; science and mathematics; ICT and in the foundation area.

26. Learning targets are set for full-time students on the basis of their prior qualifications and the results of their initial assessments. These are reviewed in their individual learning plans. In most areas of the college, the individual learning plans are used thoroughly by staff and students, and progress is monitored well. However, some one-to-one reviews are inconsistent and do not monitor the progress made since the previous meeting. Some of the targets set are too general. In some areas of the college, the reviews are infrequent at one each term.

27. There is good contact with parents and guardians of students aged 16 to 18. Tutors contact parents or guardians frequently to inform them of students' progress or of concerns about attendance or behaviour. In some areas of the college, formal reports on students' progress are provided each term and all areas have one parents' evening a year. Employers also receive reports on the progress of their employees. These are valued by employers, as are the prompt communications of concern regarding attendance.

28. The college is set in an attractive, open site, with buildings spread across three locations. The buildings present considerable challenges in terms of rendering them suitable for modern educational purposes. There has been a systematic programme of works by the in-house estates team to manage the problems, and to refurbish and improve buildings where possible. Imaginative efforts have been made, within the constraints presented by the old building stock, to create facilities for new learning opportunities, for instance in beauty therapy, and to improve students' social areas and canteens. Two newly-furbished model flats have been developed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to practise life skills. There has been careful preparatory work on identifying the strategic options relating to the future of the college's accommodation, including the

provision of new purpose-built accommodation. A new high street learning shop has been developed as a community resource, offering ICT courses for adults. At present, despite some improvements, access for people who have disabilities is not consistently good across all parts of the college. An access audit has been carried out and the resultant action plan, due to be completed by September 2004, has been put out to tender. There has been improved access to sports facilities since the last inspection, both on-site and off-site.

29. There was an extensive computer replacement programme in 2003 which has improved facilities. There is good access for students to drop-in IT workshops on all parts of the campus and a successful new curriculum resource centre for students at the upper site. There is good access to ILT resources and support for teaching staff, with developments being led by an enthusiastic ILT working group. Although ILT is being used effectively by some teachers, it is not yet in use in all curriculum areas. Not all areas have adequate access to computers and data projectors, for instance construction and business. In the ICT area, there is a lack of printing facilities in the classroom and the network is slow. There are inadequate furniture and facilities for adult ICT lessons in community venues, which are primary schools.

30. The college has a pleasant library which is stocked well in most curriculum subjects. The library benefits from the very good book stock of the adjacent East 15 theatre school, which is part of the University of Essex. There is an assistive technology centre which provides specialist equipment for students with disabilities. Most curriculum areas are well supplied with resources, materials and equipment, and there is good technician support. New electronic equipment and updated machinery provide good facilities in motor vehicle engineering. Most teachers have suitable vocational and professional qualifications and experience. The proportion of full-time and part-time staff with teaching qualifications is low at 54%. A well-regarded programme of staff development is in place, with objectives linked to the college's strategic objectives. There has been a recent increased focus on accredited teacher training courses and the development of teaching and learning skills. Take-up of staff development opportunities is inconsistent across the curriculum areas and a minority of new vocational staff are finding the level 4 teaching qualifications too demanding as a starting point. Support is being provided to alleviate this difficulty.

31. The college has revised its curriculum in the light of its changing recruitment patterns and in order to strengthen links with the local community. The proportion of full-time students recruited from East London boroughs has increased in recent years and in 2002/03, exceeded two-thirds of the total. Meanwhile, the numbers of part-time students, who are mainly local, have declined. Approximately 48% of students aged 16 to 18 are from disadvantaged areas.

32. The college offers a wide range of courses. It has increased the proportion of enrolments at entry level and level 1. Good opportunities for internal progression to full-time programmes at levels 2 and 3 have been established in most areas of learning, with progression to HE available in business, engineering and education programmes. The college has developed its community provision successfully. There is an expanded programme of non-accredited courses on campus, the development of IT provision through a college drop-in centre, courses for parents in local primary schools and a recently-opened learning shop in a high street location which offers IT courses. There is limited part-time vocational provision in business and in sport and recreation, and there has been slow progress in the re-introduction of programmes in work-based learning. The provision of courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL is insufficient to meet the needs in the local population and current student body.

33. The college has well-developed links with local schools. Some 97 students aged 14 to 16 enrolled in 2003/04. The discrete programmes in construction and engineering are of a good standard, while students of this age who join groups of older students, such as those on business programmes, are well supported. College courses are promoted effectively through a varied programme of taster events, open days, attendance at careers fairs and visits to schools using a college bus equipped with IT and technological equipment. Links with employers are satisfactory. The college has well-established employer connections in construction and engineering, and has been responsive to recent requests from employers for training. Overall, the contribution of employers to the process of course review and development is underdeveloped.

34. There are good enrichment opportunities for students to reinforce and extend learning. These involve work placements, residential events, community projects and educational visits, for students in construction, IT, sport, travel and tourism, health and social care, and visual and performing arts and media. There is a programme of elective enrichment events for full-time students, although participation is low. However, the fitness centre is popular with students and some well-received new options have been introduced in music and the performing arts. A campus radio station is being developed.

35. Provision for the development and accreditation of students' key skills is weak. Pass rates were significantly below national averages in 2002/03. Recent changes have been made, including a move away from discrete key skills courses to provision integrated into students' main programmes, managed by curriculum centres. There is a lack of consistency in the implementation of the new arrangements. Key skills are integrated effectively in business, humanities and in English, but are integrated insufficiently in science and mathematics, engineering, sport, leisure and travel, and health and social care. Key skills are managed poorly in construction and in IT. In some cases, outcomes of the initial assessment of key skills are not being used to plan appropriate programmes of study.

36. Guidance and support for students are good. Pre-entry information, advice and guidance are very effective. Information on courses and criteria for entry to the college are clear and are appreciated by students. In September 2003, entry criteria were enforced more strictly. References were required for all new students aged 16 to 18 and these were followed up in detail. This increased the emphasis on ensuring students started on appropriate courses and reduced the number of students entering without appropriate prior achievements. Current applications for full-time courses, for 2004/05, are higher than at the same time last year. Information, advice and guidance about the support services available for students are communicated effectively to them prior to joining the college. This good practice is continued during enrolment, induction and throughout the year. Students and staff know what support is available through the intranet, e-mails, leaflets in registers, posters, 'roadshow' presentations to tutor groups and plasma boards. The information is re-emphasised half way through the year.

37. Students are provided with a week-long induction at the start of their programmes. This process is effective and appreciated by students. Much information is now spread over the first half term so that students are not overloaded during their first week in college. About 70% of the tutor groups received visits in the first half term from staff advising students on the support facilities available. Policies relating to support are clear, comprehensive and helpful to staff and students. Resources are detailed and helpful, for example, the 'toolkit' for tutors, the induction handbook and the sixth form tutorial programme.

38. The college works closely with the Connexions service and considerable joint planning and collaborative work with students takes place. The college has a team of attendance monitors and also the 'RAISE' team, which focuses on improving retention, achievement, improvement and success. These teams work effectively with students who are at risk of leaving the college. Prompt interventions with such students have resulted in appropriate support being provided. This has enabled the students to stay on their course and improve their attendance, punctuality, attitude and behaviour. A nursery which has 24 places is available on site for use by students, staff and the local community. The nursery was judged to be good by Ofsted in its inspection in 2003.

39. Effective procedures are in place to identify the support needs of students. Prior to admission, full-time students are asked to indicate additional support requirements. All full-time students are given an initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and dyslexia needs during induction. Additional support is provided promptly once the need has been determined and agreed with the student, although in science and mathematics, this process has been too slow. Students who arrive later in the year are given an induction and are screened for additional support needs.

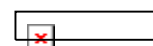
40. The provision of additional learning support has increased considerably over the last year. Staffing has increased and a further 60 students are receiving extra support in 2003/04 compared with 2002/03. Learning support is well funded, with £800,000 available in 2003/04, a significant increase on the previous year. Additional learning support is delivered mainly through in-class and

one-to-one support and is available to part-time students. The quality of the additional support provided is good in most areas of the college, although there is not always adequate focus on improving students' skills rather than supporting them in completing assignments. Students appreciate the assistance they receive and state that their progress at the college has been enhanced by the extra support provided both in-class and in one-to-one lessons. Liaison between the teacher and the learning assistant is effective mainly in ensuring that relevant support is provided to the students, although in some instances, there is scope for improvement.

41. Good pastoral and personal support are provided throughout the college. In most areas, the group tutorial system for full-time students is well organised and engages students in a wide range of topics and activities. However, the practice is inconsistent and in some areas the tutorial lacks focus or is used for curriculum work. Students on most part-time courses do not have personal tutors, but receive support from teachers and can be referred for additional learning support.

42. The college has good relations with local schools and provides high-quality information, advice and guidance to students. Effective support is given to about 100 students aged 14 to 16 who attend the college. This vocational provision motivates students who would otherwise be unlikely to remain in education. The full support facilities of the college are available to all students of this age range. The college has a child protection policy and a designated member of staff who has close links with the local area child protection committee. A minority of staff have received training to date on the child protection policy.

Leadership and management



43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, who joined the college in 2001, and senior managers have improved the financial position of the college and restructured its staffing and management effectively. They are providing clear strategic leadership that is recognised by all in the college and have succeeded in creating good staff morale after a difficult period of change. They are working with the staff and governors to continue the reshaping of the college's curriculum, to improve retention, pass rates, the quality of teaching and learning, and to redevelop the college's site. Some early indications of improvement were evident during the inspection.

44. Most weaknesses identified at the last inspection, in 1998, have been addressed successfully. The college has made considerable progress in developing its management information system. Financial information is detailed and produced frequently. Since the last inspection, governors and managers have dealt with a serious financial deficit effectively and the college's financial health is now satisfactory. Although the college has failed to reach its agreed student targets for the past three years, action taken at the start of the current year has resulted in an improved position for 2003/04. A planned major redevelopment of the site was abandoned in 2000 because of spiralling costs. Further in-depth work has been carried out to identify options for redevelopment and a decision is to be made in June 2004 on the best way forward. Relationships with local employers and partner schools are strengthening. The monitoring of college policies and procedures remains inconsistent.

45. The three-year development plan identifies eight strategic objectives which reflect national educational priorities and the learning needs of the local community. Each of the objectives is associated with clear targets for improvement, although the targets lack measurable outcomes against which progress can be monitored. The targets are incorporated into the college's operational plans.

46. There have been improvements in retention rates in the current year. Overall retention rates showed little improvement in the three years up to 2003 and the college's figures remained at, or below, the national average. The college took action in September 2003. The in-year retention rate during 2003/04, for students aged 16 to 18, has risen to 9% above the position it was at the same

time last year and 6% above for adults. Overall pass rates for the three years up to 2003 have shown some improvement, although in most areas these remain at, or below, the national average.

47. Governors demonstrate considerable commitment to their work with the college, and have business skills and experience which are relevant to the needs of the college. The quality and standards committee receive presentations by college managers on courses performing poorly against targets for retention and pass rates. However, governors receive insufficient critical analysis of data to help them monitor progress against the college's educational performance targets and need further training for this aspect of their role. The governors have indicated an intention to work more closely with curriculum areas. Link governors have been identified to work with particular curriculum areas, but visits have not yet taken place in the current cycle.

48. The management structure was revised substantially during 2003 with the appointment of two vice-principals. The changes in the structure were implemented smoothly and the new structure is operating effectively. Teaching and learning are managed through five main centres. Curriculum management in most areas is satisfactory. Where it is effective, there is good management of teaching and learning, effective teamwork, good course administration, effective internal assessment and verification, and good staff development. In two weaker areas, there is ineffective administration and inconsistent monitoring of the quality of provision.

49. New quality assurance policies and procedures were introduced from September 2003 and a comprehensive quality cycle was launched in January 2004. Course reviews are carried out effectively in most curriculum areas, leading to appropriate action plans to deal with weaknesses. The college's self-assessment report, which draws on course reviews, provides a realistic evaluation of the college's provision. The two-year lesson observation programme, which ended in September 2003, overestimated the strengths of teaching and learning. The college recognised this issue and commissioned an external review which confirmed managers' concerns. As a result, an extensive programme of staff development has been introduced to improve teaching and learning. The college is reviewing its lesson observation policy in order to start a new system from September 2004.

50. The performance appraisal of all staff is carried out by line managers on an annual basis and is linked to the objectives identified in the college development plan. The system lacks rigour and consistency, and is too dependent on the quality of individual managers. Staff development needs, identified during the appraisal process, are usually met. However, the monitoring and evaluation of training activities and professional updating are not undertaken consistently. The college is reviewing the appraisal process and intends to introduce a new system from September 2004. There is effective support for new staff.

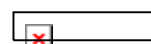
51. The management information system is very good. It provides accurate, timely and reliable information on finance, enrolments and students' progress. The system provides a wide range of relevant reports, available to all staff, either through the computer network or in paper form. Data are input on a daily basis and reports are updated regularly. For example, the daily input of students' attendance has enabled staff to identify students at risk promptly. The data is also used during course reviews and by tutors monitoring students' progress. The use of data in these ways has contributed to the process of monitoring and improving retention rates in the current year. There is scope to use the detailed information available from these reports to support curriculum development.

52. There is a strong commitment at all levels to widening participation and promoting learning to all who wish to benefit from it. The college has developed provision within the local community. There is a multi-faith prayer room on site and the college celebrates religious festivals. There are policies and action plans relating to race and diversity, and the college is complying with its responsibilities under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. All staff and governors have undertaken professional development on the significant elements of these policies. The college is also taking action to comply with the SENDA, for example, to improve access for people with restricted mobility to all areas of its site, which is currently restricted. Reports on students' attendance and retention and pass rates are produced by gender, age and ethnicity for both managers and course teams. The college has begun to make use of these data to inform future developments. Promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity, particularly through learning materials is effective. In visual and performing

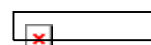
arts, the range of courses and the curriculum are being developed to meet the needs of the diverse range of students now attracted to the college. There is a policy on harassment and bullying for students and staff. The complaints procedures have been reviewed recently and are readily accessible. However, the monitoring of action to resolve complaints is not effective.

53. The college has undertaken benchmarking exercises to compare its performance with that of other colleges. It is now providing value for money in most aspects of its business. The strategic decision to maintain programmes in all programme areas has resulted in low numbers in some teaching groups. This factor, and low pass rates in some areas, is reducing the ability of the college to provide value for money in all aspects of its work. The financial health of the college is good and the management of resources is satisfactory.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- much good and lively teaching which engages students in learning
- good progress by students in biology
- good development of students' practical skills
- effective use of ILT in the curriculum
- good use of students' work in displays.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in most advanced courses

- insufficient focus on developing students' key skills
- slow identification of students' needs in learning support.

Scope of provision

54. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses, mostly at levels 2 and 3. GCSE courses are offered in mathematics, biology, and human physiology and health studies. Biology, human biology, chemistry and physics are offered at AS level and GCE A level. The college also offers free-standing modules in mathematics and AS-level and GCE A-level environmental science. There are 326 enrolments in science and mathematics. Of these, approximately 70% are by students aged 16 to 18 and 35% are by part-time students.

Achievement and standards

55. Retention rates in all subjects are in line with national averages and in-year retention rates for 2003/04 show an improvement on previous years. Attendance at lessons during the inspection was above average for the college. However, punctuality in lessons is poor, despite action taken by staff to address this issue.

56. In biology, progress is good. Value added data shows that students achieve better average points scores than might be expected of them from their prior attainment. Pass rates on GCSE courses are in line with national averages at grades A* to C. However, pass rates on advanced courses are low. In eight of the nine advanced courses, pass rates are below the national average, although value added data shows that these students' achievements are in line with expectations based on prior attainment at GCSE.

57. Students develop good practical skills. They can manipulate apparatus and equipment effectively, work safely and interpret findings well. They understand the theory behind their practical work. For example, in one chemistry lesson, students analysed different aldehydes and ketones accurately and explained clearly the role of oxidation in the tests used. They are thorough in their investigations and write up their results clearly. One group of biology students investigated the effect of exercise and caffeine on heart rate for homework. Their reports were well written and presented, the results were accurate and provided good evidence for theory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE mathematics grades A* to C	2	No. of starts	335	284	181
		% retention	73	65	68
		% pass rate	39	48	40
AS-level mathematics**	3	No. of starts	94	15	93
		% retention	80	73	55
		% pass rate	5	0	35
AS-level physics**	3	No. of starts	53	49	29
		% retention	75	55	62
		% pass rate	60	4	50

GCE A-level biology and human biology*	3	No. of starts	46	67	63
		% retention	46	82	78
		% pass rate	67	76	67
GCE A-level chemistry*	3	No. of starts	44	28	26
		% retention	50	93	88
		% pass rate	55	73	70
GCE A-level mathematics*	3	No. of starts	53	61	43
		% retention	64	93	74
		% pass rate	35	47	34

**data on GCE A levels in 2001 is based on two-year programmes*

*** in 2002, college policy was that students should not cash in their grades after completing an AS-level course, but wait until they had completed the full GCE A-level course*

Quality of education and training

58. Much teaching is lively, well paced and effective in engaging students in learning. Lessons are generally well planned, although some do not contain measurable learning objectives. Lessons often contain a good variety of learning activities, including question and answer, practical activities and group work. In the best lessons, a range of these activities is used to stimulate students' thinking, develop their research and analytical skills, and to promote effective learning. In one lesson, students researched the advantages and disadvantages of genetically modified crops and presented their findings to the group. They developed good teamwork and research skills, learned how to illustrate and present an argument coherently and could describe a good range of benefits and problems associated with genetic modification. However, in a minority of lessons there is an over-reliance on teacher input, and question and answer sessions do not always provide sufficient challenge or recall for students.

59. Several staff use ILT very effectively in their lessons. In one mathematics lesson, digital photographs were used to capture students' attention and remind them of earlier practical work. This was linked to the college's intranet site, where additional information was provided. In conjunction with good explanations from the teacher, this was used successfully to develop students' understanding of moments and forces. In chemistry, presentations for use in theory lessons are placed on the intranet. These are accessed regularly by students and are effective in helping them revise and learn. In one physics lesson, the whole group was able to see Brownian motion on a television monitor linked to a microscope. As a result, they were able to ask, and answer, more searching questions about what they were seeing.

60. Many students work collaboratively to prepare posters illustrating aspects of their courses and these are displayed prominently in mathematics classrooms and laboratories. For example, good diagrams illustrating chemical bonding are displayed in laboratories. The preparation of these posters by students reinforces their learning and that of others.

61. Key skills are not taught separately, but are integrated with science and mathematics provision. However, schemes of work and lesson plans rarely give enough information on the way key skills will be developed or assessed. In lessons, opportunities for the overt development and assessment of key skills are not always seized by teachers.

62. Laboratories are well organised and equipped, with good technical support. Classrooms are spacious and although some are in need of refurbishment, they are fit for purpose. The library contains a good range of books which meet general interest, support courses with underpinning information and extend students' knowledge. However, there are no multiple copies of essential texts

in biology. Access to ICT facilities in some laboratories is good. Little use is made of professionally produced materials to inspire or motivate students.

63. Assignments are set regularly and marked clearly, with feedback showing whether students are on target to achieve, exceed or fail to achieve their predicted grade. Most give clear information on how performance can be improved. Where students' performance is giving cause for concern, an effective reporting system is used to alert tutors who give additional guidance and set targets for improvement.

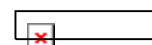
64. The range of courses available is satisfactory. All four sciences are offered at advanced level. Free-standing units in mathematics are available and students can take mathematics GCSE at foundation or intermediate level. The college has recently made a submission to offer access to HE courses in science. It advertises vocational science courses in the prospectus, although none are running.

65. Many students are admitted to the college with lower than average attainment, a history of poor achievement or disaffection at school. Their additional learning support needs are not identified or addressed early enough in their programme.

Leadership and management

66. Science and mathematics provision is well managed. Managers use data well to inform their decisions and set targets for improvement. There is effective sharing of information between teachers of individual subjects. Recent changes in the college's structure have been implemented smoothly and communication between members of staff is good. Staff have participated in a range of appropriate development activities focusing on teaching, course development, assessment and diversity. Most staff were involved closely in preparing the recent self-assessment report. Data was used well to inform their decisions, but there was less use of qualitative information and reflection on performance in the subject areas.

Construction



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- good in-class learning support
- good and productive links with industry
- very good project for disaffected students aged 14 to 16.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates

- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- poor development and management of key skills
- poor punctuality and attendance
- inadequate focus on improving teaching and learning and students' achievements.

Scope of provision

67. Courses in construction are provided in two main areas, brickwork and electrical installation. A multi-skills option which incorporates elements of brickwork, carpentry and joinery, plastering and plumbing is also available. Courses are predominantly at levels 1 and 2 and are available full time or part time. NVQs are available in brickwork, provided that students can demonstrate evidence of vocational competence from the workplace. There are 67 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 7 full-time students aged over 19. Of the 97 part-time students, 74 are aged over 19 and 23 are aged 16 to 18. Full-time and part-time introductory courses in construction crafts are provided for 72 students aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

68. Pass rates in construction are low. These have been below national average figures consistently for the last three years. Poor administrative procedures within the construction department have rendered 2002/03 brickwork data unreliable. Retention rates in the current year have decreased significantly. Levels of attainment in most practical lessons are satisfactory. Progress in portfolio development is slow. Many portfolios contain insufficient evidence for students who should be completing this year. Students' attendance and punctuality are poor and lateness is challenged inadequately by teachers.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
City and Guilds 2360-01 part 1 competences electrical installation	1	No. of starts	80	83	88
		% retention	80	77	98
		% pass rate	58	25	50
NVQ bricklaying construction	2	No. of starts	49	58	*
		% retention	41	33	*
		% pass rate	0	79	*
City and Guilds 2360-02 part II competencies electrical installation	2	No. of starts	39	54	44
		% retention	79	81	91
		% pass rate	6	27	33

*** data unreliable**

Quality of education and training

69. Too many teaching lessons in construction are poor. Time is wasted in reading handouts to students and in students copying drawings from whiteboards. Teaching methods are not varied sufficiently. Students are challenged rarely and the teacher merely passes on information. In many lessons, there are inadequate checks on learning. Theory lessons do not make use of ILT. Teaching in workshops is better, but learning plans fail to take into account the wide range of projects being undertaken by students in any session.

70. Key skills have been developed and managed poorly. Pass rates are very low. Initial assessments of these skills are not used effectively to plan learning. Teachers focus on helping students to complete assignments rather than developing the skills that will enable students to complete them. Students are confused as to what is required to complete the key skills qualification and portfolio development is started too late in the students' learning programme.

71. Construction staff have appropriate vocational qualifications. Many have been recruited recently from industry and have relevant up-to-date technical knowledge. Insufficient numbers of teachers are employed in brickwork; two new teachers have too many lesson hours per week as well as undertaking teacher training and assessor awards.

72. Brickwork and electrical installation workshops are satisfactory. The smaller workshops used for the carpentry and joinery, and plumbing elements of the multi-skills course in construction are equipped inadequately for the qualification. Tools are plentiful and of satisfactory quality except in the electrical installation workshop where these are poor. A good supply of consumable materials is available for practical work. Good and productive links have been made with local construction companies. These provide many benefits for students including work placement opportunities, improved facilities and sponsored specialist tools and equipment. Electrical installation teachers have insufficient access to computers and there are few data projectors.

73. Most assessment is well planned, rigorous, comprehensive and tracked well. The marking of practical exercises by teachers is good, but lacks input by students. Portfolios, assignments and practical exercises are well marked with good feedback given to students. A sound internal verification process ensures the quality of assessment of completed work. Some internal verification is carried out by a sub-contractor because there are too few qualified construction internal verifiers employed directly by the college. Students' progress is well recorded, but this is not communicated to students and they are generally not aware of the progress they are making towards completion of their qualification.

74. A very good project has been designed to meet the needs of disaffected students aged 14 to 16. A group of these, most of whom have not attended school for up to two years, is working on a house on the campus. A range of activities aimed at developing practical skills is provided and includes literacy and numeracy skills development. Attendance is good, the students are enthusiastic about the work they are doing and many have now decided to follow a career in the construction industry.

75. Progression opportunities in construction are poor. The range of provision is narrow, focusing only on brickwork and electrical installation. Students are working towards the vocational qualifications and key skills required by modern apprenticeships, but these are not available at the college. Students who complete the foundation multi-skills construction award can progress on to brickwork courses, but there are no progression opportunities into carpentry, plastering and plumbing.

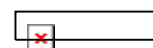
76. Learning support in lessons is good. Support teachers work well with vocational staff to assist students with literacy and numeracy, as well as needs arising from dyslexia. Students' needs are assessed, recorded and monitored accurately by the support teachers who plan and track support. Students receiving support value this and other students in the lesson also benefit from the presence

of support teachers. There are weaknesses in tutorial support. Individual learning plans are completed inadequately and not updated. They do not contain learning targets for students and are not valued sufficiently by staff. Group tutorials are planned and managed poorly. Staff are not clear on the purpose of these and many are extensions of theory lessons. However, teachers with up-to-date industry experience give good careers advice.

Leadership and management

77. Management in the construction department has been unsatisfactory. There has been an inadequate focus on quality assurance in improving teaching and learning, and student achievement. Until recently, no strategies had been put into place to tackle long-term low pass rates. Incorrect achievement data have gone unchallenged and unresolved. Teachers are unaware that pass rates on their programmes are low. A new management structure is in place and is committed to improving and developing the department. An accurate self-assessment has been carried out which has identified weaknesses correctly. Tracking systems are being developed to ensure that data is correct. Action is being taken to improve retention and pass rates. Ambitious plans are being put together to develop courses and facilities. Improved brickwork facilities and early examination successes in the current year are tangible evidence of positive change.

Engineering, technology and manufacturing



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on CAD and motor vehicle level 2 programmes
- good teaching and acquisition of skills on 14 to 16 and motor vehicle programmes
- high standard of resources in motor vehicle provision to support learning
- effective partnerships with schools and employers.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on most courses
- poor attendance and punctuality

- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- underdeveloped management information systems.

Scope of provision

78. The college offers a wide range of engineering courses from levels 1 to 4, although the majority of courses are at levels 2 and 3. General engineering courses are available at levels 1 and 2. Courses are delivered for full-time and part-time students, and there are opportunities for students to attend evening classes in CAD, motor vehicle studies, model engineering and horology. In 2002/03, there were 292 students, of whom, 65% were full time and 35% part time. Some 44% of students are adults who attend mainly part-time evening classes. There is a small group of students aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

79. Retention and pass rates are high for the small numbers of students on level 2 courses on motor vehicle mechanical and electronic systems unit replacement programmes. CAD and NVQ level 2 motor vehicle courses have consistently high pass rates. Students on mechanical engineering courses, at NVQ level 2, are producing practical work of an acceptable standard. However, pass rates are low on most courses, and attendance and punctuality are poor.

80. Many students on the programme for 14 to 16 year olds have poor previous attainment and school attendance. The college has welcomed these young people and is helping them to develop skills and prepare for the world of work. For example, students have made tools which can be used in later years.

81. Achievement of additional skills in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The achievement of key skills varies throughout the provision. A new management approach to greater integration of key skills into the mainstream motor vehicle programmes is proving more successful. On-line testing for key skills is being piloted with good improvements in achievement. Plans are in place to formalise the teaching of key skills delivery for all students in the summer intake.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
NVQ performing engineering operations	1	No. of starts	*	*	54
		% retention	*	*	49
		% pass rate	*	*	66
NVQ vehicle fitting	1	No. of starts	24	21	30
		% retention	58	52	50
		% pass rate	0	36	47
CAD City and Guilds 4531-01	2	No. of starts	29	37	21
		% retention	93	97	71
		% pass rate	100	81	80

National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	15	18	33
		% retention	67	67	61
		% pass rate	60	83	33

* course not running

Quality of education and training

82. A quarter of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory. In weaker lessons, teaching is planned poorly, with unclear objectives. There are poor questioning techniques and explanations lack clear detail. Students spend considerable time completing technical sketches under time constraints, regardless of the use of this information. Limited use is made of handouts to increase the time available for developing skills such as calculation. Progress tends to be measured by the performance of the more able students, with little attention paid to the competence of the remainder of the group. In some lessons, there is insufficient involvement of students and inadequate use of resources to support learning. In one case, there was inappropriate instruction in the use of basic tools. One student cut a finger and could not complete the lesson. Teachers take care to ensure that students use personal protective equipment. However, health and safety advice is not promoted clearly at appropriate areas of the workshops. No notices exist to remind students of the need to wear eye protection when using grinding machines.

83. There is much good, enthusiastic practical teaching on programmes for 14 to 16 year olds and motor vehicle courses. Teaching styles include lectures, good use of interactive electronic teaching aids and a wide range of occupationally specific exercises. Good use is made of practical learning resources to reinforce theory teaching. The 14 to 16 age group work on fitting exercises which are appropriate to the trade. They demonstrate good skills in working on vehicle servicing and the replacement of parts including brakes, suspension systems and other basic components. Lesson plans are generally well structured and informative, although little reference is made to the preferred learning styles or literacy and numeracy support needs of individuals.

84. Considerable investment in vehicle equipment resources has resulted in improvements in the motor vehicle workshop. The main classroom has the latest electronic learning aids supported by good software packages. Students prefer these methods of training and are engaged actively during lessons. Additional computer-based equipment and updated machinery in the motor vehicle workshops allows students to work more closely to industry standards. There has been effective investment in a mobile training unit. This is used to promote engineering to schools and at training events. Schools make use of these facilities regularly and often achieve engineering technical awards. In the general engineering workshop, supporting machine tools such as lathes, drills, vehicle training media and grinders are not in good condition and do not meet the standard students would expect to encounter in modern workplaces. Some staff have received training in the use of interactive whiteboards, but classrooms are not always suitable for the adaptation of this equipment and teachers are not yet able to build these techniques into lectures.

85. Full-time staff are well qualified and experienced in their trades. Part-time staff are recruited from industry and use their recent experience to good effect. All staff, except those who are new, hold appropriate vocational awards. Some 70% of teaching staff hold relevant teaching qualifications, while the remainder of staff are working towards them.

86. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. There is frequent assessment of students' work and students are informed fully of their progress. Detailed documents are maintained by some tutors, to track students' progress. There are good arrangements to identify and meet students' literacy and numeracy support needs.

87. There are effective partnerships with schools and employers. Good links exist with two local schools, parents and several high-profile motor vehicle employers. Taster courses in engineering and motor vehicle studies for young people, including women, encourage enrolments on to appropriate courses successfully. Regular discussion has taken place with local employers to

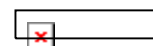
determine the skill and qualification requirements of the area. These contacts have led to full-time work or work placements for students. A wide range of appropriate programmes and opportunities is on offer. In most cases, courses offer very good progression routes for students' development. Students may attend on block release, full time or day release, dependant upon their needs or work commitments.

88. There are satisfactory practical and pastoral support arrangements for students. Planned individual and group tutorials enable students to receive additional support in basic skills and areas of poorer performance. Specialist support teachers or technical staff are allocated to provide individual guidance in lessons where literacy or numeracy support or practical assistance may be required. Tutors form good working relationships with students. Induction programmes have been improved to provide clearer information and improve retention rates.

Leadership and management

89. Management in engineering is now satisfactory. The engineering management team are relatively new to the college. Managers at curriculum level have recognised previous poor performance. They have set clearer objectives for training and introduced new working practices to improve teaching and students' performance. Staff morale is high following the recent investment in the motor vehicle provision and several new staff have been appointed. Courses with poor attendance have been discontinued. Programme time scales are under consideration for adjustment to allow for more realistic completion dates and improve pass rates. The new management information systems are starting to provide more accurate information, although managers are not yet monitoring performance data adequately.

Business, administration, management and professional studies



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GNVQ and AVCE in business and NVQ level 2 in accounting courses
- good development of personal and business skills
- innovative and challenging assignments
- strong individual pastoral and learning support
- effective use of facilities in the training office.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level accounting and legal text processing at level 2
- too much uninspiring teaching
- insufficient commercial updating of staff
- narrow range of part-time programmes.

Scope of provision

90. There are 400 full-time and 202 part-time students following programmes in business, administration, management and professional studies. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18, whilst most part-time students are over 19 years of age. Full-time students are working towards NVQs in business administration, at levels 1 to 3, foundation and intermediate GNVQs in business, AVCE in business, and AS level and GCE A level in business, accounting and economics. Part-time courses include NVQs in accounting, at levels 2 to 4, text and word processing, the certificate in personnel practice and other management and professional courses.

Achievement and standards

91. Pass rates on GNVQ and AVCE business courses and on the NVQ in accounting at level 2 course are consistently above national averages. However, pass rates on AS-level accounting and on legal text processing are low. Many students produce work of a high standard. Students on professional courses are researching topics such as performance appraisal, presenting their recommendations in report and oral format, and implementing them successfully at work. Students are gaining useful personal and employment skills including time management, organisation and presentational skills through practical assignments and also through work experience, which develops their self-confidence significantly. Students on the e-business course are gaining excellent business skills through an innovative project to design websites for local charity organisations. This involves meeting and negotiating with managers, making presentations, and researching and designing the website in teams.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	23	18	19
		% retention	70	67	95
		% pass rate	94	100	89
BTEC first and GNVQ business intermediate	2	No. of starts	58	56	56
		% retention	84	86	80

		% pass rate	49	73	87
Legal text processing	2	No. of starts	91	70	57
		% retention	70	80	79
		% pass rate	73	70	49
AVCE business double award	3	No. of starts	55	33	54
		% retention	84	73	50
		% pass rate	76	88	93
NVQ accounting 1 year	3	No. of starts	27	24	24
		% retention	63	83	75
		% pass rate	71	70	56
AS-level business studies*	3	No. of starts	83	111	113
		% retention	84	77	73
		% pass rate	54	22	70

** in 2002, college policy was that students should not cash in their grades after completing an AS-level course, but wait until they had completed the full GCE A-level course*

Quality of education and training

92. Only half of lessons had teaching which was judged good or better. The best lessons are prepared well, using a variety of techniques to suit students' needs. Some teachers use current events and their own recent commercial experience to enliven lessons. They encourage lively debate about practices at students' own workplaces and facilitate the sharing of information. Assignments are challenging. In one topical GCE A-level lesson, students were required to assess the impact on economies of new countries joining the European Union. Students on GCE A-level courses are able to discuss factors affecting business mergers knowledgeably and use terminology with confidence. The weaker lessons lack structure and are unstimulating. The pace and demands of the work are not differentiated sufficiently for students of varying ability and there are inadequate checks on learning. There is insufficient use of ILT to enhance learning.

93. The well-equipped training office is used effectively by NVQ administration students to gain practical skills and supervisory experience. There is a good stock of reference books and students carry out work for college departments. All students have ready access to modern computers with Internet facilities in IT suites, although few classrooms are equipped with digital projectors or computers. This would assist learning particularly in accounting. Attractive displays of students' work enhance many classrooms, but some rooms need refurbishing and redecorating. Most staff have relevant degrees and many belong to professional bodies; they either have or are working towards teaching qualifications. Established staff lack recent commercial experience.

94. Assessment and internal verification are generally satisfactory. The portfolios of administration students contain a wide range of evidence. There is insufficient use of work-based evidence in accounting portfolios and learners are not visited in the workplace by assessors. On one course, assignments failed to meet the criteria and students' progress was delayed. Homework is set regularly and marked promptly on most courses. Feedback to students is well considered, with constructive suggestions for improving work.

95. There is a good range of courses for full-time students, many of whom progress from level 1 through to level 3. Qualifications in IT, AS level and GCE A level or a further AVCE are available as additions to students' main programmes, subject to timetabling constraints. Both students aged 14 to 16 and those from disadvantaged backgrounds are integrated well into programmes and are provided with effective support. Provision of part-time courses is narrow, apart from accounting qualifications, which are available from levels 2 to 4. There is a limited range of management

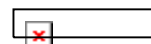
courses.

96. Good information and guidance results in most students being on appropriate courses, although in some cases, students have been placed at the wrong level. Induction is comprehensive and memorable and helps students settle quickly into the programme. Students receive effective personal and additional learning support, although there are some delays in accessing diagnostic tests for dyslexia. Close monitoring by tutors of students' attendance and progress, and support for those who need it, is improving retention rates on full-time courses. Retention rates have been high in 2003/04, at over 90%. Tutors regularly measure progress against predicted grades and there are signs that pass rates are improving, particularly on full-time courses.

Leadership and management

97. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory. Course reviews are effective and have brought about improvements such as changes in advice and guidance to ensure students are placed on appropriate courses, changes in assessment patterns, and the introduction of alternative attendance modes and opportunities to progress to further study. Internal communications are good, and part-time staff are invited to meetings and receive regular information. The self-assessment report was mainly accurate. Poor management of one course has been addressed in the current year. Arrangements for staff development are satisfactory. New staff are supported informally, but the mentoring system is underdeveloped.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on AVCE courses
- good teaching on intermediate GNVQ courses
- effective monitoring and support for students
- well-devised and thorough worksheets and assignment guidance sheets.

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to the needs of more able students

- ineffective planning of in-class additional learning support
- unsatisfactory accommodation in community provision
- poor management of key skills in ICT.

Scope of provision

98. The college offers a good range of provision from levels 1 to 3. There are 658 students studying ICT or computing, of whom, 316 are full-time students aged mainly 16 to 18. The remaining 342 students are aged 19 years or over, and study mostly part time. Full-time provision for students aged 16 to 18 includes foundation and intermediate GNVQ in ICT, AVCE double award, national diploma for IT practitioners, AS-level and GCE A-level computing and AS-level and GCE A-level ICT.

99. Courses are provided at the 'Flex-IT' centre in the college and the new 'Achieve IT' centre, which is a drop in facility for adult students in the town centre. There is a range of part-time courses at 10 local primary and junior schools in the area.

Achievement and standards

100. Retention and pass rates are satisfactory or better for all full-time courses. On adult short courses, retention rates are satisfactory and pass rates, previously low, have shown some improvement. Students have the opportunity to develop a key skill. On full-time courses, punctuality is poor and causes frequent disruptions to lessons.

101. Students' achievements were satisfactory or better in most lessons. In an effective level 1 lesson, students made very good progress using a range of software to edit a graphics assignment. In a GCE A-level lesson, students worked enthusiastically in pairs to produce a poster to explain relational databases and normalisation. Students demonstrated a good grasp of the relevant knowledge and terminology.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	16	25	36
		% retention	75	88	72
		% pass rate	100	82	77
Intermediate GNVQ in IT	2	No. of starts	52	94	96
		% retention	81	85	61
		% pass rate	74	45	73
AVCE double award ICT	3	No. of starts	***	37	54
		% retention	***	73	69
		% pass rate	***	78	92

AS-level ICT**	3	No. of starts	126	172	120
		% retention	77	69	63
		% pass rate	61	15	64
AS-level computing**	3	No. of starts	70	61	38
		% retention	84	62	74
		% pass rate	49	11	79
GCE A-level ICT*	3	No. of starts	52	81	47
		% retention	48	79	89
		% pass rate	84	69	86
GCE A-level computing*	3	No. of starts	53	22	32
		% retention	58	82	84
		% pass rate	45	89	85

**data on GCE A levels in 2001 is based on two-year programmes*

*** in 2002, college policy was that students should not cash in their grades after completing an AS-level course, but wait until they had completed the full GCE A-level course*

****course not running*

Quality of education and training

102. The majority of teaching is satisfactory. In one effective lesson, a data projector was used to demonstrate the airbrush technique to edit images with graphics software. In another lesson, group work was used effectively to decide on a creative theme and images for an advertisement". This enabled students to help each other with the IT equipment and software to collect images, before each producing their own advertisements. All theory lessons are taught through practical experience. In some lessons, poor lesson planning makes progress slow. An example was when data could have been e-mailed to each student before the lesson so they did not waste time typing, which was irrelevant to the lesson objectives. In a significant number of lessons, insufficient account is taken of students' individual learning needs. For example, there were no additional progressive tasks for students working towards a high grade.

103. Comprehensive worksheets are in use, with step-by-step tutorials, guidance on techniques, review sheets and graded problem-solving activities. Assignment guidance sheets are easy to follow as the extensive problems are separated into sections. Information on grading criteria for each grade is made available and comprehensive feedback is provided on how to improve the work to obtain a higher grade. This is very motivating for students. Assessment is fair and reliable, and students' work is marked regularly and returned promptly. The monitoring of students' progress is good and conducted through tutorials using individual learning plans. Rigorous entry requirement procedures have ensured that students are placed on the correct course.

104. There are good teaching resources on the main site. However, accommodation in community provision is unsuitable, with adults using primary school furniture in small rooms with insufficient space between laptops. In one case, there was a printer on an easy chair and a trailing power lead. There is also a lack of appropriate teaching aids such as overhead projectors and whiteboards. On the main site, staff and students make good use of the intranet for course notes, the student handbook, and assignment and assessment guidelines. Students also have external access to enable them to study at home.

105. There is a wide range of enrichment activities, including the creation of websites for charities,

amateur radio activities and visits to museums. Certified network and IT practitioners' courses were introduced to meet the needs of employers requiring specialist IT practical skills and these are available as an additional option on level 3 vocational courses. However, there are no work placement opportunities as part of students' courses.

106. Guidance and support for students are good. The tutorial system works well and teachers work hard to ensure that students meet the required standards. Students value the individual tutorial sessions where progress is discussed, achievement targets are set and action plans are agreed. All students have individual learning plans developed from initial guidance interviews, which include action plans and tutorial records. A record of assignment grades forms part of the individual learning plan and is used as a basis for discussions in tutorial sessions. Learning support assistants have been allocated to many of the vocational courses. The quality of this support is inconsistent as there is a lack of formal co-ordination between the teacher and the assistant about the activities planned for the lesson.

Leadership and management

107. Leadership and management in the curriculum area are satisfactory. The small amount of adult and community provision is managed well, with an effective quality assurance system, which copes well with frequent short course enrolments. There is good involvement of staff in the college's self-assessment procedure, which draws upon a good quality assurance system which operates at several levels. Students' progress is monitored carefully and accurately on a regular basis. Staff are very aware of individual students' progress and use the information to encourage students to progress further in lessons. Arrangements for the development of students' key skills are not well managed across full-time programmes. Data are not used effectively to improve teaching and learning by curriculum managers.

Sports, leisure, travel and tourism

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

Strengths

- high and improving pass rates on AS-level sport games and recreation courses
- much good teaching
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- good range of subject-related enrichment activities
- effective action to address punctuality and attendance.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on intermediate GNVQ leisure and tourism courses
- insufficient use of IT in teaching
- poor curriculum management on the intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism course.

Scope of provision

108. The area offers the first diploma in sport, the foundation and intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism, AVCE in travel and tourism and also leisure and recreation, and the AS level and GCE A level in sport, games and recreation. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and study full time. There is a limited range of part-time courses in sport and travel, most of which are non-accredited. There is a narrow range of additional qualifications available to full-time students which includes the airfares and ticketing certificate and the Association of British Travel Agencies (ABTAC) primary certificate. There are low numbers of enrolments by adult students.

Achievement and standards

109. Pass rates on the AVCE in leisure and recreation and the AS level in sport, games and recreation courses are above the national average. Pass rates on the AS-level course improved to 100% in 2002/03. For AS level and GCE A level in sport, games and recreation, they indicate that students' average point scores have been well above those indicated by their prior attainment. Some courses have retention rates above the national average. However, both retention and pass rates are declining on the intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism course, and pass rates are low. Students' written work is generally of a high standard. In 2003, a travel and tourism student won a local award, which recognises both academic performance and a significant contribution to the community. Sport students have competed successfully at national level in kick-boxing and orienteering. Students' subject knowledge and skills are well developed and the theoretical aspects of most courses are integrated effectively into practical activities. This increases motivation and enables students to make good progress in lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
Foundation GNVQ leisure and tourism	1	No. of starts	**	15	20
		% retention	**	73	75
		% pass rate	**	64	80
Intermediate GNVQ leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	29	31	27
		% retention	83	81	70
		% pass rate	79	36	42
AS-level sports, games and recreation	3	No. of starts	30	28	24
		% retention	63	71	63
		% pass rate	68	95	100
AVCE (double award)	3	No. of starts	*	33	33

travel and tourism		% retention	*	42	64
		% pass rate	*	86	76

* course not running

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

110. There is much good teaching, with teachers using a range of activities effectively to engage students' interest. The majority of lessons are planned comprehensively and include stimulating group work and a range of practical activities, which involve all students and generate interest and enthusiasm. In one lesson, the students produced well-presented and detailed seminar papers on equal opportunities in sport, which were used as the basis for an effective group discussion. Most courses are based on comprehensive schemes of work, which identify where key skills will be developed. Individuals' learning needs are taken fully into account in course plans.

111. In less effective lessons, the needs of individual students are not met consistently, despite being identified in lesson plans. A minority of lessons rely too much on input from the teacher, without involving students sufficiently. IT facilities are available in many teaching rooms, but the majority of staff do not make enough use of ILT to enhance teaching and learning.

112. There is a well-qualified and generally well-experienced team of full-time and part-time staff, most of whom hold at least first degrees in relevant subjects. There is a large proportion of new staff who have yet to gain recognised teaching qualifications. Staff feel well supported and have good access to a wide range of development opportunities such as degree courses conferences for keeping up to date. Some staff hold chief and principal examiner posts, and one member of staff is the joint author of a textbook for AS-level courses in sports, games and recreation.

113. The college uses a range of external facilities such as the Charlton Athletic football club and local sports centres to enhance students' practical activities. Most of the teaching rooms and the curriculum area contain good resources to support teaching and learning. However, the library contains few up to date resources, especially for travel and leisure courses. A small number of teaching rooms are too small for the size of the lesson and are not appropriate for group work; and some have poor heating and ventilation. The sports hall and fitness centre are in need of refurbishment. There are plans to develop a fully operational travel agency on the main site to enable other courses such as NVQs in travel services to be offered.

114. Students are provided with appropriate feedback on how they can improve their work. Some assessed work, especially on level 2 courses, lacks annotation. The process of internal verification of assignments and marking is rigorous. Assignment briefs are checked prior to them being issued to students and a sample of students' work is marked twice.

115. Students' progress is monitored effectively through regular tutorials. Students understand how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. Attendance is monitored rigorously and there have been significant improvements in attendance and punctuality in the past year. College data indicate that retention rates in the curriculum area have improved during 2003/04. Students speak positively about the formal and informal support they receive from their teachers and they have good access to additional support. There is a very good range of enrichment opportunities for students. For example, the AVCE students have planned and participated in a camping trip and a water sports residential in the Ardeche region of France. There is a well-integrated work experience programme for the majority of students, although many of the placements for travel students are in hospitality rather than travel.

Leadership and management

116. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong team ethos. Communications are

good and the course teams review course performance regularly. Some aspects of good practice are shared between staff informally, but there is scope to develop this further.

117. Management of the intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism has been poor, but strategies have been implemented to address this. The link between lesson observations and the appraisal of staff performance is not well developed. The self-assessment process and action planning are generally effective, but progress against all points in the development plan is not monitored systematically. The systematic analysis of ethnicity at course level is developing and equal opportunity issues are dealt with effectively within the curriculum.

Health and social care

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

Strengths

- high retention rates on the diploma and certificate in childcare and education courses
- high pass rates on most full-time courses
- well-managed work placements on childcare courses which enhance learning
- effective monitoring of individual progress in tutorial programmes.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on intermediate GNVQ in health and social care, and on the part-time diploma in childcare and education
- low retention rates on intermediate GNVQ and AVCE health and social care courses
- insufficient range and pace of learning tasks
- shortage of specialist teachers affecting learning adversely.

Scope of provision

118. The college offers full-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 with the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE), a two-year national diploma in childhood studies and early years, and the AVCE and GNVQ in health and social care. There are 130 students enrolled on these courses, predominantly aged 16 to 18. A full-time access to health studies and nursing course was offered in September 2003 for the first time. There are approximately 145 students enrolled on a limited range of part-time day and evening courses which include the certificate in dental nursing and level 2 and 3 qualifications in counselling. There is no provision for NVQ qualifications.

Achievement and standards

119. Students on full-time courses in childcare achieve well and complete their courses successfully. There are high pass rates on most full-time courses. Retention rates on full-time childcare courses are above the national average and have been improving over the last three years. Students on the part-time diploma in childcare complete the course, but the pass rate is significantly below the national average. There are poor and declining student retention rates on level 2 and level 3 courses in health and social care. The pass rate for the intermediate GNVQ in health and social care is below average. Students on part-time courses in counselling achieve well.

120. In lessons, students show a good grasp of basic concepts, but are less confident in demonstrating more advanced skills. Students' oral skills in discussion and group work are better developed than their written skills. They respond well in small group work and role play, and are confident when presenting information to the rest of their class. The quality of students' displays in classrooms is of a high standard. There is good progression for students on courses in childcare. Six students from the diploma in childcare course gained places on degree courses in 2004. All other students on the course went directly into employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
First aid at work	1	No. of starts	37	51	23
		% retention	78	98	100
		% pass rate	0	96	100
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	19	17	24
		% retention	84	88	96
		% pass rate	6	100	91
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	16	*	16
		% retention	63	*	44
		% pass rate	90	*	100
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	27	22	26
		% retention	74	86	88
		% pass rate	60	89	78

**fewer than 15 students enrolled*

Quality of education and training

121. Most teaching across all courses is satisfactory or better. In good lessons, teachers make objectives clear at the start and check students' understanding and learning frequently. In a childcare lesson, students practised skills through role play, taking turns to give and receive feedback from a placement manager. They demonstrated skilfully effective ways of handling difficult feedback in a positive way. Teachers promote professional values and ethics actively. Lessons reinforce the need to apply confidentiality appropriately in the work place. Colourful classroom

displays promote respect for diversity, customs and spiritual beliefs. Students on childcare courses make good use of experience from work placements to link theory and practice. In one lesson, a student related her understanding of Ainsworth's theory on child separation anxiety to children who are upset in nursery school when left by their primary carer. In contrast, on health and social care courses, many students are unable to relate theory to practice. Students who chose to do a work placement showed greater understanding of these links. In less successful lessons, there is an insufficient range of learning tasks to meet the needs of all students. Teachers sometimes talk too much and the pace of work is too slow. Faster workers waste time waiting for slower workers to complete tasks. The assessment of students' work is good. There are satisfactory arrangements for the internal moderation of coursework, and teachers provide helpful and supportive comments on written work.

122. Staff shortages place extra demands on the small team of full-time teachers. In some cases, it has not been possible to find replacements for staff who have left. In some lessons, substitute teachers do not have the relevant vocational experience to support good learning and make effective links between theory and practice. The teaching of key skills has also been affected adversely by staff shortages. A few classrooms are too small to accommodate larger groups when doing practical activities. There is little use of ILT in childcare, and health and care lessons and there are no course materials to support students' learning for care and childcare courses on the college's intranet. A recently-developed website for the access to nursing course was used effectively by students to conduct research into alcohol misuse. Learning resources and the library stock are adequate.

123. Well-managed work placements on childcare courses enhance students' learning. Students prepare thoroughly in advance of placements. They make preliminary visits and write to managers or head teachers to obtain places. There is very good communication between the college and providers. Students' records of attendance and evaluation in the workplace are well maintained and held confidentially. Teachers visit placements regularly and provide good written and oral feedback to students.

124. The foundation course in caring for children is aimed at students with low prior qualifications. College staff interview applicants in their existing schools in the year prior to the start of the course. This foundation course provides well-managed work placements in local nurseries that help prepare students for the childcare workplace environment.

125. There is good monitoring of individual progress on health and social care, and child care programmes. Initial assessment was completed in the first weeks of term and results were used to identify additional support needs. All students have realistic individual learning targets. These are monitored closely by tutors and updated regularly. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of their students and their individual needs. Students value the personal support and subject guidance which teachers provide readily.

Leadership and management

126. Management of the department is satisfactory. Regular meetings of course teams and informal staff discussions deal with student issues effectively. There is an effective self-assessment process at course level, but development plans do not include specific improvement targets. Staff have not been appraised in the past year and have no personal objectives. Staff appointed recently receive very good support to develop teaching skills. Current arrangements for staffing lessons where there are shortages are inadequate.

Visual and performing arts and media

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on courses in art and design, performing arts and media at levels 1 and 2

- broad and responsive range of provision
- extensive programme of educational visits and community projects which enhance learning
- effective strategies to improve retention rates.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level and GCE A-level art and design
- low retention rates in AS-level media, GCE A-level art and design, and foundation GNVQ in performing arts
- inadequate lesson planning and uninspiring teaching in too many lessons
- insufficient integration of ILT in art and design.

Scope of provision

127. The college offers a broad range of full-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 in visual and performing arts and media. This includes foundation GNVQ programmes in art and design and media, BTEC first diplomas in art and design and performing arts, GCSE in media, and intermediate GNVQ courses in media and art and design. Qualifications at level 3 include AS level and GCE A level in art and media studies, and a wide range of BTEC national diplomas in media, performing arts, art and design and foundation studies. The expanding range of part-time provision includes a newly-introduced BTEC national award in stage management, run as an evening class primarily for adults and available to full-time students as an additional qualification. The college offers a range of leisure courses for adults by arrangement with Essex LEA.

Achievement and standards

128. In foundation GNVQ programmes in art and design and performing arts, pass rates of 100% have been maintained over a three-year period, and those in intermediate GNVQ media and the first diploma in performing arts are at, or above, national averages. Retention rates are low on the foundation GNVQ programme in performing arts. At level 3, pass rates in AS-level and GCE A-level art, and GCE A-level media, are below the national average. Retention rates are low in AS-level media and GCE A-level art. In contrast, high standards of work are achieved in the national diploma

in graphic design, national diploma in performing arts and AS-level photography. For example, a student's project on the theme of the environment comprises a series of striking high-quality digital photographs. Performing arts students, in a duologue taken from Berkoff's East, display a depth of characterisation and emotions unusual at this stage of the course.

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 foundation art and design	1	No. of starts	21	17	***
		% retention	71	65	***
		% pass rate	100	100	***
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	35	36	40
		% retention	66	94	80
		% pass rate	100	91	100
GNVQ intermediate media	2	No. of starts	33	19	28
		% retention	85	89	75
		% pass rate	75	82	90
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	27	27	28
		% retention	85	59	75
		% pass rate	87	88	95
AS-level media studies**	3	No. of starts	93	128	78
		% retention	75	62	74
		% pass rate	66	09	90
AVCE (double award) in performing arts	3	No. of starts	*	48	34
		% retention	*	65	50
		% pass rate	*	94	88
AS-level art	3	No. of starts	246	138	135
		% retention	68	70	79
		% pass rate	41	78	66

**course not running*

*** in 2002, college policy was that students should not cash in their grades after completing an AS-level course, but wait until they had completed the full GCE A-level course*

**** fewer than 15 students enrolled*

Quality of education and training

129. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons observed and the majority of students make the progress expected of them. The most successful lessons are those where the enthusiasm of the teacher motivates students and enables them to achieve challenging targets. In a national diploma in graphic design lesson, independent learning skills were encouraged and students worked with intensity towards meeting the deadlines for the completion of their final major project. Topics ranged from an educational handbook for London Zoo to a corporate identity for a local sports centre. In another first diploma lesson, one student was using photographs of rare plants, taken during a visit

to Kew Gardens, as primary resource material for a collage. She was able to describe confidently how she would use disparate images in her composition. However, there are too many lessons in which not all students are engaged fully. In some cases, lesson planning is inadequate and specific objectives are not set, therefore the pace of the lesson suffers. In other lessons, the tasks set are insufficiently demanding or presented in a mundane way. Insufficient use is made of ILT in the teaching of art and design.

130. The curriculum area has been actively developing its offer in response to the changing needs of students, an increasing number of whom come from East London boroughs. The range of courses encourages progression to further study within the college and into HE. Learning is enhanced by a comprehensive programme of educational visits and well-devised community-based projects. Performing arts students benefit from a well-stocked library, of which, a feature is the provision of multiple copies of play texts, made possible by a collaborative arrangement with the nearby East 15 acting school of the University of Essex.

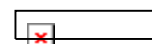
131. Assessment practices are effective and supported by a rigorous internal verification system. Learning targets are set for students, and progress is monitored regularly and recorded in individual learning plans. Written feedback on assignments is of high quality. There is some inconsistency in the design of assignment briefs. Tasks are not always cross-referenced adequately to grading criteria.

132. Both individual and group tutorials are held on a regular basis, and students were unanimous in praising the levels of support, both academic and personal, that they receive. Group tutorials are valued by most students. In performing arts tutorials, students are able to provide evidence for communication key skills level 3 as well as meeting the criteria for certain course units. In fine art, individual academic tutorials are used effectively to build a portfolio of evidence demonstrating the key skill of 'improving own learning and performance'. Not all students identified as needing additional learning support take up the opportunity. Additional learning support is available in lessons on level 1 courses. In a foundation GNVQ art and design lesson, the learning support assistant worked closely with the teacher in ensuring that students met lesson objectives.

Leadership and management

133. Leadership and management in this area are satisfactory. Challenging targets for retention and pass rates are set and strategies to achieve these are embraced by all staff. The improved retention rates in the current year are early indicators of improvement. Staff development is effective in support of departmental objectives. Individual course self-assessment reports are rigorous. However, the monitoring of actions and of progress towards targets is uneven, and a significant number of development plans are incomplete.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in GCE A-level geography and philosophy

- good added value in AS-level philosophy

- improved retention rates in the current year
- varied teaching methods which engage students.

Weaknesses

- low pass and retention rates in most AS-level subjects
- low pass rates in over half of the GCE A-level subjects
- poor punctuality in most lessons
- some poor use of questioning techniques in lessons.

Scope of provision

134. The department offers a good range of GCE A-level and AS-level courses in geography, government and politics, history, law, philosophy, psychology and sociology to 254 full-time students. AS-level critical thinking is available to extend the learning of more able students who are advised to study five AS-level subjects. An AS level in world development is available as an elective subject for curriculum enrichment. There is adequate provision for part-time students, who can select either one-year intensive GCE A levels in psychology or sociology, evening courses in AS-level and GCE A-level law or philosophy, or AS-level psychology or sociology. GCSE psychology is offered as a daytime course. There are 104 part-time students, with 40 in the 16 to 18 age group.

Achievement and standards

135. Pass rates to 2003 have been mostly low, particularly in AS-level subjects and GCSE. Only AS-level history and philosophy results were above average in 2003. Pass rates in the popular AS-level subjects are low, although the results of the AS-level modules in psychology and sociology, in January 2004, suggest significant improvement in the current year.

136. Analysis of the value added to students' achievements shows that students in AS-level philosophy achieved better in 2003 than their entry scores would indicate. Students in other subjects made progress in line with their initial qualifications. Pass rates are also low in GCE A-level subjects, except for GCE A-level geography and philosophy, which have had 100% pass rates for two consecutive years, with small numbers of students. Retention rates have been below average in all AS-level and most GCE A-level subjects, but in-year college figures indicate that they have improved and are good in the current year.

137. Standards of attainment in lessons are satisfactory. Students are generally able to use

specialist vocabulary in their lessons and show understanding of subject concepts. In a lesson about the jury system, AS-level law students were aware of the concept of 'presumption of innocence', but were not familiar with that of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. Often, students' contributions consist of simple statements which are then developed by the teacher. However, some students are able to explain complex ideas, such as Hegel's theory of synthesis. Written work shows a high level of competence as students learn to analyse and evaluate ideas in essay-writing. It also indicates that they are learning to develop and support their arguments. ILT is used well by some students, for example, to produce graphs to illustrate research for psychology assignments.

138. Attendance was low during the inspection, but registers show that students' absence is usually average. Punctuality in many observed lessons was poor, with frequent lateness disrupting the learning of punctual students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE psychology grades A* to C	2	No. of starts	35	20	20
		% retention	77	55	35
		% pass rate	22	64	71
AS-level history**	3	No. of starts	42	43	24
		% retention	81	81	79
		% pass rate	79	29	89
AS-level philosophy**	3	No. of starts	29	18	39
		% retention	79	56	59
		% pass rate	70	0	78
GCE A-level psychology*	3	No. of starts	66	51	78
		% retention	65	90	62
		% pass rate	60	59	77
AS-level psychology**	3	No. of starts	128	164	153
		% retention	76	70	66
		% pass rate	42	5	45
GCE A-level sociology*	3	No. of starts	41	55	50
		% retention	73	71	78
		% pass rate	73	72	79

**data on GCE A levels in 2001 is based on two-year programmes*

***in 2002, college policy was that students should not cash in their grades after completing an AS-level course, but wait until they had completed the full GCE A-level course*

Quality of education and training

139. Teaching is mostly well planned and teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. In the majority of lessons, there is a variety of teaching methods, including pair and group work, quizzes, role play, discussions and questioning, to promote and sustain students' interest and progress. As a revision exercise, psychology students prepared a quiz to test each other on therapies. Groups in a sociology lesson were absorbed in assembling posters about cohabitation and one-parent families for presentation and display to other students. In the majority of lessons tasks are divided, and

students are encouraged and helped to learn from each other. However, in many lessons questioning techniques are not used effectively to check learning or to ensure all students are included.

140. Staff are well qualified. Recent staff development has focused on improving and updating teaching and learning skills through internal and external courses. ILT is used increasingly in the department, with some subjects, including geography and philosophy, making resources available on line, so that students are able to access them through the intranet. Efforts have been made to make the learning environment relevant and interesting, with a strong subject identity for rooms, with teaching materials and students' work on display. The geography and politics rooms have news areas on notice boards to track current events. Heating problems make rooms uncomfortable at times.

141. The assessment of students' written work is carried out regularly and accurately. Students are guided competently towards analytical essay-writing skills through thoughtful marking which, at best, is annotated, corrected for English and punctuation, and gives detailed suggestions for improvement. Most marking is of a high standard, but a minority is minimal and does little, but acknowledge good points, with brief comments.

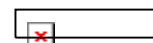
142. Care is taken to assess students on entry and to use the information to monitor, develop and report their performance. More rigorous selection and initial assessment procedures were used in September 2003 to ensure that students were placed appropriately on their courses. Students' progress is discussed in lessons with subject teachers twice a term. The information is then passed on to tutors for them to produce an action plan and end-of-term reports. Learning targets are set, but they often lack detail. Parents receive reports each term and they are invited to a parents' evening once a year. Information is collected on the needs and performance of particular groups of students, but this is not used for planning purposes. The development of key skills has been integrated effectively into lessons and this has resulted in a positive attitude by students. Educational visits are arranged regularly to student conferences, the Houses of Parliament and magistrates' courts. Geography students take part in field trips and psychology students visit a local hospital to experience brain scanning. Most students apply to university. In the current year, 89% of second-year GCE A-level students have made applications.

143. Personal support is given effectively to full-time students by tutors and subject staff, who also take part in recruitment events. Part-time students complete learning plans in only a minority of courses. They are not allocated a tutor, but are given extra staff time for Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applications if necessary. Clear procedures are in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

144. Management is good in this area. The restructuring in summer 2003 has resulted in the creation of an active team. Managers have clear expectations, setting and monitoring realistic targets to improve teaching and learning. Good practice is spread effectively through staff development and frequent meetings, and care is taken to encourage diversity, both within the student and staff body. There are no opportunities within course reviews for students to discuss courses with staff, although there is a channel for students to express views through the students' union.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- well-developed analytical skills amongst level 3 students of English
- high pass rates on part-time modern foreign language courses
- effective monitoring of students' progress
- effective level 1 provision in English, meeting the needs of students
- good course co-ordination and curriculum area management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on many courses
- low pass rates on GCE A-level English literature and AS-level and GCE A-level French
- over-reliance on English in some modern foreign language lessons.

Scope of provision

145. The college offers courses to full-time students in AS-level and GCE A-level English language and English literature, and in GCSE and pre-GCSE English. It also offers part-time courses, both during the day and evening, in a range of Open College Network (OCN) courses in French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish. These courses are at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are also post-GCSE discussion groups in French and Italian. Part-time courses are offered in the evening, in GCSE English and GCE A-level French, and two classes in creative writing. There are currently 642 students enrolled on these courses.

Achievement and standards

146. Achievement in both curriculum areas is satisfactory. Pass rates on OCN courses in modern foreign languages have been high over three years, with many at 100%. Achievement on the pre-GCSE certificate in English course, in its first year of operation, has been good, with a 94% pass rate. Pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level English language courses, in 2003, were in line with national averages, at 93% and 83% respectively. There have been low pass and retention rates in

GCE A-level English literature, and in AS-level and GCE A-level French. However, pass rates in GCSE English, grades A* to C, increased to 68% in 2002/03, which is well above average. The retention rate has improved considerably in the current year. Attendance was low during the inspection and there was poor punctuality in some lessons for full-time students.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2001	2002	2003
GCSE English language grades A* to C	2	No. of starts	346	221	157
		% retention	81	67	61
		% pass rate	28	34	68
AS-level English language**	3	No. of starts	43	71	64
		% retention	67	70	63
		% pass rate	72	2	83
AS-level English literature**	3	No. of starts	75	94	70
		% retention	77	72	54
		% pass rate	88	32	82
GCE A-level English language*	3	No. of starts	37	26	33
		% retention	70	92	91
		% pass rate	77	96	93
GCE A-level English literature*	3	No. of starts	69	63	46
		% retention	68	79	74
		% pass rate	81	76	74

**data on GCE A levels in 2001 is based on two-year programmes*

*** in 2002, college policy was that students should not cash in their grades after completing an AS-level course, but wait until they had completed the full GCE A-level course*

Quality of education and training

147. Teaching is satisfactory. All lessons are well planned and have clear objectives. In the better lessons, teachers employ a variety of methods and activities to stimulate and challenge learning, including group and pair work to develop students' skills. In some modern foreign language lessons, students demonstrate confidence in their speaking and good knowledge of vocabulary and appropriate expressions. For example, the students in a French discussion group demonstrated highly-developed speaking skills in French, when they discussed current issues in France, notably the visit of Colonel Gaddafi and a scandal involving a high-ranking official. However, in a number of modern language lessons, English is used too often by both teachers and students, and the speaking skills of students remain underdeveloped. Students on advanced courses in English have well-developed analytical skills in both their language and literature studies. They are confident in their use of specialist vocabulary and show good skills in close reading and annotation. In one GCE A-level English language lesson, the students were able to analyse the important features of four books written for children, discussing at length their relative merits as a group after working independently. Students' work is well presented and demonstrates the interest many have in their studies. It is corrected, marked and returned in good time with useful comments from the teachers. The development of key skills is well integrated into advanced courses in English.

148. Resources in both English and languages are satisfactory. The majority of teachers are well

qualified. A few do not have qualified teacher status, although they have been teaching for a number of years. Classrooms are clean and spacious, and there is a language laboratory. Learning materials are well produced and appropriate, and the course handbooks for students on advanced English courses are particularly well-thought out and useful. There is a good stock of relevant books and magazines in the library, but some textbooks used in modern language lessons are outdated.

149. The monitoring of students' progress in both curriculum areas is effective. Part-time adult students on modern foreign language courses have their knowledge and aspirations recorded at the first session of the course and their progress is monitored closely thereafter. Full-time GCSE and advanced students of English follow the college monitoring system. There is an initial assessment, the establishment of a minimum estimated grade, reviews, reports and a current assessed grade. The system is applied rigorously.

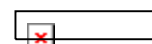
150. The range of provision is limited. There is no daytime provision of an AS-level or GCE A-level course in any modern foreign language and the GCSE English course for mature students is the only evening course in English. However, a good feature of provision is the pre-GCSE English course which ran for the first time in September 2002. Students aged 16 or over who have not obtained a D grade in English, follow a one-year course leading to an accredited certificate of English, which prepares them well for a second year, in which they can take the GCSE.

151. Students are supported well in lessons and at other times by subject teachers. Initial guidance is thorough, ensuring that students join the courses that suit their needs and prior learning. The college monitoring and tutorial system for full-time students ensures that additional support is made available when the need arises. Detailed profiles are maintained on full-time students. All students on the pre-GCSE English course receive additional learning support in all lessons.

Leadership and management

152. Leadership and management are good. The course managers in English meet regularly to discuss and take action on students' progress, course development and teaching methods. Co-ordination of part-time teachers on modern foreign languages courses is effective, with meetings each term and effective, regular communication. Schemes of work are well developed, and lesson plans are full and useful tools. Course review is thorough, with a two-day review at the end of the academic year leading to the formulation of an action plan which is further reviewed following the publication of examination results. Target setting for staff is well established. Staff development activities related to strategic objectives are satisfactory. The appraisal system is implemented rigorously and lesson observations are conducted effectively by managers. Equality of opportunity and understanding of diversity are promoted, particularly through learning materials.

Foundation programmes



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

Strengths

- high retention rates and good progress in discrete adult basic skills courses

- good differentiation of individual learning needs in adult programmes in literacy, numeracy and ESOL

- enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching in most lessons
- good resources are used well to support learning in basic skills, ESOL and learning support.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in key skills application of number and communications at levels 1 and 2
- insufficient development of skills through learning support and key skills
- diagnostic assessment not used effectively to plan learning support and key skills
- narrow range of programmes in literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

Scope of provision

153. All foundation courses are taught on the main college site. The college has part-time literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses taught in a dedicated room. Additional support for students on other college courses takes place either in a specialist centre or in curriculum classrooms. Key skills application of number and communications are integrated into curriculum areas. In full-time and part-time courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, literacy and numeracy are taught separately as well as being integrated into other subjects. There are 661 students on courses in literacy, numeracy, ESOL and courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of courses take place during the day and some evening classes are available. Students may work towards the national tests in literacy and numeracy.

Achievement and standards

154. Retention rates are high on short programmes in ESOL and numeracy. In 2002/03, retention rates on ESOL courses ranged from 87% to 95% and in numeracy, from 88% to 100%. Pass rates in key skills for application of number and communications are very poor. In 2002/03, no students achieved level 1 in either subject.

Quality of education and training

155. Lessons in literacy, numeracy and ESOL are planned effectively to pay good attention to the differing learning needs of individual students. Activities are cross-referenced to the national curriculum. Good use is made of ICT, with students working on interactive software in numeracy lessons. Teaching in lessons, particularly for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is

enthusiastic and knowledgeable. In one lesson for students with behavioural difficulties, strong classroom management kept students both on the task and well motivated. In all foundation courses, and in additional support sessions, students work in a supportive learning environment with positive student/tutor relationships. The quality of teaching in key skills is variable. In both additional support sessions and key skills lessons there is insufficient development of underpinning knowledge and skills. The support tends to be focused instead on the completion of coursework. In one effective lesson, enthusiastic and challenging mathematics teaching used relevant, practical examples linked to the vocational area. In a less successful lesson, students were expected to know metric measurement and understand the concept of scale drawing in order to complete a mathematics task, but they were unable to apply either skill. In key skills and some learning support sessions, diagnostic assessment results for individual students do not inform either lesson planning or teaching.

156. Accommodation for discrete basic skills and additional support is attractive and well resourced. Both workshops contain relevant and adult resources including computers with access to the Internet. Resources are used well by teachers to support learning and students enjoy the challenge of using interactive software to improve their mental arithmetic. Some classroom accommodation for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is shabby. However, students' work is displayed attractively in all classrooms and students' successes are celebrated. There are two newly-furnished model flats for the use of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There was no access to ILT to support learning in a supported mathematics lesson for construction students.

157. All students in literacy, numeracy, ESOL and courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assessed formally and the assessment is used to inform the learning plans of the students. Learning goals for each individual are set and these goals are incorporated into each lesson the student attends. Student records are consistent, well maintained and track the progress of each student. In other curriculum areas, initial assessment of students is completed at course level during induction and tutors may then request additional support for the student. The identification of AS-level students with dyslexia has been improved.

158. The range of programmes in literacy, numeracy and ESOL is narrow. A three-hour taster session is followed by enrolment on to a 20-hour course for one term. Students may then re-enrol if they wish. The college has run some courses in English and mathematics with parents at local primary schools and intends to develop these and other community or work-based courses further in the future.

159. There is a high level of literacy and numeracy support for students across the college. Some 147 students receive individual support outside lessons and 48 lessons have a support tutor. Additional support is arranged through the learning support service and is delivered by qualified tutors. In courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there is good use of support workers to manage potentially disruptive students. Additional learning support across all areas of learning represents 10% of the college's core funding.

160. In some cases, support provided by the college support workshop is not linked sufficiently to teaching and learning on the student's main programme of study. Informal liaison takes place with course tutors of full-time students, but little formal forward planning of support needs takes place. There is little liaison between support tutors and individual subject teachers to plan support for part-time students.

Leadership and management

161. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is effective management of discrete courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Action is being taken to improve the range and depth of courses to meet the needs of the community, and a new language policy has been drafted to improve language support. The management of additional learning support across the college does not ensure consistently good practice in meeting students' needs. New arrangements for the management of key skills have not ensured consistently good methods for developing students' key skills in literacy and application of number.

Part D: College data

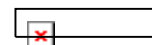
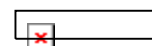


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	11	12
2	34	30
3	38	34
4/5	0	1
Other	17	23
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,743	269	12
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	207	634	5
Engineering, technology and manufacture	301	279	3
Business administration, management and professional	671	454	7
Information and communication technology	1,975	1,016	18
Retailing, customer service and transportation	44	32	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	189	143	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public services	148	266	3
Visual and performing arts and media	989	561	9

Humanities	2,390	651	17
English, languages and communication	2,021	332	14
Foundation programmes	1,026	333	8
Other/unknown	17	23	1
Total	11,721	4,993	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	566	442	545	955	566	483
	Retention rate %	75	73	80	64	55	78
	National average %	75	76	76	69	70	72
	Pass rate %	56	66	44	47	64	44
	National average %	69	71	71	68	71	73
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,565	1,382	977	917	703	690
	Retention rate %	77	74	70	74	68	77
	National average %	70	72	72	68	68	70
	Pass rate %	69	66	73	44	66	61
	National average %	69	71	71	68	72	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	3,384	2,947	2,424	634	671	667
	Retention rate %	72	70	73	79	73	72
	National average %	71	77	74	68	70	71
	Pass rate %	60	48	71	49	53	53
	National average %	77	79	76	69	72	72
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	52	63	66
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	92	78	85
	National average %	73	71	**	67	67	72
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	50	65	58
	National average %	54	53	**	55	56	57

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

3. College rates for 2003: college's unvalidated data

**numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

*** no national average available*

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)	56	38	6	98
Level 2 (intermediate)	53	38	9	34
Level 1 (foundation)	41	44	15	45
Other sessions	83	17	0	12
Totals	55	37	8	189