



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## Weymouth College

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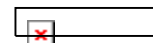
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#### **Basic information about the college**



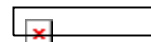
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Name of college:	Weymouth College
Type of college:	Tertiary
Principal:	Susan Moore
Address of college:	Cranford Avenue Weymouth Dorset DT4 7LQ
Telephone number:	01305 761100
Fax number:	01305 208892
Chair of governors:	Paul Kent
Unique reference number:	130653
Name of reporting inspector:	Alan Hinchliffe HMI
Dates of inspection:	15-19 November 2004

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



## Information about the college

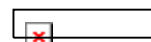


Weymouth is a medium-sized tertiary college serving the town of Weymouth, Portland, and south and west Dorset. The college is the main provider of vocational and academic education in the area. The only other college within reasonable travelling distance specialises in land-based industries. One of the local secondary schools has a sixth form, and some young people travel from the Weymouth area to Dorchester for their sixth form education. In Dorset overall, around 60% of year 11 pupils achieve 5 grades A\* to C at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), compared with a national average of 52%. Unemployment is very low.

Around 9,000 students attend the college, of whom approximately 2,000 are full time. Of the full-time students, most are aged 16 to 18; most part-time students are adults. A wide range of general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) subjects, advanced vocational certificate in education (AVCE) courses, Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) is available for full-time students. The college has expanded its range of courses at levels 1 and 2 in recent years. Around 60% of students are female and the small proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds reflects the population of Dorset. The college offers courses in all areas of learning, although provision in land-based industries is very small. The college is a partner in a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in stonemasonry. The largest areas of learning are humanities, English and languages; visual and performing arts and media; science and mathematics; information and communications technology (ICT); and business. Some adult part-time courses, especially in information technology (IT), are taught at outreach centres across the sub-region.

The mission statement of the college is: 'Weymouth college aims to meet the education and training needs of the community by providing a quality service to achieve positive outcomes'.

## How effective is the college?



The college has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2002, when it was judged to be inadequate. Weaknesses in financial management and governance have been largely resolved. The quality of provision is satisfactory in 8 of the 10 curriculum areas inspected. Education for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. However, provision for literacy and numeracy across the college is unsatisfactory.

### **Key strengths**

- improved financial position and good financial management
  
- good links with schools and other external partners

- good provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- broad range of provision
- good and extensive use of new technology to support learning.

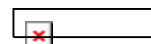
***What should be improved***

- pass and retention rates on some courses
- the quality of teaching and learning in some curriculum areas
- tutorial support for students
- provision for literacy and numeracy
- curriculum management in some areas
- arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision
- the quality of self-assessment reports
- the use of management information
- students' attendance at lessons
- access to buildings for students with restricted mobility

- o key skills provision
- o additional learning support.

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

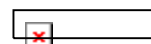


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high in physics and chemistry, but low in advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) biology. Students develop good practical skills. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, although a narrow range of teaching strategies is employed. Resources, equipment and technician support are good. Quality assurance of the provision is weak.
Engineering	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Work-based learning contributory grade: <b>satisfactory.</b> Retention rates are high on most courses, but pass rates are low on level 2 courses. Most teaching is good, particularly in the workshops, but some teaching in theory sessions does not adequately involve students and they do not make satisfactory progress. The vehicle workshops are particularly well resourced and students receive good support from experienced tutors and technicians. Training is not adequately planned to meet work-based learners' needs.
Information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students on part-time courses achieve well, but full-time students on vocational courses are less successful. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but on full-time courses, some teaching lacks variety and challenge. Provision in the community is good. Curriculum management is satisfactory, but quality assurance is weak.
Hospitality and catering	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Overall, pass and retention rates are low, although retention rates are high on level 2 courses. Most teaching is good, but students' individual learning plans are not used effectively. Good resources support the development of good practical skills. Curriculum management is satisfactory.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Contributory grade for hairdressing: <b>good.</b> Retention rates are high, and pass rates are high on hairdressing courses at levels 2 and 3 and beauty therapy courses at level 3. Teaching and learning are good on hairdressing programmes. Resources in

	hairdressing are good and reflect a real working environment, but there are insufficient resources in beauty therapy. Tutorial systems are ineffective and internal verification is weak.
Health, social care and early years	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Students' achievements on courses have been poor, but students are now making satisfactory progress. Teaching and learning are good. There is a wide range of provision in care and early years, a direct response to local employment needs and government priorities in the care sectors. Curriculum management is good.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are high on many courses, but retention rates are low on AS level and national diploma courses. Theory and practice are well integrated in teaching and learning, and performing arts students display good practical skills. In a minority of lessons, there is insufficient attention to students' individual needs. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
Humanities, English and modern foreign languages	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high pass rates at GCE A level, but many students do not achieve the grades of which they are capable at AS level. Attendance in some lessons is poor. Teaching and support for students are good. There is a good range of languages for evening classes. There are significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the curriculum.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	<b>Good.</b> Students' achievements are good. Most teaching and learning are good or better, with some very good lessons. Support for students is very good with weekly tutorials ensuring the personal and social needs of students are met well. Students have access to a wide range of supportive activities and resources. Management of the curriculum is good.
Literacy and numeracy	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Students' pass rates on externally accredited qualifications are very low. Teaching on part-time courses for adults is good, but there is much unsatisfactory teaching on vocational courses. The initial assessment process is ineffective. Management of key skills provision across the college is unsatisfactory.

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



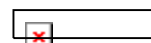
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior management has made progress in strengthening the financial position of the college and governors have given strong support to the college during a period of financial recovery. Managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities for financial management and senior management is giving clear direction about the future. However, standards have fallen in two curriculum areas and the quality of literacy and numeracy provision, that was judged unsatisfactory at the last inspection, has not improved. The quality of teaching and learning has not improved since the last inspection. Students' achievements remain satisfactory overall and have not improved since the last inspection. Governors have not been effective in evaluating the standards of learning and achievement. Slow progress has been made in developing policy on equal opportunities and monitoring its effects. The college's quality assurance system is insufficiently rigorous. The lesson observation system is weak and does not identify the weaknesses in teaching and learning.

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



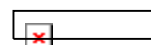
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college has appropriate policies on equality and diversity, and a race equality action plan to comply with recent legislation. An equality and diversity committee was established in September 2004. This committee, chaired by the principal, is yet to meet. The college runs an annual diversity week to celebrate diversity in the community. Although equal opportunities have been addressed, they are not consistently embedded in all areas of the college or through the curriculum. The college has been successful in attracting adults to learning in outreach centres in the rural community. There is a child protection policy and adequate procedures for dealing with any concerns for children and vulnerable adults. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Students' attendance, retention and pass rates are analysed by gender and ethnicity, but there is limited use of the analysis to inform actions. Staff development has been provided on disability legislation. Weaknesses concerning access to buildings and facilities for people with restricted mobility, noted at the last inspection, have not yet been addressed fully.

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



Support and guidance for students are unsatisfactory. Although there is a good range of support and guidance services available, there are significant weaknesses in the co-ordination of tutorial provision, arrangements for providing additional learning support, and the effectiveness of some tutorials. A central guidance team provides impartial advice and guidance to potential students of all ages. The college has an established cycle of events including guidance evenings and taster days to help potential full-time students aged 16 to 18 make informed choices. Initial assessment is not used effectively to identify individual additional support needs or to inform individual learning plans. At the time of the inspection, not all students who had been referred for additional support had their needs met. A central tutorial team provides tutoring and support for most students on full-time courses. The quality of tutoring is variable, as is the effectiveness of communications with course teams. Although students appreciate the support they receive while at college, many students do not perform to their potential. The monitoring of the effectiveness of guidance and support for students is poor.

### **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***

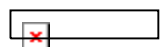
- helpful and supportive teachers
  
- good computer facilities
  
- good teaching

- friendly environment
- good library and learning resources
- freedom and independence offered by the college
- opportunity to make new friends
- their courses.

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

- the price of food in the refectory
- timetabling of lessons
- facilities in some curriculum areas
- college transport and buses
- the impact of the student council.

**Other information**

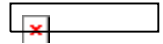


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to



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

## Part B: The college as a whole



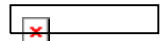
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	59	30	11
19+ and WBL*	63	33	4
Learning 16-18	58	31	11
19+ and WBL*	54	42	4

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

\*work-based learning

### Achievement and standards



1. Judgements about students' achievements during the inspection were based on official data for the years 2000/01 to 2002/03, and data supplied by the college for 2003/04. At the time of the inspection, the college did not have a full set of data for 2003/04. However, reliable data was available for most major qualifications, and the college was able to supply aggregated data for most qualification types sorted by level and age.

2. Overall, there has been no improvement in students' achievements since the 2002 inspection. Pass and retention rates remain satisfactory overall, but with significant variations across the college. According to data supplied by the college during the inspection, overall retention rates declined in 2003/04. As not all students' achievements for 2003/04 were recorded at the time of inspection, it was not possible to make an overall judgement on pass rates. However, data from the major qualifications taken by full-time students show that the proportion of students who successfully complete their courses has not improved since 2001/02. Pass rates at GCE A level remain high and are above national averages, but there has been a significant decline in pass rates at AS level from 88% in 2001/02 to 72% in 2003/04. The proportion of students achieving a grade A\* to C on GCSE courses has increased to above the national average, although retention rates remain unsatisfactory at 57% in 2003 and 63% in 2004. Pass rates on AVCE courses improved significantly from 2002/03

to 2003/04, rising from 69% to 81%. On national diploma courses, although all students who completed the courses were successful in 2004, the retention rate declined from 91% in 2001/02 to 57% in 2003/04. Provisional data for NVQ courses in 2003/04 show an improvement in the pass rate at level 3, but a decline in both pass and retention rates at level 2. Pass rates for key skills qualifications are very low.

3. The standard of students' work is satisfactory overall. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in lessons, developing new skills and achieving their individual learning goals. In hospitality and catering, and in engineering, students develop good practical and personal skills. In visual and performing arts and media, most students are enthusiastic and make good progress in improving their creative skills, although they have insufficient opportunity to develop independent learning skills. By contrast, some students in hairdressing produce assignments which demonstrate good independent research. Health, social care and early years students are adept at linking the theoretical work that they do in lessons to the practical settings of their work placements. In humanities, much students' work is good. In their coursework, many students write fluently and demonstrate a sound grasp of theory. In science and mathematics, although the standard of students' work is satisfactory overall, some students on GCSE courses do not produce assignments at an appropriate level. On full-time courses in ICT, most students do not develop sufficiently the skills of critical evaluation, research and analysis. Across the college as a whole, some students are held back by weak numeracy or literacy skills.

4. Attendance at lessons is unsatisfactory. During the week of inspection, the average attendance rate was 77%, which is below the national average for all colleges inspected in 2003/04, and below the attendance rate of 80% recorded at the college's inspection in 2002. Punctuality is satisfactory, although students who rely on buses to get to college are sometimes late for the first lesson of the day.

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

5. Official data for 2000/01 to 2002/03 show that at levels 1 and 2 the proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who successfully complete their courses is at the national averages, whilst at level 3, it is above the national average. Over the three year period, there has been no significant change in students' achievements when compared with national averages. Although the pass rate at level 2 increased significantly between 2000/01 and 2002/03, this was balanced by an equivalent decline in retention rates. At advanced level, the percentage of students who successfully complete their courses was 7% above the national average in both 2001 and 2003, and 12% above in 2002. However, data for 2004 indicates a decline in overall performance at level 3, with a particularly sharp fall in success at AS level.

6. The college analyses the progress that students make on advanced level courses by comparing their achievements with their prior attainment at GCSE level. Such value added analysis shows that, in 2004, students at GCE A level overall achieved in line with what could be expected of them, although there was significant variation between subjects. For example, in English language students made particularly good progress, whilst in biology students' final grades were, on average, significantly lower than could be expected. At AS level, value added analysis shows that in most subjects there was significant underachievement in 2004.

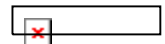
### **Adult learners**

7. Between 2000/01 and 2002/03, the proportion of adult students who completed their courses successfully at levels 2 and 3 increased broadly in line with the improvement in the national average. At level 2, the retention rate on long courses is above the national average, but the pass rate is below the national average. At level 3, retention rates are significantly above, and pass rates slightly below, the national average. Both pass and retention rates at level 1 rose in 2003 to significantly above the national average. However, this improvement is accounted for by a large number of students on a short course that had been classified as a long course. Preliminary data for 2003/04 show a significant decline in pass and retention rates at level 1.

8. Large numbers of adults take short courses at the college. Over the last three years, there has been a significant improvement in students' achievement of qualifications on short courses, and the pass rate in 2003 was at the national average.

9. In work-based learning, few apprentices over the last three years have achieved the full framework within time. However, recent changes in the management of work-based learning have led to improvements in retention rates on programmes. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, and in engineering, students are now making satisfactory progress.

### Quality of education and training



10. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but has not improved since the last inspection. Inspectors observed 170 lessons. In 61% of these lessons, teaching was good or better, in 31% it was satisfactory, and in 8% less than satisfactory. The proportion of lessons graded good or better is slightly lower, and the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons slightly higher, than the average for all colleges inspected in 2003/04. The proportion of teaching judged to be very good or outstanding was 18%, compared with the national average of 25%. In only two of the lessons observed was teaching judged to be outstanding. Grades awarded by inspectors for students' learning were very similar to those for teaching. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching was in lessons for students aged 16 to 18.

11. The proportion of good or better teaching was largest in hospitality and catering, health and social care, humanities, English and modern foreign languages, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There was some unsatisfactory teaching in all curriculum areas except on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The largest proportion of good or better teaching was at level 2, although the lowest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was on level 3 courses. There was no significant difference between the quality of lessons taught by full-time teachers and those taught by part-time teachers.

12. Most lessons are planned carefully. In the better lessons, teachers devise a range of activities to ensure that students concentrate and learn quickly. An appropriate range of whole class teaching, group and individual work is used to enable students to acquire new knowledge, discuss ideas, and develop their practical skills. A particular feature of much of the good teaching is the effective use made of interactive learning technologies to stimulate students' interest, provide access to a good range of resources, and record the outcomes of group work and discussions. On occasions, multimedia resources are used imaginatively to provide students with an exciting learning experience. In many good lessons, teachers are knowledgeable about students' individual learning needs, and use effective strategies to ensure that the work is appropriate for students of different abilities. In good vocational lessons, for example, in engineering, hospitality and catering, and health and social care, teachers are adept at linking theoretical work to the practical skills that students develop in the work environment. In most lessons, students are well motivated and keen to learn.

13. In the less effective lessons, the pace of learning is slower and insufficient attention is given by teachers to ensuring that all students understand the work. Teachers' questions are not used effectively to check that students have understood the specific skills or knowledge being taught. Students' individual needs are not identified adequately. As a result, in some lessons weaker students struggle to understand, and more able students are not challenged to develop higher level skills of analysis. In a minority of lessons, time is wasted as students copy out notes from textbooks or from the whiteboard. In unsatisfactory lessons, little learning takes place. Such lessons are characterised by poor planning, poor classroom management, a lack of purpose and, frequently, low attendance.

14. Most teachers hold adequate qualifications. Technical, library and support staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. The staff development programme has a strong emphasis on curriculum

and management development. Individuals, course teams and departments identify their training needs through appraisal and staff training plans. However, there is no detailed evaluation of the longer term impact of the staff development programme on teaching and learning. There is insufficient professional and commercial updating for staff teaching on vocational programmes.

15. Resources for teaching and learning are good overall. Since the last inspection, the college has invested in ICT to support teaching and learning. The college has established a virtual learning environment that is increasingly being used to good effect in teaching and learning. Laptop computers are taken to community venues to support students who are unable or as yet unwilling to study in the college. Outreach centres are well resourced with computers that are networked to the college.

16. The learning centre includes the library, a shop and private study facilities. This area has been extended since the last inspection to provide space for open access computers and a substantial quiet study area. The library stock is extensive and is well used by students. A well-equipped skills centre provides a base for the teaching of basic and key skills. Students use this as a drop-in centre in addition to timetabled lessons.

17. Accommodation issues identified in the last inspection have not yet been fully addressed. The college does not have an accommodation strategy. Some of the site remains inaccessible to persons with restricted mobility and further adjustments need to be made to improve accessibility within college buildings. For example, access to the hairdressing salon requires students and clients to pass through five sets of doors without automatic openers. Following an audit of the accommodation, plans have been implemented to remedy some of the accessibility issues. Some weaknesses remain in accommodation for curriculum provision. For example, accommodation for performing arts programmes does not have adequate soundproofing for music rehearsal rooms. Although much of the accommodation used by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was only built three years ago, some of the bases are small for the number of students and support staff using them. In visual arts, accommodation is cramped and unsuitable.

18. The suitability and rigour of assessment is variable. In some curriculum areas, for example, humanities, English and modern foreign languages, and science and mathematics, appropriate homework is set and marked regularly, with detailed comments designed to help students to improve their work. However, in photography and media, feedback is often cursory and lacks detail. In performing arts, and in full-time ICT courses, marking contains insufficient guidance to students on how to improve their work.

19. Initial assessment and individual target setting and action planning are used well in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and in courses for adult returners. However, on most full-time courses, initial assessment is not used to plan appropriate programmes of work for individual students, or to inform individual learning plans. In particular, the results of initial assessment are not used effectively to identify students who would benefit from individual support for literacy and numeracy. There is little evidence of the use of specific and measurable targets to help students achieve to their potential. More attention is paid to target setting where students' progress has been identified as problematic. The process of setting personal achievement targets is in the early stages of implementation and its effectiveness has yet to be evaluated. Many students do not know how well they are progressing or what to do to improve their performance.

20. On work-based learning programmes, assessment is generally appropriate, but is mainly based on tasks being carried out in the workplace at the time of the visit rather than as part of a planned programme of training and assessment. Workplace assessment provides evidence for the NVQ portfolio, but is not adequately used to monitor progress through the framework and to ensure that learners complete the framework in good time.

21. The college offers a good range of courses and appropriate progression routes from level 1 to level 3 in most curriculum areas. The range of courses at levels 1 and 2 has increased, but there remains a shortage of courses for less able students, particularly those with profound and multiple difficulties. Language courses during the day have been reduced in response to declining demand, with no provision below level 3, although evening class students have a very wide choice of

languages at beginners' level. The college has recently extended its basic skills provision to include literacy and numeracy courses taught in conjunction with the probation service and local housing associations. Computer courses are offered at outreach centres based across the county.

22. The college works well with local schools and is a key partner in the Chesil Education Partnership of all local schools. Over 700 school pupils attend the college as part of the developing programme for pupils aged 14 to 16. Part-time provision for pupils is offered in hospitality and catering, health and social care, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and engineering. In summer 2004, the college took a lead role in a summer college project to provide a one week programme of taster courses for school pupils leaving primary school to go to secondary school. The college has good connections with local employers and provides support and training for many of these. Links with employers are particularly good in hairdressing and beauty therapy, and health, social care and early years. In hospitality and catering, and ICT, links with employers are underdeveloped.

23. The enrichment programme is not effectively co-ordinated across the college and the number of students undertaking enrichment activities is low. There is poor access to organised activities. Many students find that activities that take place on a Wednesday afternoon do not fit in with the demands of their college timetable. Some curriculum areas include valuable curriculum enrichment activities as part of the course. Enrichment is particularly good in visual and performing arts and media. For example, foundation art and design students have a residential week in Cornwall to draw and to visit galleries, and there are many student productions. A particularly good range of additional qualifications is available in health, social care and early years.

24. The management and co-ordination of key skills is ineffective. All students complete a diagnostic key skills assessment as part of their induction, but the results of this assessment are not used effectively. Efforts to integrate key skills into vocational programmes have only been partially successful. There is an expectation that all students will leave the college with a key skills qualification; in fact, very few do so.

25. Good advice and guidance are provided to prospective students. Links with partner schools are very good. The guidance team makes contact with pupils in local schools when they are in year 9. An established cycle of events, including guidance evenings and taster days, helps pupils to make informed decisions about their application to the college. Most students are on courses which meet their needs. However, the college does not effectively monitor the reasons for students changing their courses or leaving the college without completing their course.

26. Full-time students receive a good induction to the college and their courses. Appropriate additional learning support is arranged for students whose needs are identified at application, interview or enrolment. The college arranges for specialist equipment for students with visual or hearing impairments. Some dyslexic students are identified early and are supported appropriately. However, not all students who would benefit from support are identified at an early stage. The initial assessment used by the college is appropriate for identifying students' key skills levels, but is not used effectively to identify students who need further assessment to diagnose specific literacy or numeracy needs, or to identify dyslexia. Students who are referred for support during the year are less likely to receive appropriate support. At the time of the inspection, not all students identified as needing additional support were receiving it. The college has yet to monitor the impact of additional learning support on successful course completion, or to make comparisons between those who receive support and those who decline the offer of support.

27. A central tutorial team has responsibility for tutoring most full-time students. The overall co-ordination of tutorial provision is weak. Communications between the central team and teachers are inconsistent. In some curriculum areas, teachers have a clear understanding of the role of the central team, and students are clear about the respective responsibilities of staff. In other curriculum areas, however, the links between the central team and teachers are unsatisfactory. Students are timetabled for one hour a week for group or individual tutorials. Some tutors do not use the whole hour allocated. Overall, the tutorial provision is poorly planned. Students are sometimes not clear when, or where, they should attend for tutorials, and sometimes they attend and are sent away. As a consequence, attendance at tutorials is variable. The content of the tutorial programme is limited. Although there is a scheme of work, which includes careers and progression guidance, there are

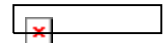
insufficient supporting materials. The quality of group tutorials varies considerably across the college.

28. Tutors have responsibility for monitoring students' progress and attendance. The extent to which students' absences are followed up is inconsistent, as is the rigorous monitoring of their academic progress. Tutors have responsibility for negotiating individual learning plans with students. The use of individual learning plans is not well developed. Most learning plans are not individual and do not include specific and measurable targets to help students to perform to their potential. Reports are sent to parents of full-time students aged 16 to 18 twice a year, but these do not include specific details on individual progress.

29. Arrangements to assure the quality of tutorial provision have been ineffective. There has been a lack of clear direction and insufficient evaluation of the arrangements for supporting students. Although many students receive good pastoral support from tutors and teachers, support arrangements have not been effective in raising students' achievements or improving retention or attendance rates.

30. The central guidance and learner services team provides a range of welfare and financial support to students. Good financial advice and support are provided to adult students and those in receipt of the education maintenance allowances. Careers guidance is provided both by the central guidance team and by personal tutors. Links with the local Connexions service are good and Connexions staff are based at the college for two days a week. A counselling service offers confidential support to students, although there is insufficient appropriate accommodation for private meetings. There is little systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of the guidance and student services provided.

## **Leadership and management**



31. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection in 2002, senior management has been successful in strengthening the weak financial position of the college, in developing much clearer lines of management accountability throughout the organisation and in fostering good links with local schools and community organisations. It has not been successful in improving the quality of teaching, learning and achievement. The grades awarded to curriculum areas have declined and the provision of literacy and numeracy remains unsatisfactory. Over 8% of the teaching observed during the inspection was unsatisfactory and students' attendance was poor. Students' retention and pass rates are mixed and do not show an improving trend. Overall student success rates are higher on level 3 courses than at levels 1 and 2.

32. Governors work closely with the principal, deputy principal and senior management team to implement the financial recovery plan and to set agreed corporate objectives for the college. New governors have been appointed over the last two years and the college has been able to draw upon the expertise of the board in financial management and the development of appropriate human resource procedures. Monitoring of financial performance has been thorough. However, critical evaluation of the standards of the education and training provided by the college is underdeveloped. The quality of information provided to governors on teaching, learning and students' achievements has not helped them to make an accurate assessment of performance. Governors have reviewed their own performance through a self-assessment exercise and recognise the need to improve the monitoring of the educational provision.

33. Lines of communication and management accountability are clear. A major restructuring of management roles and responsibilities, involving all curriculum and support services, has taken place since the last inspection. There has been a substantial programme of training, particularly for heads of department and programme area managers. Managers at all levels are clear about what is expected of them. Annual targets for enrolment, retention and pass rates are set and there is a

comprehensive system of monitoring of performance at programme level involving senior and curriculum managers and the management information systems manager. The college has developed an effective review tool which integrates data on enrolment, retention rates, and projected income and expenditure. Although these monitoring procedures are tight, the college did not achieve its original local LSC funding targets for the three years prior to 2003/04.

34. Procedures for strategic planning are cumbersome. They have not enabled managers at curriculum level to translate the wider mission and corporate objectives into meaningful short-term goals that are specific, measurable and demonstrate improvements in teaching, learning and guidance. There are long lists of short-term and long-term actions in the 2003/04 strategic planning documentation which do not provide a synopsis of what actual progress has been achieved. Since 2002, college managers have had to deal with different planning documentation relating to recovery, post-inspection action and development. At the time of the inspection, the college was starting to integrate and simplify its planning processes through the use of a 'scorecard system'.

35. The effectiveness of management at curriculum level varies significantly. In health and social care and courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities management is good. In contrast, the management of humanities, English, and modern foreign languages, and visual and performing arts and media is weak. Across the college, the management of central tutorials is inconsistent, with insufficient focus upon setting and monitoring targets to improve the progress of students. Cross-college management of key skills and additional learning support is also ineffective. In some cases, deficiencies in management and co-ordination are associated with difficulties in recruiting curriculum managers to unfilled posts. Quality assurance procedures are ineffective in many curriculum areas. Managers give insufficient attention to analysing the quality of teaching and students' achievements. For example, there is little use of value added data on GCE A-Level courses to diagnose patterns of students' performance and to improve teaching, learning and guidance. On AS-level courses, value added measures demonstrate that in most of the subjects students do not make adequate progress when their performance at GCSE and AS level is compared. Aspects of day-to-day management, such as the use of routine management information systems data to assess progress at course level and maintain accurate class registers, are weak in many areas.

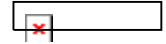
36. Quality assurance procedures have not led to consistent improvements in standards. Many of the quality assurance procedures are at an early stage of development and lack rigour. The review procedures cover both teaching and service aspects. Self-assessment is used widely at team, programme, departmental and whole-college levels. In 2003/04, 191 lessons were observed as part of the quality assurance process. Over 90% were judged to be good or better and only 3 sessions were judged to be unsatisfactory. This judgement is very much out of line with the findings from inspection. The commentaries in departmental self-assessment reports on the quality of teaching and learning reflect a generally uncritical approach to self-evaluation. The college recognises that it needs to strengthen its current mechanisms and, in 2004/05, has introduced a system of quality audit as an additional form of scrutiny applicable to both curriculum and service areas.

37. Good links have been fostered and maintained with partner schools and community organisations. Through close co-operation with local schools, the college is providing vocational courses for pupils in the 14 to 16 age range from local schools. There are strong links with partners to increase access to education and training in community settings, for example, IT courses for adults, and to tackle social exclusion. These include effective partnership with the local Connexions service.

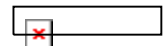
38. The college policies on equality of opportunity and race equality were approved by governors in July 2004. There is an annual monitoring report that draws together evidence of actions taken to promote equal opportunities, for example, through the monitoring of staff and student data and through training events for staff and students. These initiatives show that the college has been slow to take action in response to the findings of the last inspection where equal opportunities practice was seen as weak. At curriculum level, insufficient attention is given to promoting equality and diversity in teaching and learning. There is little evidence of monitoring and review of equality and diversity issues in the self-assessment reports.

39. Inspectors judged that the college provides satisfactory value for money. Since 2002, the college has controlled costs carefully and improved the efficiency of its use of staff resources. Overall the quality of provision has remained satisfactory during a period of financial stringency and substantial organisational change.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Science and mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates in AS-level and GCE A2 chemistry and GCE A2 physics
- good development of practical skills
- good accommodation and equipment
- technician support that promotes good practical work and health and safety procedures.

#### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rate in GCSE mathematics for full-time students aged 16 to 18
- low pass rate in AS-level biology
- failure of many students to attain their predicted grades at AS level
- narrow range of teaching strategies



- weak quality assurance.

### **Scope of provision**

40. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and geology, and GCSE courses in mathematics and biology. There is also an AVCE in science and a BTEC national certificate in pharmacy. All subjects are offered during the day, and some in the evening. There are around 134 students enrolled on mathematics and science courses, of whom, 52% are aged 16 to 18. Most adult students study part time.

### **Achievement and standards**

41. Overall, students' achievements in science and mathematics are satisfactory. Pass rates in chemistry, and in GCE A2 physics, are high and significantly above the national average. In 2003/04, a student was in the top 5 nationally at physics GCE A level. Most adult students taking GCSE mathematics are successful. However, pass rates in AS-level biology are low, and declined to 58% in 2004. A small proportion of students aged 16 to 18 taking mathematics GCSE achieve a grade C or above. At AS level, too many students do not achieve the grade that would be expected based on their prior achievement. For example, the college's own analysis indicates that in biology and human biology students on average achieve around two grades lower than they could be expected to, based on their GCSE results.

42. The standard of students' work is satisfactory overall. In some subjects, students produce well-presented written work making appropriate use of IT and application of number. Students develop good practical skills. In an AVCE science lesson, students carried out practical work in a laboratory very competently. Written, practical and oral work are at an appropriate standard, with some students able to take the subject further in discussion and through problem-solving activities. For example, in a further mathematics lesson, students were able to discuss at a conceptual level the sketching of curves. However, work to stretch the more able students is not routinely available in most subjects. Some students' work in GCSE mathematics is of below grade C standard. Progression from AS level to GCE A2 is low. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2002 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	172	184	89
		% retention	80	61	64
		% pass rate	40	30	49
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	31	36	28
		% retention	87	72	79
		% pass rate	93	96	86
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	53	91	67
		% retention	74	84	85
		% pass rate	62	66	58
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	22	28	20
		% retention	91	93	90
		% pass rate	80	85	61

GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	21	21	24
		% retention	100	90	88
		% pass rate	86	100	100
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	26	40	51
		% retention	100	83	94
		% pass rate	92	85	81

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

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

43. Teaching and learning in science and mathematics are satisfactory. Programmes of teaching are well-planned and lessons are usually well organised and managed. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and about examination requirements; they use this knowledge to prepare students effectively for examinations. However, too many lessons lack imagination and take little account of the ways in which different students learn as well as failing to challenge the more able students. Teachers do change activities throughout lessons, but there is still a considerable amount of copying from the board or dictation of notes. In the best lessons, a range of resources is used. There is some good use of interactive whiteboards and the virtual learning environment. For example, in a geology lesson, the teacher described the shape that pillow lava takes and then annotated a computer projection of a photograph to show the precise form to students. In a physics lesson, the teacher used incomplete handouts which could then be completed on the screen using the interactive whiteboard. Students are attentive in lessons and when asked direct questions respond positively. Students generally work hard, wasting little time in lessons and make steady progress.

44. Accommodation for science and mathematics is good, with a number of well-equipped base rooms. The rooms are generally spacious and contain good displays with subject-specific posters and students' work. In most cases, the vocational rooms have computer facilities as well as fixed digital projectors and interactive whiteboards. Technician support for the science area is good and supportive of safe working practices as well as promoting good practical skills. Teachers are appropriately qualified. In some subjects, there is a predominance of part-time staff. This makes it difficult for students to see teachers outside of lessons, although staff involved are aware of this and are flexible in trying to minimise the difficulties that could arise.

45. Overall, the assessment of students' progress is satisfactory. Homework is set each week and is marked thoroughly and accurately. Good feedback is provided when the work is returned, usually within a week of being set. Often, the work that is set is taken from previous external examination papers, which helps to ensure that the standard of work is as required. Use of assessment information does not lead to effective target setting for individuals.

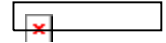
46. Guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Teachers and tutors provide good support for students requesting it. A diagnostic test is used on entry which identifies students' key skills requirements and informs teaching staff of individual needs of their students. It was recognised that additional support for physics students was needed in mathematics and this has been provided. Knowledge of the individual needs of some students does not always inform curriculum or lesson planning. All students are allocated time with a personal tutor to monitor progress and provide personal support.

### **Leadership and management**

47. Curriculum management in science and mathematics is satisfactory. Individual courses are managed effectively. However, course self-assessment reports do not adequately assess students' achievements and do not sufficiently address the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Formal, minuted meetings are held regularly, but there are not always clear actions set with timescales.

Quality assurance at programme area level is weak. Data are not used effectively to identify weaknesses in the quality of provision. Lesson observations have not been rigorous or comprehensive. Issues of equal opportunity and diversity are not promoted through the curriculum.

## Engineering



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

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

### **Strengths**

- high retention rates on many courses
- good teaching in practical lessons
- high-quality resources in vehicle workshops.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on many level 2 courses
- too much unsatisfactory teaching in theory lessons
- weak planning of training for work-based learners.

### **Scope of provision**

48. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in engineering and motor vehicle engineering at levels 1 to 3. They include advanced electronic, mechanical and motor vehicle engineering. There are 77 apprentices, of whom 60 are advanced apprentices on electrical installation programmes and 17 are apprentices on motor vehicle and motorcycle programmes. There are 234 students on college programmes, of which 18% are adults and 5% are female. The provision also includes GCSE engineering for pupils from local schools.

### **Achievement and standards**

49. Retention rates on level 2 electrical installation and engineering courses are high, particularly for

electrical installation part 1 (theory) and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate engineering. Retention rates for work-based learning programmes in electrical installation are also high for the cohorts that started in 2002/03 and 2003/04, at 83% and 100% respectively.

50. Pass rates on many engineering and electrical installation courses at level 2 have been low over the last three years. These include a computer-aided design (CAD) course, with a pass rate well below the national average over the past two years. However, some pass rates have started to improve recently. The pass rate for the GNVQ intermediate course increased from well below 50% in previous years to 88% in 2003/04. The pass rate for full-time level 1 motor vehicle courses was 7% in 2001/02; during the last two years the pass rate was over 90%.

51. The standard of practical work is satisfactory for both college-based and work-based learners. The wide range of learning opportunities in the workplace enables work-based learners to develop appropriate skills. NVQ portfolios are well structured and include a wide range of evidence. Students on motor vehicle and motorcycle develop good practical skills in assembly, service and disassembly. They are able to demonstrate good diagnostic and fault-finding skills.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 2002 to 2004***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds electrical installation part one (theory)	1	No. of starts	21	37	30
		% retention	90	89	87
		% pass rate	74	58	88
City and Guilds motor vehicle/motorcycle (full time)	1	No. of starts	20	17	25
		% retention	75	65	84
		% pass rate	7	91	95
City and Guilds computer-aided engineering competencies	2	No. of starts	23	18	*
		% retention	78	89	*
		% pass rate	89	81	*
City and Guilds computer-aided draughting and design	2	No. of starts	45	76	34
		% retention	89	75	91
		% pass rate	45	67	81
GNVQ in intermediate engineering	2	No. of starts	15	19	*
		% retention	80	79	*
		% pass rate	17	40	*
AVCE in engineering	3	No. of starts	18	30	19
		% retention	89	80	89
		% pass rate	75	71	88

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

***Quality of education and training***

52. Most teaching is good or better. The majority of lessons are well prepared and planned. In the better theory sessions, the pace is controlled by teachers' good use of questions. In many workshop

lessons, teachers consistently question students to check their understanding of the tasks they are performing and to prepare them for the next practical activity. For example, in a good lesson on binary counters, the teacher reviewed and consolidated prior knowledge before the students carried out practical work to demonstrate the operation of increasingly complex circuitry. In another practical lesson for motorcycle engineering students, the teacher developed the concept of test and diagnosis through discussion, and then consolidated this through practical testing and diagnostic exercises using specialist equipment. However, in some theory lessons, students are inadequately involved. In such lessons, explanations given by teachers are often not understood by students. Students' understanding is not checked before moving on to more complex topics. In one lesson, the teacher spent much time writing notes on the whiteboard, which students copied. Confirmation of learning was limited to an inadequate general question.

53. There are high-quality resources in the vehicle workshops including a wide range of cars and motorcycles. There is an extensive range of industry-standard equipment and tools. These include vehicle ramps and specialist diagnostic testing tools such as temperature measuring devices and stethoscopes. Resources and equipment in the electrical installation workshops are satisfactory and include bays to practice installation work. Most classrooms are satisfactory, but a computer-aided engineering room has a suite of computers on benches with no suitable chairs. Resources in the workplace are satisfactory. Employers provide relevant health and safety equipment to apprentices, and specialist tools and equipment where they are required.

54. Assessment is satisfactory. There is comprehensive assessment during practical sessions, including formative assessment of practical tasks which are also thoroughly inspected and reviewed on completion. Effective guidance to improve the standards of workmanship is provided by experienced and qualified staff. Full-time students are well briefed on the assessment criteria for assignments. Some assignments are broken into stages and on the completion of each stage the student is given a formative assessment and further guidance on how to progress. Assessment of apprentices' competence is carried out in the workplace by college assessors. This is carried out on tasks which are taking place at the time of a visit rather than within a planned programme of training and assessment.

55. The range of courses provided is satisfactory with some entry level courses introduced this year. Staff have good links with local employers in the vehicle trades. There is little provision, and currently a low demand, for part-time courses in general engineering at levels 2 and 3. Managers have agreed a strategy for improved engagement with local engineering employers. There are satisfactory links with schools through school taster courses and the GCSE option, with good progression to mainstream college provision.

56. Initial assessment for full-time programmes includes a good diagnostic test in engineering skills. Progress reviews take place regularly, but do not always include specific short-term targets. Individual learning plans for full-time students are not individualised and are not adequately used to plan and record training and progress. Students are very positive about the vocational and pastoral support and guidance provided by vocational staff. Work-based learners value the close support provided by college assessors.

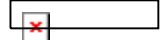
### ***Leadership and management***

57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course teams meet regularly to discuss a range of issues including the progress made by individual students. Communication between college tutors and vocational staff is poor. The course management process and records are comprehensive and include analysis of student questionnaires and data on retention and pass rates. Self-assessment reports are developed with participation from all staff. These are used to inform the strategic plans for the programme areas.

58. Although there have been recent improvements, work-based learning is insufficiently planned and co-ordinated. Individual learning plans do not include target dates for all aspects of the framework. They are not used effectively to inform apprentices and employers of progress made or to plan further training. On-the-job training takes place, but is not adequately planned to help apprentices complete the framework in good time. There is insufficient co-ordination of on-the-job

and off-the-job training. There are no formal arrangements by college staff to monitor implementation of equality of opportunity practices at each employer. Work-based learners have only a rudimentary understanding of equality of opportunity issues.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good attainment on part-time courses
  
- good student tracking and support on part-time courses
  
- good use of new technology to enhance learning
  
- well-targeted community provision.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory achievement on full-time vocational courses
  
- teaching strategies do not address the needs of all students
  
- ineffective quality assurance.

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

59. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses from entry level to level 3. These include AS-level and GCE A-level courses, BTEC introductory IT at work, BTEC first and national diplomas for IT practitioners, certificate for IT users, and European computer driving licence (ECDL) courses. Courses are available in a range of modes and times at the college and at outreach centres throughout south and west Dorset. There are 107 full-time and over 1,000 part-time students. Of the full-time students, 88 are aged 16 to 18.

### **Achievement and standards**

60. Pass and retention rates are satisfactory on most part-time and short courses, and students demonstrate high levels of attainment. Students on the new BTEC national diploma for IT practitioners course achieve well, but many full-time students, particularly those on vocational courses, do not. For example, the pass rate on the intermediate GNVQ course, replaced by the first diploma for IT practitioners in 2003/04, has been below 50% in each of the last two years. Students on the AS-level and GCE A2 courses achieve pass rates above the national average, although the pass rate on the AS-level course has declined in each of the last three years. The college's own analysis shows that the majority of students on GCE A-level courses do not make as much progress as they should.

61. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. The BTEC first diploma students showed a sound understanding of simple macros for use in an Excel spreadsheet and BTEC national diploma students could programme file-handling procedures in visual basic. Students on the ECDL course were able to manipulate the formatting of field codes embedded in a word-processing document, and students on short community courses joined digital images to form panoramic views. In general, students have a good attitude to work. However, although attendance at lessons during the inspection was satisfactory, a few students are regularly late for their first lesson of the day.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2002 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Using ICT (short)	1	No. of starts	543	424	251
		% retention	91	91	92
		% pass rate	66	77	69
Certificate for IT users	1	No. of starts	25	338	240
		% retention	92	86	93
		% pass rate	65	69	58
First diploma for IT practitioners (GNVQ intermediate in 2002/03)	2	No. of starts	16	20	17
		% retention	100	50	76
		% pass rate	63	30	46
Diploma for IT practitioners (ICT systems support)	2	No. of starts	*	36	21
		% retention	*	89	90
		% pass rate	*	63	58
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	19	35	27
		% retention	84	71	89
		% pass rate	94	88	63
National diploma for IT practitioners	3	No. of starts	25	17	21
		% retention	72	71	100
		% pass rate	100	75	95

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* course did not run

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

62. Overall, teaching is satisfactory: much teaching is good, although a minority is unsatisfactory. Teachers make good use of IT and data projectors for demonstrations and exposition of material. Such presentations enhance teaching and learning by communicating potentially difficult concepts in a way that makes them easier to understand. However, work in a significant number of lessons does not challenge students sufficiently and the pace is too slow. This is most evident when students work individually at computers.

63. The best lessons are planned and structured well and use a variety of methods to maintain students' interest and ensure that all students understand new topics. In these lessons, students work with interest and perseverance and make good progress. For example, in one lesson for adult students on a system support course, a good mix of theory and practical activities ensured that all students were challenged and pace was maintained; after a brief introduction from the teacher, students worked on a variety of activities to learn about the repair and maintenance of computer hardware. The teacher used his good relationship with the group to build students' confidence and encourage their learning.

64. Some less effective lessons lack challenge, and in others students work too slowly. These lessons often start well with a clear explanation of the topic, but the rate of learning slows once students start work individually. Teachers plan lessons, but these often take insufficient account of the needs of individual students. Teachers often allow too much time to complete an activity or are too ready to provide students with solutions; as a consequence, learning is slower and attainment lower. In one lesson, students developing a simple program were rarely challenged to find their own faults because the teacher anticipated the difficulties and told students how to avoid them.

65. Computing resources are good and are used well to help students to learn. The new computers have LCD screens; these contribute to a better working environment and mean that there is more space for students' course materials. During lessons, students work with current, commercial-standard software. Students have easy access to computers during their private study time. Internet access is good and well used by students. The use of the college virtual learning environment is developing and students make good use of remote access to materials.

66. Assessment practice is sound. There are some instances of helpful feedback on marked work, but some comments do not focus sufficiently on improvement. External verification of courses noted few deficiencies in the management of internal verification.

67. Programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of students. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time computing and IT courses and creates good opportunities for internal progression. The outreach centres are particularly effective at meeting the needs of adult students new to IT. For example, introductory courses using laptops are run at schools, care homes, hospices and village halls, providing learning opportunities to a wider audience. However, few female students are enrolled on full-time courses. Opportunities for work experience are limited; no full-time course includes work experience and few other opportunities exist for students to learn about life outside the college.

68. All students receive appropriate advice, guidance and support in selecting their courses. Student tracking and support in the outreach centres are very good, and students are supported well in lessons.

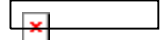
### ***Leadership and management***

69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Part-time courses, both in college and at the outreach centres, are managed well. Curriculum management of full-time courses is satisfactory. However, quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory. Course reviews rarely contain targets for improving retention and pass rates. Management information is not readily available and is not used effectively to the benefit of students. No value added analysis is undertaken within the curriculum area. Issues identified in course reviews are used to provide good action plans to effect improvement and minutes of course team meetings show that these are acted upon. Internal observations of teaching and learning result in grades that are over generous. As a result,



weaknesses in teaching are not identified and staff development to improve teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.

## **Hospitality and catering**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates on level 2 courses
  
- good development of students' practical skills
  
- good resources for food production.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on most courses
  
- low retention rates on level 1 and level 3 courses
  
- narrow range of teaching strategies
  
- ineffective individual learning plans.

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

70. The college offers NVQ programmes in catering and hospitality at level 1 in preparing and serving food, level 2 in food preparation and cooking and food service, and level 3 in food preparation and cooking. Level 1 and level 2 qualifications are provided for both full-time and part-time students. There are 81 students in total, of whom 45 are full time. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18, whilst most part-time students are adults. There are 12 apprentices in hospitality and catering. Apprentices attend college one day a week for vocational training and key skills. There is also a group of school pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend the college for two afternoons a week to work towards NVQ level 1 in food preparation and cooking.

### **Achievement and standards**

71. Too many students fail to complete their courses successfully. Retention rates on NVQ level 2 courses are above the national averages, although pass rates are significantly below. Retention rates on the NVQ level 1 preparing and serving food course have been below the national average for the past three years and the pass rate has also declined during this period to below the national average. Retention rates on the NVQ level 3 food preparation and cooking course have been low over the past three years. The progress of learners on apprenticeship programmes is unsatisfactory. There has been no achievement of apprenticeship frameworks up to the time of inspection. Retention rates have also been low, with no students completing in 2001/02 and 54% completing in 2003/04. Students starting the programme in 2004 have all remained on the course. Currently, there are high in-year retention rates on all courses.

72. Students achieve a high level of practical skills in food preparation and cooking. Good examples of butchery skills were displayed in the preparation of joints of meat and good techniques exhibited in the filleting of large fish for a function at the college. The working environment of the college allows students to improve their practical and social skills by working in teams. Students develop good skills in customer care by working in the practise restaurant. All students are aware of the standards expected of them. Teachers monitor their progress well and provide good support when required.

#### **A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality and catering, 2002 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
NVQ preparing and serving food	1	No. of starts	12	28	13
		% retention	67	68	69
		% pass rate	100	84	56
NVQ food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	21	25	53
		% retention	100	88	77
		% pass rate	76	64	59

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* The number of enrolments on most courses is too small to show illustrative data

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

73. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching schemes are comprehensive and detailed. In practical lessons, teachers use small demonstrations well to illustrate techniques to the whole group, for example, decorating cold buffet items. In a good lesson for NVQ level 1 students, the teacher effectively helped students to learn by breaking down the skills being practised into small chunks. Advanced level students are able to clearly relate the skills they are learning to the hospitality industry. In the better lessons, teachers require the students to be self-critical. In one good practical lesson, a part-time student described the cooking of a lamb dish well and extended this to the expectations of his customers in his workplace. In one unsatisfactory practical lesson, poor practice was evident in vegetable preparation.

74. Theory teaching is less effective. Teachers often fail to fully identify the expected learning outcomes at the start of lessons. A narrow range of strategies is used to support learning. Lessons are predominantly teacher centred and do not fully accommodate the differing learning styles of students. The use of new technology in teaching and learning is insufficient.

75. Assessment is well planned and thorough, fulfilling awarding body criteria. Students have a good understanding of the overall requirements. However, they rarely take responsibility for deciding when

they have gathered sufficient evidence to meet the NVQ criteria. Teachers involve students well in evaluating the standard achieved during assessment. Outcomes are recorded accurately and there is a well-managed process for monitoring students' progress. Internal verification is well planned and covers all aspects of the NVQ programmes. However, individual learning plans are ineffective. Targets for achievement are usually the same for all students, with little variation to reflect individual ability and progress. This is also reflected in work-based learning where there is insufficient consideration of the students' workplace and the range of experiences gained within it. The initial assessment process does not fully inform teaching. There is little consideration of differing abilities and learning styles when planning teaching.

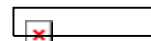
76. The range of courses in catering and hospitality is narrow, as is the range of additional qualifications available to students. The college plans to introduce a level 2 pastry qualification during the current academic year to address this, and to improve students' knowledge and employment prospects. Enrichment activities are limited. There are good links with local schools, particularly through the Increased Flexibility programme. Although staff have good informal links with the industry, there is no established forum where college staff and employers meet to identify the requirements of local employers and develop suitable courses.

77. Students receive good support from teachers. Vocational teachers, who provide the majority of teaching, also provide a high level of support and, in many cases, are the main contact for students. Students are recruited to courses by a variety of routes and receive good pre-entry guidance. Interviewing is thorough, providing good information about courses and the expectations of the college.

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

78. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The area experienced a period without a manager in post when many aspects of management were not addressed, such as course development and planning. The new manager is implementing policies and procedures in an open and consultative manner. Targets have been introduced for retention, pass and attendance rates. Staff understand these and monitor them through regular meetings. There is a well established and thorough process of quality assurance on all NVQ courses. Meetings are well recorded with identified actions, but they often fail to establish target dates for completion. All staff contributed to the self-assessment report, which recognises the weaknesses of the area.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



Contributory grade for hairdressing is **good (grade 2)**

#### ***Strengths***

- high retention rates
  
- high pass rates on many courses
  
- good resources in hairdressing

- good teaching and learning on hairdressing programmes
  
- good progression routes.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on some beauty therapy programmes
  
- poor resources in beauty therapy
  
- weak internal verification processes
  
- poor access for students and clients with physical disabilities.

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

79. The college offers NVQs in hairdressing and in beauty therapy at levels 1, 2 and 3. Other courses include body massage, Indian head massage and advanced nail techniques. Courses are offered both during the day and in evenings. There are 90 students aged 16 to 18 and 32 adult students on full-time courses. Around 100 students are on part-time courses, the majority of whom are adults. There are 36 apprentices in hairdressing. As part of the IF programme, around 50 school pupils aged 14 to 16 are taking NVQ level 1 courses.

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

80. Pass rates on NVQ hairdressing programmes at levels 2 and 3 and beauty therapy courses at level 3 have been consistently above the national averages for the past three years. However, pass rates for NVQ level 2 beauty therapy and the body massage certificate are below national averages and have declined since 2002/03. Retention rates on most courses are high. They were above national averages in 2003/04 for all courses and many have been above national averages for three years. All students who started NVQ level 3 beauty therapy in 2003/04 completed and passed the course. Achievement rates of apprentices are satisfactory, with 40% of students who started in 2002/03 completing successfully.

81. The quality of students' assignments is high and sometimes excellent, often showing good use of IT and independent research skills. Some hairdressing assignments are particularly good. The best assignments showed independent thought and imaginative use of pictures to describe conditioning treatments and French plaits in client information brochures. All of the NVQ level 3 beauty therapy students who completed in 2004 are currently employed within the industry. Most level 2 students progress to level 3. Students show a professional approach towards developing practical skills, which are satisfactory for this stage of the course. However, attendance at the lessons observed was unsatisfactory, at 73%.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2002 to 2004***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
NVQ hairdressing (2 year)	2	No. of starts	38	38	36
		% retention	68	55	83
		% pass rate	85	81	83
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	2	No. of starts	33	22	23
		% retention	88	82	91
		% pass rate	69	94	71
Body massage certificat (1 year)	3	No. of starts	59	58	56
		% retention	85	84	84
		% pass rate	76	84	74

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

***Quality of education and training***

82. Teaching and learning are good in hairdressing and satisfactory in beauty therapy. Most lessons are well planned. All staff demonstrate good current knowledge of the industry. Good reference is made consistently to health and safety and commercial working times. Teachers make good use of question and answer techniques to ensure that students understand the skills they develop and knowledge they acquire in lessons. For example, in one lesson, students demonstrated good depth of knowledge of anatomy and physiology when questioned. Students are enthusiastic in most lessons and understand the application of theory. For example, in one good lesson, the students accurately identified facial muscles as the teacher demonstrated facial massage. In a good hair colouring theory lesson, the students carried out a hair analysis on one another to choose an appropriate product. Most beauty therapy lessons are satisfactory. Although students do learn, it is frequently at too slow a pace. In some lessons, time is wasted as students copy out work from textbooks.

83. There are good resources on hairdressing programmes. The salon is well equipped and reflects a real working environment. However, one of the two beauty therapy salons is less than satisfactory. Some level 2 lessons are often timetabled together, causing overcrowding and disruption. There is insufficient equipment for level 3 beauty therapy programmes. For example, 3 epilation blend machines are shared between 18 students. There are sufficient clients for students to practise and achieve assessments. Staff are appropriately qualified. Many have attended key skills training to help them to integrate communication key skills into students' vocational programme. Most theory rooms have an interactive whiteboard, but much of the beauty therapy theory is delivered in the salons without access to new technologies. There is poor access to salons and classrooms for students and clients with restricted mobility.

84. Students' written assignments are marked and returned promptly, with good feedback and advice for further development. Assignments are well spaced, allowing students adequate time for completion. However, little use is made of individual targets to measure students' progress and to help them achieve their goals. Internal verification is weak, and relies too heavily on verification of assignments and portfolios for practical subjects. The recent appointment of a work-based learning support worker has led to an increase in the number of assessments of apprentices carried out in the workplace.

85. There are good progression routes available from level 1 to level 3 in NVQ hairdressing and beauty therapy and a variety of part-time programmes available in the evening and on Saturdays. Timetables on full-time beauty therapy programmes accommodate mature students with children. A wide range of enrichment activities is offered and the section organises visits to exhibitions and

invites speakers, for example, from a cruise ship employer, for hairdressers and beauty therapists. There are good links with local employers through the work-based learning support officer. All hairdressing students undertake two weeks work placement.

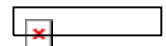
86. All students are interviewed and placed on the level of programme appropriate to their GCSE results. More able students can quickly progress on to the next level. Induction is supported by an informative hairdressing and beauty therapy booklet.

87. The tutorial system is ineffective. Tutorials are poorly attended, and are not used effectively to monitor or improve students' progress. One unsatisfactory tutorial observed during the inspection was organised poorly. The very small number of students who attended learnt nothing. Students do not value tutorials.

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

88. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Hairdressing courses are managed effectively. There is good communication between the programme manager and section staff. There is clear understanding of the high standards expected from both staff and students in order to develop students' professional skills and improve their achievements. Course reviews are satisfactory. Staff at course level fail to appreciate the significance of targets set by senior managers. Teachers have little confidence in the reliability of management information data. There is effective planning to ensure that there are adequate numbers of hairdressing and beauty therapy clients to enable students to practise and complete required assessments.

### **Health, social care and early years**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching
  
- wide range of provision
  
- good curriculum management.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on most courses
  
- insufficient use of initial assessment to inform teaching and learning.

### **Scope of provision**

89. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in care and early years from level 1 to level 4. There are 79 full-time students on early years programmes. In health and social care, there are 102 full-time students on GNVQ and AVCE courses. Part-time courses in both early years and care are offered in NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4. There are 57 students on the NVQ early years programmes and 37 on care programmes. Part-time courses in counselling are followed by over 50 students. Over 50 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend college to take either the foundation award in caring for children or a GCSE in health and social care. A wide range of short courses is available to full-time students, including British sign language, toy making and creative crafts, first aid, food hygiene and drug awareness.

### **Achievement and standards**

90. Pass rates on most full-time courses are unsatisfactory. For example, in 2004, the pass rate on the intermediate GNVQ in health and social care was 33%, and on the certificate and the diploma in childcare and education it was 68% and 43% respectively. The pass rate on the foundation GNVQ was 100% in 2004, although of the 17 students who started the course, only 9 completed it. Pass rates on short courses are high. Retention rates are below national averages on the GNVQ foundation and AVCE health and social care courses. At the time of inspection, there was evidence of improvement in retention rates.

91. The standard of work of current students is satisfactory with appropriate activities completed in lessons. Level 2 childcare students, having chosen a suitable venue for an outing, were writing letters to inform parents of the arrangements. The necessary information was expressed clearly and all errors of punctuation, spelling and grammar corrected. Foundation students in a first aid lesson were correctly bandaging a simple hand wound and fitting an elevation sling. Advanced level students demonstrate a good grasp of the link between theory and practice. In an unsatisfactory numeracy key skills lesson, students struggled to understand basic mathematics. There is very good progression from the Increased Flexibility programmes for pupils aged 14 to 16 to full-time college courses.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and early years, 2002 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GNVQ health and social care	1	No. of starts	16	17	17
		% retention	81	65	53
		% pass rate	85	73	100
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	*	18	30
		% retention	*	78	83
		% pass rate	*	71	68
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	*	24	18
		% retention	*	0	78
		% pass rate	*	0	43
AVCE in health and social care	3	No. of starts	19	51	41
		% retention	95	82	59
		% pass rate	83	90	71
Diploma in counselling	3	No. of starts	51	15	*
		% retention	82	73	*

		% pass rate	60	91	*
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Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

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

92. Teaching and learning are good overall. Schemes of work and lesson plans are focused and detailed. They are clearly matched to the specification requirement and the level of award. Students make clear links between college-based work and their vocational practice. In many lessons, teachers make good use of small group work, pair work and question and answer techniques to involve students in learning. Student contributions to lessons are focused and thoughtful. For example, in a very good early years lesson, students were selecting and costing appropriate equipment for a nursery. They were able to discuss their choice of equipment in terms of its contribution to children's development. In a good AVCE lesson, skilful teaching enabled students to hold a productive discussion on the links between inequality and access to scarce resources. In several lessons, teachers used new technology effectively to present topics and to record students' contributions.

93. All students complete an initial assessment, and many complete a learning styles questionnaire, during their induction period. These are designed to inform both teachers and students of individual learning needs. However, the results of the assessments are not clearly used by teachers in planning their lessons, and students are unaware of the use made of the information gathered through initial assessment. Students' work is marked with care, strengths are identified and there is clear guidance for improvement. Students' progress is carefully recorded and monitored.

94. Overall, resources are satisfactory. Serious staffing difficulties over the last two years have been resolved and suitably qualified teachers are now in place. Classrooms are generally well suited for curriculum delivery including practical care and craft activities. Occasionally, students are taught in inappropriate accommodation. For example, a first aid lesson was in a room too small for all the necessary practical activities. Teaching and learning activities were limited by the size of the room for the few occasions when students from different courses were taught as one large group.

95. Support for students is satisfactory. All full-time students have a personal tutor and regular tutorials. Individual tutorials provide support on a wide range of personal and learning needs. However, there are no monitored individual learning plans in place. Targets are not set routinely to monitor and review academic and personal progress. NVQ candidates do not have a personal tutor.

96. The range of courses offered is wide and there are good progression routes between levels. Full-time students follow a range of short courses wider than is normally associated with care programmes, including British sign language, toy making and creative crafts as well as first aid, food hygiene and drug awareness. A new foundation degree in early years is offered in partnership with Bournemouth University. An increasing programme of full cost courses is being delivered for a range of local care and early years services throughout Dorset. The provision for school pupils has been very successful, with many students coming to the college after leaving school to take full-time courses.

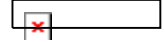
### **Leadership and management**

97. Curriculum management is good. Roles and responsibilities within the programme areas are clear to staff and students. The minutes of meetings clearly identify and record actions taken. Retention and pass rates and equality of opportunity are standing items on the agenda. Staff, through their course reviews, contribute directly to the area self-assessment process. However, the centrally held data on attendance, retention and pass rates do not match that held within the department. There is very good support for new staff. All new teachers have a mentor and are supported in writing schemes of work and lesson plans. There are productive links with a wide range



of community organisations. Work placements in care and early years are managed very effectively.

## Visual and performing arts and media



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on most courses
- good integration of theory and practice in some lessons
- high level of practical skills in performing arts
- good enrichment programme.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates
- insufficient attention to students' needs in a minority of lessons
- unsuitable accommodation in visual arts
- ineffective quality assurance.

### **Scope of provision**

98. Most courses are at level 3 and include national diplomas in performing arts, media, popular music, and music technology, and a diploma in foundation studies in art and design, both full time and part time. Full-time students are encouraged to take an additional AS-level course in their first year from the wide range available; these include drama, media studies, music, dance, fine art, textiles, graphics, film, and art and design. At level 2, there are first diploma courses in performing

arts, music, media and art and design. Part-time courses include life drawing, textiles, print making, fashion and tailoring, photography, the first diploma in performing arts, disc-jockeying techniques and music practice. There are around 500 students, of whom nearly 300 are aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses. Most part-time students are adults.

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

99. Pass rates are high on most courses. For example, pass rates on GCE A2 drama, media studies and art and design, and on the BTEC national diplomas, were 100% in 2004. Pass rates are also high on most AS-level courses, although they are below national average in both music and drama. On the first diploma in performing arts, the pass rate was unsatisfactory, at 49% in 2004. However, retention rates overall are unsatisfactory for students aged 16 to 18, except on GCE A2 courses. At the time of inspection, many students had already left national diploma courses in media production and music technology that started in September 2004.

100. The standard of students' work is frequently high. Practical work is often imaginative and experimental. For example, in one lesson, a small group explored through dance the reactions of four people coming to terms with death. Visual symbolism was used very imaginatively as students engaged in a violent dance of fear before a calm and serene acceptance of the inevitable. A GCE A-level art student had used digital colour enhancing on photographs of an abandoned tractor and, after evaluation, had concentrated on the lighting and film speed to achieve the same effects. Experimental work in textiles explores colour and texture through combining thread, wire and plastics. However, some students produce work of a lower standard, relying too much on copying original pieces.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts and media, 2002 to 2004***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
AS-level dance	3	No. of starts	22	16	20
		% retention	73	88	80
		% pass rate	100	100	81
AS-level drama and theatre studies	3	No. of starts	22	33	15
		% retention	91	88	67
		% pass rate	95	72	80
National diploma in media production	3	No. of starts	17	16	*
		% retention	76	38	*
		% pass rate	85	85	*
Diploma in foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	*	39	30
		% retention	*	85	90
		% pass rate	*	100	100
GCE A-level art and design	3	No. of starts	46	20	70
		% retention	93	90	96
		% pass rate	100	100	100
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	*	22	21
		% retention	*	91	90
		% pass rate	*	100	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

*\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled*

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

101. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with several very good lessons and a minority that were unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, students work with enthusiasm and respond well to challenging projects. There is effective integration of theory and practice in teaching and learning. For example, in an art history lesson, students discussed artists' work intelligently in relation to their own developing practice, while in a first diploma music technology lesson, theory and practice were well integrated to ensure clear understanding of the application software. Students in a very good film studies lesson were taught to use technical language to support their response to film narrative and camera work. Information and learning technology (ILT) is integrated effectively into music technology, film and media studies lessons. For example, an interactive whiteboard was used successfully in one outstanding film studies lesson where the teacher moved effortlessly between a computer presentation, film extracts and the virtual learning environment.

102. A minority of lessons are unsatisfactory. In the less successful lessons insufficient account is taken of the individual needs of students and there is an over-reliance on whole group teaching. As a result, many students are unenthusiastic in the lesson and learn little. In a few lessons, time is wasted because of poor organisation, and learning is slow. The aims of the weaker lessons are not always clear and students' understanding is not always checked before moving on.

103. Performing arts resources are good. There is a fully-equipped 250-seat theatre. There is a range of small rehearsal and classrooms, but more are needed as students frequently have to rehearse in the foyer or bar. There is good equipment and computers in the music technology area and the dance studio has a sprung floor and floor to ceiling mirrors.

104. Accommodation in visual arts is cramped and unsuitable; this restricts learning. For example, a life drawing lesson took place in one half of the printmaking studio, and an art history lesson took place with a projector balanced on a pile of books with no blackout facility to help see the slides clearly. The small drawing studios limit the scale and ambition of students' work. There is no ventilation in the print room. Visual arts students have limited access to workshops for independent learning.

105. Students are assessed regularly using appropriate methods. Assignments are clearly presented, with criteria for success attached. In visual arts, marking is thorough with clear guidelines for improvement. However, in performing arts, marking is often less thorough, with little cross-referencing to criteria and sparse advice on how to improve the work. Final major projects are well marked, with grades clearly related to each criteria.

106. Enrichment opportunities include an exuberant show band which includes students of all ages, as well as members of the general public. There is a programme of visits to the college theatre by professional companies as well as 12 student productions each year.

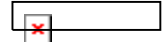
107. Students are well supported. Tutorials are used as academic support, or to track students' progress against agreed targets based on GCSE entry grades. For example, there is a personal tutor attached to the music area who spends two days a week in the department and works closely with music lecturers, attending the fortnightly staff meetings. Students appreciate the guidance that tutors give them regarding suitable progression routes.

### **Leadership and management**

108. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Although individual courses are well managed, there is no coherent management overview of the provision. Communication between different levels of management is ineffective. Quality assurance is ineffective. The self-assessment reports lack rigour. There is accurate analysis of accommodation and retention rate weaknesses in programme reports, but the overviews by the heads of curriculum do not address these issues. There are no strategies in place to improve teaching and learning. Written feedback from lesson

observations is not critical and is often repetitive. There are few strategies for improvement and insufficient analysis of action plans and targets. Staff new to teaching are not well supported in their initial weeks to deliver the curriculum or to evaluate their own teaching. Equality and diversity are not actively promoted through the curriculum.

## Humanities, English and modern foreign languages



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates at GCE A level
- good teaching on most courses
- good range of languages for evening courses.

### **Weaknesses**

- students' underachievement at AS level
- poor attendance
- significant weaknesses in leadership and management.

### **Scope of provision**

109. There are 685 enrolments on courses in humanities. The majority of these are GCE A-level students who are full time and aged 16 to 18. The main subject areas are psychology, sociology, history, geography, religious studies, and critical thinking. There are also access to higher education HE courses for adult students, and a GCSE psychology course in the evening. In English and modern foreign languages, students are enrolled on daytime courses at GCE A level in English language, English literature, French and Spanish and GCSE English. Around 400 students are enrolled for evening lessons, some of which are short courses, and include French, German, Greek, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. These are non-examined courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

110. Pass rates are consistently very high at GCE A level, with nearly all students who progress into the second year of the course to take the GCE A2 qualification being successful. However, in 2004 at AS level, pass rates were below the national average in some subjects, for example, geography, critical thinking, psychology and Spanish. The percentage of students achieving high grades at AS level is low in many subjects. The college's own analysis shows that many students aged 16 to 18 do not achieve the grades expected of them on the basis of their GCSE results. Retention rates are satisfactory overall, but were significantly below national averages in 2004 in English and modern foreign languages. The pass rate in GCSE English in 2004 was very high. Progression from AS level to GCE A2 is low, for example, 41% in psychology. Attendance is unsatisfactory in too many lessons.

111. Students achieve high standards in their extended writing and research projects, and many write with fluency and sophistication. Humanities students show a good understanding of the subject material and discuss issues in a logical and critical fashion. Students develop confident oral skills through discussion and whole class presentation.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, English and modern foreign languages, 2002 to 2004***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE English	3	No. of starts	120	106	40
		% retention	68	53	68
		% pass rate	49	41	85
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	52	55	39
		% retention	83	85	90
		% pass rate	93	94	94
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	21	40	33
		% retention	86	95	91
		% pass rate	89	100	97
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	66	66	38
		% retention	82	89	74
		% pass rate	92	97	82
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	38	44	50
		% retention	97	86	90
		% pass rate	97	100	100
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	151	175	131
		% retention	86	77	72
		% pass rate	83	70	70

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

***Quality of education and training***

112. Teaching and learning are good on most courses. A good variety of teaching methods, including lectures, group discussions, student presentations, videos and worksheets, helps to interest and motivate students. Students make good progress in lessons, and are successful in acquiring new knowledge, developing critical reasoning skills, improving their communication skills and learning new ways to remember subject material and prepare for exams. In a social psychology lesson, there was a particularly good use of an interactive whiteboard to present students with a

stimulating multimedia experience. In a lively English literature lesson on characterisation in *The Tempest*, groups were required to make presentations on different characters including a picture they had drawn, with references to support their work. In modern foreign language lessons, there are strong links to the culture of the countries. In languages, GCE A-level teachers who are native speakers use the language effectively and students are developing strong communication skills. In some non-advanced lessons, however, there is an over-reliance on tape recordings to develop listening skills, with the teachers, who are mainly native speakers, speaking in English. Some weaker lessons in humanities are restricted to lecture and questions and answers.

113. There are good resources on most courses and staff are appropriately qualified. Teaching rooms are largely fit for purpose. The main teaching rooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards which are used to good effect by most teachers. Library resources are satisfactory although there is a significant book stock which is out of date. Students have good access to computers. Students have access to the language laboratory and to satellite television. Use of ICT in language learning is not yet being fully exploited. There are no modern foreign language assistants.

114. Students are tested regularly, and work is marked well, with helpful evaluation linked to the examination requirements. In humanities, homework is set each week on most courses. Coursework is internally moderated effectively and examiners' reports are positive. In English, uneven amounts of homework are set, but in all areas work is marked very promptly and helpfully. Portfolios of students' work on vocational languages courses have not been marked sufficiently and are still awaiting external verification. Optional homework is set regularly on evening courses which most students who attend in the evening choose to complete.

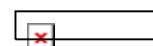
115. While a wide range of language courses for beginners is available during the evening, there has been an overall reduction in the range of courses on offer. Evening students can take six different languages, with progression provided where there is sufficient demand. These courses are popular. For daytime students, however, the range of provision has been reduced with non-advanced courses available only as enrichment, apart from GCSE English. Students not on advanced level courses are discouraged from taking GCSE English and take key skills in communications instead.

116. Teachers provide good support for students. Guidance is given to ensure that students are on the right course to meet their needs. They are given frequent feedback on their progress and the standard of their work. Students receive good initial information and guidance about courses, but are not always informed about unfeasible course combinations until after they have started at the college. Students are very well supported and teachers are approachable. There is poor attendance on some courses, which has not been followed up adequately.

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

117. Leadership and management have significant weaknesses and are unsatisfactory. There is no clear leadership of either humanities or English and languages. Although the operational management of individual courses is satisfactory, there is no clear overview of the quality of provision. As a result, strategies to improve the achievements of students, to raise retention rates, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning are underdeveloped. Team meetings do not result in clear actions. Although the self-assessment report is generally accurate, data used to inform judgements are inconsistent. Targets for recruitment have not been met on most courses. The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity are satisfactory.

### **Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**



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

### **Strengths**

- very high retention rates on adult courses
  
- good attendance and punctuality
  
- much good teaching
  
- good range of work placements
  
- very good support for students
  
- well-managed provision.

### **Weaknesses**

- some cramped and inappropriate accommodation
  
- insufficient courses for less able students.

### **Scope of provision**

118. Provision is made for 95 full-time and 68 part-time students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the main college site. Of the 95 full-time students, 38 are aged 16 to 18. There are five full-time courses for school leavers and adults. Part-time courses, including some held in the evenings, cater mainly for adults, some of whom have more severe and complex learning disabilities. The courses lead to a variety of qualifications, most of which are nationally recognised. All the students on the full-time provision have the opportunity to follow literacy, numeracy and ICT programmes. Some of these core programmes are embedded into other curriculum areas. Link programmes are offered to local mainstream and special schools, and there are well-established partnership arrangements with schools, social services, the health service, Dorset People First (a group promoting self-advocacy), and social education centres.

### **Achievement and standards**

119. Students' achievements are good. Adult students are successful in achieving modules on the Towards Independence programme and the Further Education Award. Students of all ages are successful in achieving the realistic, but challenging targets contained in their individual learning

plans. Retention rates on all courses are high. Students' attendance and punctuality are very good.

120. Students' attainment was satisfactory or better in all but one of the sessions observed. Students are able to listen to direction, follow simple instructions, support each other when appropriate and describe activities they have undertaken. Students on a part-time pottery course are able to achieve very high standards using a wide range of techniques. For example, in one lesson, a younger student on a pottery course was able to take a basic design template for a dice and recreate it in different sizes and with new decorations. In tutorial sessions students are able to reflect on their progress and make judgements on their performance and that of their tutors.

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

121. Most teaching is good or better. Students make good progress in acquiring knowledge and practical skills. Lessons are well structured with a variety of activities and opportunities for learning. In one very successful horticulture lesson, students were able to acquire skills in the basic elements of plant and shrub identification through use of the library and the Internet. They then applied their knowledge by identifying shrubs and plants in the greenhouse from their research. Students in most lessons are enthusiastic and participate confidently in group, paired and individual activities. Specific direction for learning assistants and how assessment should be undertaken during the session are included in most lesson plans. Where planning is most successful, teachers also include detailed planning to meet individual needs. However, in some lessons, although teaching activities are well planned, learning outcomes for the group and for individual students are not identified clearly.

122. Students enjoy a high level of personal support. Individual tutorials are good. Support staff are well directed in supporting the individual needs of students. Staff meet frequently and regularly to discuss students' work and achievements. A number of staff have progressed from learning support assistants and are now members of the teaching staff after having taken the appropriate teaching qualifications.

123. ICT resources for students have improved since the last inspection and are now good, with networked computers available to support learning. Most teaching rooms have an interactive whiteboard and a data projector, although their use is underdeveloped. Some of the classrooms are cramped. The art and pottery rooms were not designed for their current use. They are too small to contain necessary specialist equipment, and as a result, some opportunities for teaching and learning are lost. The new buildings are not easily accessible to people who have physical disabilities. Entrances lack automated doors and the internal doors make wheelchair use impossible for those who are independent wheelchair users.

124. The individual learning plans are good and are used effectively to set, monitor and review short-term and medium-term learning goals. Most targets, including personal and social targets, are sufficiently specific to be meaningful to the students. In many lessons, students' targets are discussed at the beginning of a lesson, assessed throughout the lesson, and evaluated with the student at the end.

125. Students have very good access to work experience and work placements which, where appropriate, match students' vocational aspirations. Support assistants mentor and manage each student's work placement, withdrawing support as the student's competence and confidence increases. The commercially run coffee shop is used well to match the training needs of students with opportunities for vocational experience. Work placements are effective in enabling some students to progress into employment or take further training programmes.

126. Students take part in a range of residential trips that includes challenging expeditions to Dartmoor and Snowdon. A number of students have successfully completed the Duke of Edinburgh Award at bronze and silver level.

127. Support for students is very good. The college works effectively with all its partner schools to provide accurate information about courses offered by the college so that few students need to transfer programmes after admission. There is good initial assessment and effective procedures for

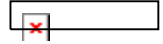


induction. Where possible, assessments are begun for school leavers during link courses and completed when the student joins the full-time course.

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

128. At an operational level, leadership and management are very good and the department is led with energy and vision. There are effective systems for staff appraisal and professional development. Courses are managed effectively and communication between course managers is good. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report are consistent with the outcomes of inspection. There are difficulties in obtaining and analysing reliable management information. As a consequence, analysis of achievement is not sufficiently accurate. Equal opportunities are part of the induction programme for students and key messages are reinforced as part of the tutorial programme.

### **Literacy and numeracy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching and learning on part-time adult literacy and numeracy courses
  
- good progress in improving staff capacity to deliver literacy and numeracy programmes.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates in externally accredited qualifications
  
- unsatisfactory teaching of literacy and numeracy in vocational areas
  
- ineffective initial assessment process
  
- unsatisfactory management of key skills.

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

129. Courses for adults in literacy and numeracy are offered in a variety of venues: in the college, in

community centres, at a local tank museum and at a housing association. There are 70 adult students currently enrolled on qualifications at these centres. There are over 600 students aged 16 to 18 taking key skills qualifications in communication and application of number at levels 1 and 2. The teaching of key skills is shared between the curriculum areas and a central skills delivery team. In 2003/04, 131 students received additional support for their literacy or numeracy needs. However, only a minority of these students continued to receive this support throughout the year. A total of 44 students were diagnosed and received support for dyslexia.

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

130. The college has introduced recently new qualifications for adults in both literacy and numeracy. Pass rates are low. For example, in 2003, the pass rate for both the level 1 certificate in literacy and the level 1 certificate in numeracy was 18%. Pass rates on the level 2 certificates are higher, at 41% and 34% respectively in 2004, but are still significantly below the national average. Few students achieve their key skills qualifications. For example, of over 200 students enrolled for key skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2 in communication or application of number in 2003/04, only 41 achieved a qualification. At the time of inspection, data for 2003/04 showed only a handful of students achieving their key skills qualifications.

131. Through their courses, some students are able to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, on a motor vehicle course, students were able to construct tables to plot current against resistance. On an NVQ level 1 bricklaying course, students were able to read health and safety texts and explain their importance to employees and employers. They then proceeded to make effective written notes to further develop their writing skills. However, in some lessons, students make little progress. In a furniture making lesson, students made notes on types of wood infestations, but there was no strategy to improve their spelling or writing skills. In other lessons, some students practise existing skills and make little progress.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy and numeracy, 2002 to 2004***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Certificate in adult literacy	1	No. of starts	*	77	15**
		% retention	*	79	87
		% pass rate	*	18	23
Certificate in adult numeracy	1	No. of starts	*	18	23
		% retention	*	88	80
		% pass rate	*	18	17
Key skills communication	1	No. of starts	73	51	89
		% retention	88	100	78
		% pass rate	30	31	3
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	66	68	186
		% retention	85	100	84
		% pass rate	24	18	1
Key skills communication	2	No. of starts	208	39	144
		% retention	39	100	92
		% pass rate	2	10	5
Key skills application of number	2	No. of starts	240	84	147
		% retention	43	88	93
		% pass rate	3	11	2

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* course not running

\*\* entry level course

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

132. The quality of teaching and learning is mixed, with too much unsatisfactory teaching. There is good teaching on part-time literacy and numeracy programmes. Students are well motivated and are enthusiastic about their learning. In one numeracy lesson, the tutor skilfully introduced the concepts of radius, diameter and circumference. The students practised measuring techniques using a variety of circular objects. The tutor then collated their findings and helped the students to identify emerging trends. This resulted in the successful introduction of pi as a constant and the students proceeded to apply this to other activities. There is also some good teaching on vocational courses. For example, in a good communication key skills session for students on a hairdressing course, the students had to role play how they would advise clients who came to the salon making requests for specific hair treatments. The tutor then observed the process carefully and the students dealt sensitively with the issues raised. As a consequence, the students effectively improved their communication skills in a vocational context.

133. However, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching on vocational courses. In some lessons designed to improve students' literacy or numeracy skills, little progress is made. For example, in a motor vehicle lesson, students were taught how to calculate percentages using a calculator. However, the students became confused as their calculators were different from the one used by the teacher on the interactive whiteboard. The teacher then proceeded to calculate the sums and to tell the students the answers. Most students made little progress throughout the session. In a key skills communication lesson for foundation health and social care students, little learning occurred. The pace of the session was slow and after 45 minutes most students had only produced a few notes. Their work was not checked for accuracy by the tutor and there was no strategy to improve students' individual writing skills.

134. In order to improve the delivery of cross-college literacy, 16 teachers have recently achieved the new level 3 qualifications for teachers of literacy. However, there is a large number of staff teaching key skills lessons who currently do not have the appropriate qualifications. Accommodation and resources are generally good. Many classrooms have interactive whiteboards. Some teachers use these to good effect. However, during literacy lessons, few students make use of dictionaries or thesauruses. Often, spelling errors made by students are not corrected by the tutors. In some numeracy lessons, students are provided with calculators to use; this is sometimes inappropriate as the external examinations for key skills at levels 1 and 2 do not allow them to use a calculator.

135. The cross-college initial assessment process is ineffective. Students take an initial assessment at the start of the academic year to identify individual students' needs. However, the results of this process are not used to inform the level of literacy or numeracy provision for a number of students. In some key skills lessons, all students follow literacy or numeracy courses at level 1 when the initial assessments for some of the students show that they should pursue a lower level of qualification. The results of the screening process are also not used effectively to inform teaching activities in the classroom. The initial assessment process does not give any indication of dyslexia needs.

136. The college has recently introduced a new individual learning plan to record targets for students who are in receipt of support for their literacy, numeracy or dyslexia. However, many of these plans have not been completed. Where entries have been made, the targets for students' achievements are often vague and do not provide a clear focus for both the students and staff to measure progress.

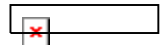
137. The college has recently expanded its provision of literacy and numeracy courses to meet the needs of the wider population of the area. Courses are now being offered in a range of community

venues and links have been established to offer courses with the probation service and a local housing association. Recruitment to courses is expanding and further links with other external agencies are scheduled to commence during 2005.

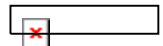
**Leadership and management**

138. The management of literacy and numeracy across the college is unsatisfactory. Few students achieve their key skills qualifications. The college has not used these data to inform curriculum areas and to set targets for achievement. The initial assessment process has little impact on the provision of the support needs of the students. Few students receive learning support for their literacy or numeracy needs. No analysis has been undertaken by the college to determine the effect of the support given on students' retention or pass rates. The self-assessment reports produced by the college for literacy and numeracy are unsatisfactory. They do not recognise the key weaknesses within the college's provision and there is no clear action plan to address these issues.

**Part D: College data**



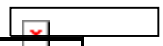
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	19	46
2	37	20
3	31	11
4/5	0	2
Other	13	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: provided by the college in 2004*

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2003/04**



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	732	1,418	12
Land-based provision	11	13	0
Construction	184	416	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	228	258	3

Business administration, management and professional	205	1,096	7
Information and communication technology	522	1,652	12
Retailing, customer service and transportation	47	696	4
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	441	1,091	8
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	194	503	4
Health, social care and public services	1,006	1,238	12
Visual and performing arts and media	721	431	6
Humanities	484	201	4
English, languages and communication	1,264	394	9
Foundation programmes	439	591	6
Unknown area of learning	760	927	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,238</b>	<b>10,925</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2004

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
		<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	697	557	830	934
	Retention rate %	82	74	78	77	84	88
	National average %	75	76	76	70	71	71
	Pass rate %	58	79	69	60	86	90
	National average %	67	69	73	68	70	77
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,258	974	987	1,124	909	832
	Retention rate %	82	79	69	65	72	73
	National average %	70	71	71	68	68	67
	Pass rate %	58	64	73	63	69	66
	National average %	68	70	73	67	71	73
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	2,546	1,791	2,108	1,136	1,104	889

	Retention rate %	70	82	81	77	75	78
	National average %	70	77	77	68	70	69
	Pass rate %	85	87	84	63	65	71
	National average %	75	77	80	68	71	74
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	176	233	132
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	81	71	86
	National average %	**	**	**	67	68	69
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	70	74	62
	National average %	**	**	**	54	54	58

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 2001 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2004.

2. College rates for 2000/2001 to 2002/03: College ISR.

\* Fewer than 15 students enrolled

\*\* Data not 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)	57	38	5	76
Level 2 (intermediate)	70	18	12	49
Level 1 (foundation)	54	33	13	24
Other sessions	62	33	5	21
<b>Totals</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>170</b>