



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## Oxford and Cherwell College

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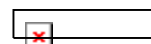
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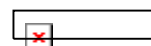
**Basic information about the college**



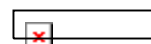
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Name of college:	Oxford and Cherwell College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Sally Dicketts
Address of college:	Oxpens Road Oxford OX1 1SA
Telephone number:	01865 550550
Fax number:	01865 248871
Chair of governors:	Michael Leech
Unique reference number:	134153
Name of reporting inspector:	Keith Abbott HMI
Dates of inspection:	29 November-9 December 2004

## Part A: Summary



### Information about the college

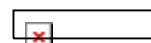


Oxford and Cherwell College is a large general further education (FE) college. It was formed on 1 August 2003 by the merger of Oxford College of Further Education, North Oxfordshire College and School of Art and Rycotewood College. Following the merger, a new executive team was appointed, with the principal taking up post in October 2003 and the vice-principals in February 2004. The college operates on two large campuses, some 30 miles apart in Oxford and Banbury. There are medium-sized campuses in Blackbird Leys, Oxford and in Thame, and information technology (IT) centres in Bicester and Kidlington. The Thame campus will be vacated in January 2005 and provision will be relocated to Oxford, Bicester and Blackbird Leys. In 2003/04, the college enrolled 15,310 students, of whom about 75% are part time. The college offers academic and vocational courses in all programme areas, with the exception of land-based industries. There is a wide range of higher education (HE), and adult and community education courses. The college has work-based learning provision in engineering, construction, business administration, hospitality, catering, hairdressing and social care. At the time of inspection, there were around 720 work-based learners.

Oxfordshire is a relatively prosperous area, with a low unemployment rate of around 1%. Major employers include the motor industry in Cowley, the food industry in Banbury and Oxford University. Significant population growth is forecast for Banbury and Bicester. About 12% of both Oxfordshire residents and the college's students are from minority ethnic groups. The post-16 participation rate in Oxfordshire is low, with 71% staying in full-time education, compared with 78% nationally. The college employs around 1,106 staff, including around 415 full-time teachers, 263 part-time teachers and 428 administrative and support staff.

The new college produced its first strategic development plan in July 2004. The mission, set out in the plan states 'We aim to be inspirational and innovative, to foster personal development through learning and to be of value and economic significance to our communities.'

### How effective is the college?



Provision is good in three areas, satisfactory in six areas and unsatisfactory in two areas. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

#### **Key strengths**

- strong and effective leadership by governors and the executive team
  
- clear focus by managers and staff on improving retention and pass rates

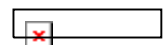
- good teaching of adult students
- high retention rates on many courses
- effective strategies to widen participation
- effective partnerships with local schools, community groups and employers.

***What should be improved***

- key skills provision
- work-based learning provision
- the use of individual learning plans
- students' attendance and punctuality
- social facilities for students.

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

**Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas**



*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall 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> Achievements are satisfactory overall, with a high pass rate in advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) chemistry in 2004, but a low rate in general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) biology. Teachers make good use of learning materials, but do not always address the individual needs of all students. Science accommodation is good. The assessment of students' work is rigorous, but individual learning plans and target setting are not used effectively.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The contributory grade for work-based learning is <b>unsatisfactory</b> . Pass and retention rates are low on many courses and for apprentices. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching and inadequate target setting for individual students. Recent management changes have improved leadership and raised staff morale.
Business studies	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Teaching on professional courses is good. Administration and management students produce work of a good standard. There are low pass rates on many courses and an insufficient variety of teaching and learning strategies. Management in the curriculum area is unsatisfactory with inconsistent implementation of college strategies for improvement and inadequate tutorial support for students.
Information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is effective teaching and good achievement on flexible IT courses. Online resources are well used, but teaching lacks sufficient variety on many full-time courses. There has been effective action to improve course management, but target setting for individual students is weak.
Health, social care and public services	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Overall achievements for childcare students are good. There is a wide range of courses. Teachers promote students' independent learning skills effectively, but many lessons fail to challenge students. There is insufficient feedback to students on courses at levels 1 and 2. Poor attendance and lack of punctuality affect learning.
Visual arts	<b>Good.</b> There are high pass rates on most courses and good progression rates within the college and to HE. Students draw well and sketchbooks are rich and experimental. Most teaching is good, but the planning of a few practical activities is unsatisfactory. There are good specialist resources at Oxford and effective curriculum leadership.
Performing arts	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass and retention rates vary from good to unsatisfactory. Most teaching effectively links theory and practice and students generally produce satisfactory or good work. The use of group tutorials is underdeveloped. Resources for practical teaching in Oxford are inadequate. Leadership and management are good and there are strong links with industry partners.
Humanities	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention rates are above national averages on most courses. Pass rates are mostly satisfactory, but in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) sociology, the pass rate was unsatisfactory in 2004. The best lessons are lively, but some teachers do not cater adequately for the needs of individuals. Students' work is thoughtfully marked and their progress is well monitored. Management is good, and characterised by new initiatives to improve students' success.
English, languages and communication	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high on most courses and there is much good teaching and learning. The college offers a wide range of courses in modern foreign languages and English, which are well managed.

	Teachers give strong support to students. The facilities for using learning technology in lessons are limited and dated, and some classrooms are overcrowded.
Foundation programmes	<b>Good.</b> Attainment is high and students have high pass rates on most full-time and part-time courses. The support that students receive is very good. Strong leadership is improving most aspects of quality assurance. Target setting in individual learning plans is not effective.
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The contributory grade for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is <b>good</b> . Good teaching on ESOL courses contributes to a high standard of students' work. There are good achievements on externally examined literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses, but poor key skills pass rates. Much assessment and planning for individuals is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities to use IT in lessons. The cross-college Skills for Life policy is underdeveloped.

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

Leadership and management are good. The principal, senior managers and governors provide strong and effective leadership. Excellent progress has been made in a short time to address the major weaknesses of the newly merged college. Decisive actions have been taken to resolve key issues such as the relocation of provision from Rycotewood and to invest in a new campus at Bicester. Financial management and quality assurance have improved significantly. Teaching has improved. The proportion of good or better lessons observed by inspectors was significantly higher than at the last inspections. Retention and pass rates rose in 2004 and are mostly at or above the national averages. Equality and diversity are promoted well. The college recognises that further work is needed to establish many of its new policies and procedures. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

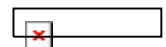
### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to social inclusion is good. Initiatives to widen participation in learning are responsive and appropriate. The college has a wide range of courses and good provision of foundation programmes, basics skills and ESOL courses. These students are well supported. Around 12% of students are from minority ethnic groups, which is the same percentage as in the local community. Links with schools and community groups are effective. Links with employers are satisfactory. The recent staff training to raise awareness of equality and diversity has been successful. The college has performance data on ethnicity, gender, disability and age, but it has only just started to analyse it. It is not used in curriculum development and review.

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

although inspectors found a few unsatisfactory examples. Good links with local schools help prospective students to make well-informed choices. Induction programmes are satisfactory. The literacy and numeracy needs of most students are assessed effectively. In a few cases, the additional support is not sufficient, generally because teachers do not use initial assessment results effectively in students' individual learning plans or their own lesson plans. The arrangements for assessing and meeting the needs of students with specific learning needs and physical or sensory disabilities are generally good, but there is inconsistency in the application of new systems, consequently, a few students diagnosed with dyslexia do not receive adequate support. Most group tutorials are satisfactory; a minority are good. The good tutorial practice set out in the college handbook has not been consistently implemented. Other aspects of support for students are generally good, including careers advice and financial support.

## **Students' views of the college**



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

### ***What students like about the college***

- friendly, supportive and caring staff
  
- being treated like adults and the adult atmosphere
  
- the wide choice of courses and opportunities for progression to other courses
  
- good tutorial support
  
- good learning resource facilities
  
- the wide range of enrichment activities
  
- the variety of activities in lessons.

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

- leisure and social facilities, especially at Oxford

- refectory facilities and the cost of food
  
- car parking at Oxford
  
- the cleanliness of the Oxford campus
  
- arrangements for enrolment at the start of term
  
- arrangements to communicate timetable changes, in particular staff changes
  
- the length of the working day, which is too long.

**Other information**

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

**Part B: The college as a whole**

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

Aspect and learner	Graded good or better	Graded	Graded less than
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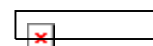


type	(Grades 1 to 3) %	satisfactory (Grade 4) %	satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	58	34	8
19+ and WBL*	71	23	6
Learning 16-18	56	37	7
19+ and WBL*	70	24	6

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



### 16 to 18 year olds

1. In 2003/04, 2,438 students aged 16 to 18 accounted for 70% of students on full-time, full-year courses. In the same year, 1,702 students aged 16 to 18 accounted for 14% of the part-time students. In 2002, overall success rates (the number of qualifications achieved compared with the number of qualifications started) of students on long courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were broadly satisfactory. They were above the national average for FE colleges at levels 1 and 3, at 57% and 64%, respectively, but the rate of 44% at level 2 was below the national average. In 2003, success rates at levels 1 and 3 declined and at all three levels the rates of 48%, 48% and 59%, respectively, were below the national averages. In 2004, success rates improved significantly.

2. Success rates are derived from retention and pass rates. In 2002 and 2003, retention rates at all three levels were satisfactory. They were within 5% above, or 5% below, the national average for FE colleges. In 2004, the overall retention rates of 87%, 81% and 81% at levels 1, 2 and 3, respectively, were well above the 2003 national average. In 2002, pass rates were good at level 1 and satisfactory at levels 2 and 3. In 2003, at all three levels, pass rates fell and were unsatisfactory at levels 1 and 2. Overall pass rates for 2004 have not yet been finalised, but known results indicate significant improvements at levels 1 and 2 and a modest improvement at level 3.

3. Analysis of achievements by broad qualification type shows that at level 2, in 2004, overall achievements improved on national vocational qualification (NVQ) and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses and were above the national average. However, the GCSE achievements were unsatisfactory. This was due to a low overall pass rate of 44%. Retention rates on GCSE courses were satisfactory. At level 3, in 2004, there was a marginal decline in overall achievements on both AS-level and GCE A-level courses. On these courses, both retention and pass rates were close to national averages. Value added data show that GCE A-level students' achievements are broadly in line with what would be expected based on their GCSE results, with humanities and English students achieving marginally better results than might be expected and business studies, computing and art and design students doing marginally worse. At level 3, overall achievements on NVQ and GNVQ courses improved between 2003 and 2004. The low number of level 3 NVQ students had high achievements, whereas the substantial number of GNVQ students had satisfactory achievements.

4. On average, about 800 students aged 16 to 18 took short course qualifications in 2002, 2003 and 2004. The success rates were 72%, 68% and 78%, respectively. These rates compare well with the national average of around 70%. Level 1 key skills literacy and application of number pass rates declined in 2004. In each case, the pass rate was less than 20% and was poor. The level 1 key skills

IT pass rate was 33%, which is unsatisfactory. Level 2 key skills pass rates are also poor.

5. In several curriculum areas, there are high pass rates on individual courses. In each of the past two years, all students who completed the national diplomas in general art and design and graphic design were successful. In 2004, pass rates were well above the national average on both the certificate and diploma in childcare and education. In 2004, there were good pass rates on several AS-level courses, including English literature, fine art, drama, chemistry, psychology and sociology. In AS-level English literature, AS-level English language and literature, and GCE A-level English literature, the proportion of passes at grades A and B was well above the national average for FE colleges at 35%, 42% and 37%, respectively. The GCSE English pass rate of 65% in 2004 was 16% above the 2003 national average for FE colleges. Students on English as a second language (ESOL) courses develop good literacy and language skills and achieve good examination pass rates. Many students on the entry to employment (E2E) programme achieve their objectives. In 2004, students on the 'New Directions' foundation level course for disaffected young people aged 16 to 18 had high achievements; over three quarters progressed either to employment or to a level 2 course. Students' achievements on engineering courses were generally unsatisfactory, although level 1 motor vehicle students had good retention and pass rates in 2004. In business studies, pass rates on many courses declined in 2004 and were unsatisfactory. For example, the pass rates on NVQ level 3 accounting and AS-level business courses were 43% and 44%, respectively. A few AS-level courses had unsatisfactory pass rates in 2004, including human biology, film studies and business studies. The GCSE sociology pass rate of 23% in 2004 was very poor.

6. Standards of students' work are generally satisfactory. However, the proportion of lessons in which students aged 16 to 18 make good progress, compared with the progress that would be expected at that point in their course, is low at 49%. Attainment was judged to be satisfactory in 42% of lessons and less than satisfactory in 9%. In science and mathematics, engineering, business and humanities lessons, students make good progress in well under half of these lessons. In contrast, students make good progress in over three quarters of visual arts, and English and languages lessons.

7. Students in many curriculum areas produce good practical work and develop relevant skills. Art and design students produce good sketchbooks and use colour well. Fashion students produce well-made garments. Business administration students produce work of a professional standard. Most information and communications technology (ICT) students develop good practical skills. Foundation students support each other well in lessons and many students on the 'New Directions' course have a mature approach to personal and social issues. In a few curriculum areas, for example, science, mathematics and business studies, many students are not able to interpret and analyse problems at the level expected for the stage of their course.

8. The overall retention and pass rates of young people on work-based learning programmes are unsatisfactory. The engineering curriculum area has the highest number of work-based learners. On both foundation and advanced engineering apprenticeships, retention rates have been unsatisfactory. Pass rates are also unsatisfactory. For example, of the 62 foundation apprentices who started programmes between 2000 and 2002, only 12 achieved the full qualification. The progress of work-based learners on hairdressing, business administration and social care programmes is also slow.

### **Adult learners**

9. Of the 16,348 students who enrolled in 2003/04, over 12,100 were aged 19 or over. The overall success rate of adult students taking level 1 long qualifications rose from 49% in 2002, to a satisfactory 58% in 2003. Final figures for 2004 are not available, but results available by the time of inspection show a further significant rise. At both levels 2 and 3, in 2002 and 2003, success rates of adults on long courses were around 50%. This is close to the national average and is satisfactory. Results known at the time of inspection indicate a modest improvement in success rates, but they remain only satisfactory. The improvements at both level 2 and level 3 are due to increased retention rates. Overall pass rates at both levels have fallen slightly.

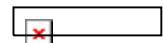
10. Analysis by qualification type shows that, at level 2, the better overall achievements occur on

NVQ programmes, where the 56% success rate is 8 percentage points above the national average. GCSE students did not achieve well between 2002 and 2004. GCE A-level and GNVQ students had satisfactory pass rates. Pass rates on adult literacy courses are very good. Access students generally succeed and many progress to university. Progression rates from the access to humanities course were particularly good with over 95% of the students who completed in 2004 gaining university places. There are substantial numbers of part-time adult students taking short qualifications. In 2004, over 8,000 students were enrolled on short courses. The retention and pass rates of these students rose between 2002 and 2004. In 2003 and 2004, the retention rates were 90% and 93%, respectively, and pass rates were 74% and 82%, respectively. These figures are broadly in line with national averages.

11. Adult students' work, is of a higher standard than the work produced by students aged 16 to 18. Adult students are well motivated and generally produce good work. For example, adults on part-time ICT courses are confident and competent in their use of computers. Adults on the access to HE art and design course demonstrate good composition skills, which in one lively lesson were effectively illustrated using jelly babies as models for a figurative composition. Foreign language students are good at analysing language texts and ESOL students' grammatical and vocabulary skills are well developed. Professional business studies students intelligently use their experience from work in class discussions.

12. Overall attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was 78%. In lessons for students aged 16 to 18, the rate was 80% and in lessons involving adults it was 74%. These rates, which are around the national average, are nevertheless unsatisfactory. In business studies, humanities, literacy and numeracy, attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was less than 75%. There was good attendance on visual arts and foundation programmes.

## Quality of education and training



13. Inspectors observed and graded 213 lessons. They judged that teaching was good or better in 62% of lessons, satisfactory in 31% and less than satisfactory in 7%. The proportion of good or better lessons is the same as the average for general FE colleges inspected in 2002/03. Teaching was most effective on foundation programmes, in English and languages, and in visual arts lessons. Teaching was least effective in science and mathematics, engineering, and business studies lessons. Lessons taught by full-time staff were generally of a higher standard than lessons taught by part-time teachers. Some 65% of lessons taught by full-time staff were good or better, compared with 57% of lessons taught by part-time staff. Teaching is significantly better in lessons primarily involving adult students. Some 72% of these lessons were good or better, compared with 58% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons involving adult students was also lower, at 6% compared with 8%. Analysis of the standard of teaching by level shows that the best teaching is on entry level courses and the weakest is on level 3 courses.

14. In many curriculum areas, the best lessons are either practical lessons or lessons that include both theoretical and practical activities. Nearly 70% of these lessons were good or better, compared with 56% of theory lessons. In the better lessons, teachers use a wide range of teaching methods including group work, paired activities and role play to maintain students' interest and develop learning. Humour is often used in English and performing arts lessons to create a good rapport with students and help them to enjoy their time at college. In languages lessons, students thrive on fast use of the target language. In ESOL lessons, teachers establish rules and check understanding through demonstration, practice and skilful questioning. Teachers who support dyslexic students use detailed support plans which set out the developmental stages of study skills. The use of learning support assistants is well planned and clearly directed in many entry level and foundation level lessons. Learning support assistants are aware of their role in monitoring, assessing and recording learning. In professional business studies lessons, teachers' good use of students' work experience facilitates lively debates.

15. There was a variety of reasons for unsatisfactory teaching. In several curriculum areas, for example, humanities, science, mathematics, business studies and engineering, opportunities to learn are missed because lesson plans do not differentiate either between students' preferred learning styles or their different abilities. In many curriculum areas, including for example, science, English, literacy, numeracy and foundation programmes, there is too little use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons. In several engineering lessons, a lack of discipline adversely affects learning. In other curriculum areas, students' late arrival disrupts learning. In a few engineering lessons, the teachers' approach to health and safety issues is far too lax. Full-time business studies students have too few opportunities for work experience or study visits. In a few performing arts lessons, students are not challenged sufficiently to explore new ideas, tackle difficult concepts or carry out critical analysis of their own work or that of other students. In a few curriculum areas, including English and visual arts, teachers do not make sufficient checks on students' learning. In one lesson, many students remained unaware that their written answers were incorrect.

16. Key skills provision is unsatisfactory. All full-time students are screened to ascertain their key skills levels and these are initially incorporated into individual learning plans. There is a clear policy and detailed procedures for the integration of key skills within the curriculum, and skills mentors, curriculum key skills champions and additional skills support staff are working closely with each other to help teachers develop these practices. Staff training has taken place and all staff are aware that key skills should be taught and evidence portfolios collated and assessed through curriculum activity. Appropriate support for students who require additional teaching to develop their skills is in place. In practice, however, there is considerable inconsistency, and the policies are often poorly implemented. Too little attention is given in many areas to the development of students' key skills, and students' achievements at all three levels are poor, and below the low national averages. Inadequate planning by many teachers leads to missed opportunities to produce or assess evidence for key skills qualifications through vocational or academic assignments, and key skills themselves are not valued by the majority of students.

17. Learning is generally satisfactory or better. The percentages of lessons graded good or better, satisfactory and less than satisfactory for learning were 60%, 33% and 7%, respectively. Learning was better in lessons involving adults. The proportion of lessons primarily involving adults where learning was good or better was 70%, compared with 56% of the lessons for students aged 16 to 18. Learning was unsatisfactory in 6% of lessons for adults and 7% of lessons for students aged 16 to 18.

18. The monitoring of full-time students' progress is regular and it provides a good indication of their progress to date. For example, the tracking and assessment of adults studying IT in the flexible learning centres is good. GCE A-level students' progress is well monitored using a three-tier system to indicate levels of concern. Each student is graded at level 1, 2 or 3 every three weeks. The tutors' actions are generally an appropriate in response to the degree of concern. On the work-based learning programme at a local car manufacturer, a similar 'traffic light' monitoring system is used effectively to track apprentices' progress.

19. Target setting is much less effective than the monitoring of progress. In many curriculum areas, the links between initial assessment, study support and targets agreed with students in tutorials are underdeveloped. Targets in many students' individual learning plans lack detail, reasonable time limits or both. In general, parents and employers are adequately informed about students' progress through regular reports.

20. On many programmes, for example, foundation courses, science and mathematics, performing arts, humanities and visual arts, assessments are regular and well structured. They clearly set out what is expected. The assessment of students' key skills is not well integrated within most courses. However, notable exceptions include media and motor vehicle courses. Students' work is generally marked accurately and returned promptly. The quality of written feedback varies from good to unsatisfactory. GCE A-level students do regular homework, which is returned promptly with good feedback. Art and design students benefit from clear advice and guidance about their work. In contrast, some business studies students waited over five weeks for the return of marked work, and a minority of care and ICT students get insufficient guidance for improvement.

21. Inspectors' findings and external verifiers' reports confirm that assessment and verification meet the requirements of the awarding bodies. An effective process ensures that good practice is noted. Actions to address identified weaknesses are closely monitored. For example, on the NVQ course in food preparation, concerns about the internal verification and assessment led to a detailed action plan that included better use of workplace assessors. New internal verification policies and procedures have recently been introduced clarifying the responsibilities of programme managers and course leaders. Early indications are that this has improved assessment, verification, moderation and recording arrangements, although it is not yet well established in all curriculum areas.

22. Customer service advisers on three sites offer impartial advice and guidance to prospective students. Generally, the advice is accurate and helpful, although inspectors found a few examples where it was unsatisfactory. Good links with local schools also help prospective students to make well-informed choices. In particular, applicants for foundation programmes are given valuable 'transition' opportunities before joining the college. Induction programmes are satisfactory. Students are given an appropriate range of activities to enable them to settle into their course and the college. Most programmes offer students the opportunity to change programmes in the first few weeks. During induction, most full-time students complete a questionnaire identifying their preferred learning styles. On many courses, this information is not effectively incorporated into schemes of work and lesson plans. However, on foundation courses, personal tutors and teachers use their knowledge of preferred learning styles to improve teaching and learning.

23. The literacy and numeracy needs of students aged 16 to 18, full-time adult students and adults on substantial part-time courses are effectively assessed soon after they join the college. At the start of the current year, all full-time students were assessed, but a minority of the intended part-time students were not assessed. Students and their personal tutors are promptly informed of the results. Programme tutors and support staff then agree the best method of supporting each individual. This may include extra support in lessons or support through one of the college's specialist study centres. These centres are open in the evening for part-time students. In general, the additional support is effective. In 2004, the retention rate for full-time students receiving additional support was 93% and the pass rate was 76%. In a few cases, additional support is not effective, generally because teachers do not use initial assessment results effectively in students' individual learning plans or their own lesson plans.

24. Initial assessment results are also used to indicate the need for further specialised diagnostic testing, for example, for dyslexia. These arrangements and the procedures for assessing students with specific learning needs and physical or sensory disabilities are good. Resources to support students with restricted mobility are good. There is a dedicated hearing support unit and students can use a range of adaptive technology equipment to support learning. There is still some inconsistency in the application of new systems, consequently, a few students diagnosed with dyslexia are not receiving adequate support.

25. Tutorial support for full-time students, part-time students and work-based learners is mostly satisfactory. Most students receive a mix of individual and group tutorials. The frequency of individual tutorials varies from weekly to once every two months. Most students feel that individual tutorials are useful, although there is a wide variation in the standard of tutorial records and some are unsatisfactory. A revised group tutorial system was introduced in 2004. Clear and useful information is set out in the college's excellent 'Teaching, learning and student support staff handbook'. At the time of inspection, good tutorial practice had not been consistently implemented across the college. Most group tutorials are satisfactory, only a minority are good. The new procedures include improved procedures to train tutors, observe tutorial sessions and to include tutorials in the internal verification process. Formal tutorials are supplemented by good informal support outside lessons which, for many students, includes access to their tutors through e-mail and by telephone. Tutorial support for part-time students is satisfactory. Support is mainly provided by their subject tutors.

26. Other aspects of support for students are generally good. Advice and guidance for careers and progression to HE are good. There are Connexions staff based on the two main campuses. There is generous financial support for students including, for example, help with course materials, course

fees and childcare fees. Between September 2004 and the time of inspection, over 500 students received financial support from college funds. Until September 2004, counselling services were limited, but the service has been extended and it is now adequate. Good links with external agencies, for example, social services, help the college to support students with specific problems, such as homelessness.

27. The college has a new procedure for dealing with child protection issues, including action to be taken if a member of staff is accused of abuse. Two members of staff are designated college nominees on child protection matters. Their role is to co-ordinate action within the college and to liaise with other agencies. Criminal record checks have been carried out on all staff working with young people. Oxford County Council has been involved with the development of the policy and arranging future training for designated staff.

28. Most teachers have relevant vocational qualifications and appropriate industrial or commercial experience. Some 78% of full-time teachers have a teaching qualification and another 11% are working towards a qualification. These figures are close to the national average for the sector. The percentage of part-time teachers with a teaching qualification is low, at 44%. The recent high turnover of teaching staff, combined with difficulties in recruiting managers and teachers in some curriculum areas, has led to a few lessons either being cancelled, or covered by staff who do not have appropriate expertise. The college has adequate technician support. The college provides good staff resources to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and students who need help with key skills and basic skills. The college has many learning support assistants and additional skills mentors who provide valuable assistance in lessons and good one-to-one help for individuals.

29. There are four main campuses at Oxford, Banbury, Thame and Blackbird Leys. Thame will be vacated in January 2005 when the specialist provision in motor-sport and construction plant maintenance will move to a new centre at Bicester. The four campuses comprise a mix of buildings of varying size, age and condition. In general, they provide satisfactory teaching accommodation, specialist facilities and workshop space. All teaching rooms are equipped with whiteboards and projectors. Good progress has been made with the installation of interactive whiteboards in 27 teaching rooms. Eight more are on order. Many classrooms have lively wall displays of students' work. A few rooms on each campus are unsatisfactory, because they are either too small for the scheduled groups, poorly laid out or subject to noise from adjoining rooms. Common areas are also broadly satisfactory, although the refectory at Oxford is small and offers a narrow range of food. The college has three nurseries with reserved spaces for the children of college staff and students. There are insufficient social facilities for students, particularly at the Oxford campus. The college lacks sports facilities, although arrangements are made for students at Oxford and Banbury to use local sports clubs and leisure centres.

30. Some buildings on all three main sites are not easily accessible to people with disabilities. Many entrances lack automated doors and the internal door system makes wheelchair use very difficult for those who are independent wheelchair users. However, the college has made an adequate response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) legislation. It has carried out an extensive access survey and produced costed plans to modify and improve facilities, for example, by installing lifts, stair lifts or ramps in buildings with restricted access. The current development programme will result in significant improvements to many buildings by September 2005. The college has a good range of specialist resources for students with visual and auditory impairments. The assistive resources centre at Oxford contains hardware and software including 'big keys' keyboards, text magnification software, speech recognition software and specialist pointing devices.

31. The college has adequate learning resource centres at each campus. They are accessible to students with restricted mobility. They have sufficient study spaces. Each learning resource centre contains IT facilities and an appropriate range of textbooks, journals, videos, CD-ROMs and language tapes. The library stock is regularly reviewed in consultation with teaching staff. The college has adequate modern computers for staff and the students. There are almost 1,100 computers for students and over 600 computers for staff. In addition, laptop computers and data projectors are frequently loaned to teachers for use in lessons. The college is beginning to develop a

virtual learning environment and a college intranet. These facilities are underdeveloped and are not yet used effectively to support learning. Students cannot access to the college IT systems from outside the college, with the exception of their college e-mail address.

32. The college has good strategies to widen participation. Several initiatives are in place to encourage minority ethnic students to participate in learning. For example, the college runs two after-school homework clubs for young Asian girls and Bangladeshi boys. This has promoted better links between the Asian community and the college, and has led to the development of a hairdressing course for Asian girls at their school. In all, around 12% of students are from minority ethnic groups, which is the same percentage as in the local community. The college has also responded positively to the needs of pupils whose schooling has been disrupted, often due to personal, social and behavioural difficulties. The 'New Directions' course, which has enrolled around 70 students, enables young people to gain in confidence, build up core skills and sample vocational options. The E2E programme also offers a good range of options.

33. The college provides a wide range of courses, at different levels and modes of attendance to meet the needs of students and employers. Following the merger, the college reviewed the location of its provision and made reasonable decisions to duplicate many courses at Banbury and Oxford. There are courses in all areas of learning, except land-based industries, and a wide range of work-based learning opportunities. There are coherent internal progression routes to higher level courses in most areas. However, not all curriculum areas offer level 1 provision and there is a narrow range of recreational adult education away from the main college campuses. Good research has been carried out to determine future markets and develop new courses. The research recognised the diversity of the college's catchment area and the different characteristics of north and south Oxfordshire. This analysis informed strategic and operational planning.

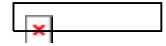
34. Employer links are broadly satisfactory. They are strongest where there is work-based learning. The centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in motor sport and the plans to develop CoVEs in engineering and management have promoted good employer links. Media students benefit from work placements at a local television studio where they have contributed to making television and radio programmes. There are insufficient links with employers in business, science and mathematics. A substantial programme of management training for employers is delivered in workplaces and at other external venues. A good example of meeting specific needs occurs at a local hospital where employees undertake their studies at 06.30 am after completing the night shift.

35. The college has effective relationships with local schools. It is often represented at schools' open events and parents' evenings. An extensive school link programme involves over 460 school pupils from 18 schools. Most take vocational options at college under the 'increasing flexibility' (IF) programme. There are 24 pupils on a pilot young apprentice scheme for engineers. They study for a vocational GCSE at college, and take part in a nationwide motor-sport project called 'Formula Schools' where they design and make a scale racing car. The project culminates in race day at Silverstone.

36. The college is responsive to the needs of the local community. It has strong links with many local and regional groups involved in regeneration and integration, including minority ethnic groups, the mental health network, family centres, groups involved with young people who are not engaged in learning, older students and the unemployed. It has developed basic skills courses with employers to improve their employees' skills.

37. There is a satisfactory range of enrichment activities. Good links between students' liaison workers and the students' union have enabled students to contribute ideas to expand the programme of enrichment activities when the offer is next updated. In the first three weeks of November 2004, over 900 students participated in enrichment activities. This represents around 40% of full-time students aged 16 to 18. Good examples include health and social care students who have taken the opportunity to study dance, basic counselling and first aid.

## Leadership and management



38. Leadership and management are good. The principal, senior managers and governors, most of whom are new, provide strong leadership and a clear strategic direction. The college has made very good progress in a short time in addressing fundamental weaknesses identified at the last inspections of the former colleges. The implementation of a complex merger has been very effectively managed. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspections. Most retention and pass rates are rising and are at or above the national average. The college met its key student number and financial targets for 2003/04. Many new policies and procedures have been developed, for example, for quality assurance and financial management, but need embedding to achieve their full effect.

39. The principal provides decisive leadership. The mission and strategic priorities of the new college are clear, well understood and supported by staff. Governors, managers and staff have been appropriately engaged in their development. A new culture is being successfully fostered which values high levels of support and challenge for both staff and students. Communication has improved and is good. Staff morale has been transformed and a clear sense of a single college has emerged. A network of strategic partnerships is being developed with key local agencies and businesses.

40. Strategic plans clearly set out the relevant key objectives. College management has been logically restructured to support strategic priorities. The decision to establish a new campus in Bicester was thoroughly researched. The relocation of provision from Rycotewood to Oxford and Bicester has been well planned and resourced. A coherent set of policies and procedures has been created. Many evolved from aspects of good practice at the three former colleges. The college recognises that they need to be developed and embedded before their impact on raising standards can be demonstrated.

41. Governors have a good understanding of the strategic priorities of the college. Most governors are new and bring to the college relevant and beneficial experience and community contacts. They are appropriately involved in creating and approving strategic plans. The curriculum and quality standards committee is beginning to monitor students' performance effectively. Financial monitoring by governors is robust and effective.

42. The curriculum is well managed in most areas. A comprehensive schedule of meetings is well used by most teams. Poorly performing courses are identified for close monitoring by senior managers. Departments have yet to develop formal operational plans linked to strategic objectives. Nevertheless, in many areas, provision is well planned. The college's new 'curriculum and innovation support unit' is operating effectively in several areas by encouraging the sharing of good practice between teams and campuses. Curriculum management in business studies, and for key skills across the college, is unsatisfactory. In engineering, students' progress on a minority of courses has been disrupted by poor management of timetables. Attendance monitoring has improved with the introduction of retention officers whose role is to work with course teams to provide support for students with poor attendance. The management of student support services, learning support assistants and additional skills mentors is effective.

43. Quality assurance is clearly focused on improving teaching and learning. A new quality assurance management team has been appointed and comprehensive new procedures have been introduced. The self-assessment report is robust, self-critical and generally accurate. Course reviews are mostly conducted satisfactorily, but a minority are insufficiently rigorous because they do not result in clear action plans and fail to identify opportunities to share good practice. Management information has also improved considerably. Accurate and timely data are provided to support the course review and newly introduced quality panel processes. However, the college has only recently provided curriculum managers with direct access and training related to software which reports students' performance. There are detailed plans to extend this to other staff.



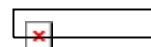
44. The lesson observation system is sound. Teachers are observed annually and there are effective links to the annual appraisal process. Strategies to align grading with Ofsted standards are not yet effective. The college judged teaching to be good or better in 71% of lessons. The comparable figure for lessons observed by inspectors was 62%. There are good and responsive systems for identifying and supporting staff training needs. New staff are well supported. A flexible combination of cross-college and curriculum area training has enabled core college priorities to be met and encouraged local initiatives such as mini-secondments between campuses. Good training for senior and middle managers, following the merger, has created strong shared values and a common understanding of leadership objectives.

45. Equality and diversity are promoted well. Equality of opportunity is one of the college's six key strategic aims. A comprehensive policy informs codes of practice for both staff and students, and embraces current legislative requirements. A separate racial equality policy is still being composed, but its core actions are already being implemented and monitored at strategic and operational levels throughout the college. There is effective promotion of equality and diversity through teaching in many curriculum areas. Action is being taken through staff development to share good practice throughout the college. The first full staff training day was dedicated to exploring the theme of diversity. This required curriculum teams to produce action plans to initiate changes in professional practices. In some areas, these have already had an impact on teaching and learning. For example, a teacher whose AS-level mathematics group includes several Muslim students was inspired to research the Arabic origins of algebra, enriching the cultural understanding of all his students.

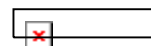
46. The college is actively pursuing ways of reaching particular under-represented or disadvantaged groups within the community. For example, a post is devoted to forging links with specific minority ethnic groups. Female students are actively encouraged to join construction courses. Provision is made for the educational needs of asylum seekers and refugees. The college collects and produces reports on students' data by ethnicity, gender, disability and age, but the analysis and use of this information, to address issues of retention and pass rates is at an early stage of development.

47. Good progress has been made to address the financial weakness of the college. Financial management and reporting has improved significantly. Staff costs have been reduced to a proportion of total costs which is close to the average for colleges. Curriculum resources are carefully allocated using a course-costing model. Decisive action has been taken to invest in and improve accommodation and teaching resources. The average class size observed during inspection was 10.6 which was the national average for FE colleges inspected in 2002/03. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

## 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 chemistry in 2004

- good use of well-prepared learning materials
  
- good science laboratory facilities
  
- rigorous and supportive marking of students' work.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates for human biology
  
- inadequate support in lessons for the needs of individual students
  
- underdeveloped target setting and use of individual learning plans.

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

48. Provision in sciences and mathematics is available at the Oxford and Banbury campuses, although most courses take place at Oxford. The provision includes AS-level and GCE A-level courses in biology, human biology, chemistry, physics, statistics, mathematics and further mathematics. Courses are offered in GCSE mathematics, pre-GCSE level mathematics and basic numeracy. A full-time GCSE programme includes science subjects. A vocational course in forensic science is recruiting an increasing number of students. Access to science courses are available at both campuses. At the time of inspection, there were 670 enrolments for science and mathematics courses, with 405 full-time and 265 part-time students. Just over half the part-time students are aged 16 to 18, studying on mainly full-time courses.

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

49. Retention and pass rates vary across the provision, but are satisfactory overall. Retention rates have fallen, and in 2004 were below the national average in AS-level physics. On mathematics courses, however, retention rates have risen to match or exceed national averages. Pass rates in human biology at AS level and GCE A level have remained significantly below national averages. Students aged 16 to 18 have high pass rates at AS level in mathematics and chemistry, with an above average proportion gaining higher grades.

50. Students show enthusiasm and complete their work diligently. In most lessons, they make good progress in developing their understanding. Students discuss their ideas well and are not afraid to share them with the whole group. GCSE mathematics students understand the concept of errors and the importance of keeping variables constant. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory and appropriate for their course. However, the work of a small number of students is not of a sufficiently high standard to give them a realistic chance of passing the examination.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	242	245	284
		% retention	66	69	77
		% pass rate	42	51	45
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	18	46	40
		% retention	94	80	69
		% pass rate	76	59	89
AS-level human biology	3	No. of starts	28	66	90
		% retention	82	74	91
		% pass rate	48	71	51
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	37	41	20
		% retention	81	88	70
		% pass rate	67	50	64
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	72	81	49
		% retention	69	81	78
		% pass rate	78	58	63

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	34	61	24
		% retention	88	75	96
		% pass rate	87	87	78
GCE A-level human biology	3	No. of starts	50	39	34
		% retention	74	87	91
		% pass rate	57	59	71

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

***Quality of education and training***

51. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers question all students to check their understanding. Teachers generally give helpful encouragement and use praise to increase students' confidence. Topics are introduced in an interesting way, often with everyday examples to illustrate concepts. Teaching concentrates on what students must know in order to pass their examinations. Learning materials are used effectively to help students to consolidate their knowledge. For example, in a biology lesson, students matched written descriptions with diagrams to develop their understanding of protein synthesis. A game using dice was used effectively in a mathematics lesson to illustrate the rules of arithmetic. On a mathematics project, teachers used innovative methods which enabled students to accelerate their progress. For example, in studying quadratic equations, students set algebraic questions for each other at a level of difficulty not normally encountered until later in the course.

52. In the less effective lessons, teaching does not meet the needs of individual students. All students receive the same tasks. The abilities of the more able students are not sufficiently extended. A limited range of teaching techniques is used in science. Whilst sufficient ILT resources are available, teachers make little use of them to enliven and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

53. Accommodation for science is good. The science laboratory at the Banbury campus is newly built and three of the six laboratories at the Oxford campus have been refurbished and are well designed. Accommodation for mathematics is satisfactory.

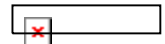
54. Students' work is rigorously assessed. Homework is set regularly, marked promptly and returned with constructive and helpful comments. Assignments are well designed. Grading criteria are clearly stated, with clear guidance on how high marks can be obtained.

55. In lessons, some students receive insufficient support for their literacy needs. Arrangements for monitoring students' additional support needs are inadequate. The progress of full-time GCE A-level students is checked every three weeks by personal tutors. However, poor use is made of individual learning plans. The plans lack detailed and measurable targets. As a result, target setting is not used effectively to monitor students' progress.

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

56. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Decisions taken at course team meetings are followed through. Observation of teaching takes place, but weaknesses remain to be addressed. Course reviews are descriptive rather than evaluative. Better co-ordination of the mathematics provision has led to regular meetings of teachers from the Banbury and Oxford campuses when good practice is shared. The college is currently participating in a worthwhile project with the Learning and Skills Development Agency to pilot new methods of teaching level 2 mathematics.

### **Engineering, technology and manufacturing**



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

**Contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

#### ***Strengths***

- good retention and pass rates on level 1 motor vehicle courses
  
- some good specialist resources
  
- good links with employers and schools
  
- the clear direction provided by new managers.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor pass rates on courses at levels 2 and 3

- declining retention rate on national certificate courses
  
- the low retention and pass rates of modern apprentices
  
- too much unsatisfactory teaching
  
- unsatisfactory arrangements for internal verification
  
- inadequate target setting for individual students.

***Scope of provision***

57. The college offers full-time engineering and motor vehicle courses at craft and technician level. Part-time courses and apprenticeship training cover a wide range of engineering disciplines. Provision is spread across four campuses. In July 2004, the college was recognised as a CoVE in motor sport engineering. Enrolments are increasing for college-based courses and for work-based learning. At the time of the inspection, there were 406 students on college-based courses, 272 work-based learners and over 200 young people aged 14 to 16.

***Achievement and standards***

58. Retention and pass rates are low. They are declining at levels 2 and 3 on many courses. The decline is most marked at level 3. The retention rate on the national certificate in engineering remains very low. In 2004, whilst retention rates across a range of NVQ level 2 courses were good, pass rates were significantly below national averages. In contrast, retention and pass rates for motor vehicle courses at level 1 were well above national averages. Too few advanced apprentices complete or pass their courses. Foundation apprentices make slow progress in achieving their full qualification which includes key skills. Of the 62 foundation modern apprentices who started programmes between 2000 and 2002, only 12 achieved the full qualification. A further 27 learners are still working towards the full qualification. In 2004, the achievement of key skills qualifications by engineering students was poor. Students are punctual for lessons and attendance is good.

59. Students use diverse sources of evidence in well-researched assignments. They produce good practical work and acquire good skills. The results of students' recent projects have been adopted for use on the production line of an automotive company. An Institute of the Motor Industry student won the student of the year award in June 2004. One motor vehicle apprentice works in a specialist small garage servicing prestigious cars.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
City and Guilds motor	1	No. of starts	38	28	32

vehicle programmes		% retention	82	43	91
		% pass rate	84	100	90
GNVQ intermediate in engineering	2	No. of starts	16	13	9
		% retention	50	85	67
		% pass rate	88	82	67
City and Guilds motor vehicle progression award, service and repair	2	No. of starts	28	18	17
		% retention	82	50	65
		% pass rate	52	11	73
NVQ performing manufacturing operations	2	No. of starts	38	18	69
		% retention	74	94	84
		% pass rate	96	82	69
AVCE engineering (double award)	3	No. of starts	42	15	19
		% retention	69	73	53
		% pass rate	69	82	50
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	29	35	20
		% retention	79	46	40
		% pass rate	96	56	13

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

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

60. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching. In these lessons, teaching is inadequately planned. Schemes of work and lesson plans fail to highlight sufficient opportunities for students to develop their key skills. It is not clear how the needs of different students will be met. Little use is made of ILT. As a result, lessons are not sufficiently varied or demanding. Students' learning is not systematically checked. On occasions, teachers fail to challenge behaviour which disrupts the learning of other students.

61. In the better lessons, students' interest is engaged by their teachers' enthusiasm and industrial knowledge. In one lesson, simple models and engine components were used to demonstrate the venturi effect in carburettors. Students' knowledge of theory was carefully developed by reference to previous learning and their own practical experience. In a lesson on logic circuits, the teacher provided additional activities to extend students who worked quickly and monitored each student's progress using a tracking sheet.

62. Most accommodation and resources are good and fit for their purpose. Students on motor-sports engineering courses use a trackside facility based at Silverstone. Facilities at Thame are of a good standard and widely used. There are good engineering and motor vehicle workshops at Blackbird Leys. Multi-purpose workshops have been set up for young people aged 14 to 16. Good use is made of vocationally relevant displays including sections of car components. Technicians provide good support in workshops.

63. The college has excellent links with local automotive industries. Some apprentices are placed with Formula One companies where they are able to use specialist equipment. There are very good opportunities for pupils from local schools to gain experience at the college through the IF programme, formula cars and young apprentice schemes.

64. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Students know when and how they will be assessed. Assignments are well integrated with practical work undertaken by students on electrical and

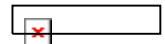
automotive courses. However, some key skills assignments are not set in a relevant context. Students generally receive prompt and detailed feedback on their written work. Internal verification is unsatisfactory on several courses where there have been staff shortages.

65. Students are well supported. Additional support is provided to full-time students who need to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. There are also evening courses providing additional support for part-time engineering students. Tutors respond quickly to students' problems. The monitoring of students' progress is ineffective. There is little use made of targets to help full-time students to improve their work. For work-based learners, target setting is insufficiently detailed to enable them to make progress. Students' individual learning plans are not updated regularly.

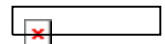
### ***Leadership and management***

66. The new management team is providing staff with a clear direction. Staff are responding positively to the need to address weaknesses. Communication between sites is good. Teams meet regularly. Action points are recorded, but the records do not always indicate a timescale for their achievement. There is little reference in self-assessment to the outcome of the previous year's action plan. Insufficient attention is paid to some aspects of health and safety. Students work on soldering projects without goggles or protection from fume extraction. In a motor vehicles lesson, students worked unsupervised in a workshop.

### **Business studies**



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



### ***Strengths***

- good teaching on professional courses
  
- good standard of work on administration and management courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor pass rates on many courses in 2004
  
- insufficient variety of teaching and learning strategies
  
- inadequate tutorial support

- o unsatisfactory curriculum management.

### **Scope of provision**

67. The college provides courses in business, principally for full-time students aged 16 to 18, and a wide range of professional and management courses for adult students. Courses in accountancy and administration are offered to students aged 16 to 18 and to adults. At the time of the inspection, there were 912 students, of whom 660 were adults. A further 80 learners on work-based programmes were taking qualifications in accountancy or administration. The full-time provision covers Business Technology Education Council (BTEC), AS-level and GCE A-level courses. Professional courses include management, personnel practice, marketing and legal executives. There are also commercial courses offered directly to employers. The college contributes to a countywide project to provide training in supervisory management.

### **Achievement and standards**

68. In 2004, pass rates on many courses were poor. For example, pass rates on NVQ accounting qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 4 fell 20% below national averages. There were similarly low pass rates at AS level and GCE A level in business. Many work-based learning students take too long to achieve their full qualification. Retention rates are generally good. Some 80% of all administration students who began courses in 2004 completed their programme.

69. Administration students produce work of a high standard. They keep their files neat and well organised. Their work shows a good understanding of business practice and a high level of skill in the use of IT. Work-based management students on NVQ programmes produce high-quality portfolios. On professional courses, students conduct intelligent debates and discussions in lessons, using their experience from work and personal life to make learning more vivid. In 2004, a student on the Chartered Institute of Marketing course was named as the top professional diploma student in the region. GCE A-level students do not apply sufficient rigour to the interpretation and analysis of business problems. Full-time students sometimes fail to concentrate on tasks when working in groups. Attendance and punctuality in lessons are unsatisfactory.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in business studies, 2002 to 2004**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GNVQ intermediate in business	2	No. of starts	17	28	*
		% retention	59	79	*
		% pass rate	80	68	*
AVCE business (conversion to double award)	3	No. of starts	24	24	*
		% retention	92	96	*
		% pass rate	86	100	*
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	68	67	53
		% retention	65	76	91
		% pass rate	73	59	44
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	62	45	82
		% retention	84	78	88
		% pass rate	73	80	43



NVQ management	4	No. of starts	50	60	64
		% retention	34	28	56
		% pass rate	53	100	67
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	25	33	30
		% retention	88	94	93
		% pass rate	73	74	21

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

\*fewer than 15 students enrolled

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

70. Teaching on professional courses is good. Teachers set suitably demanding tasks. They encourage lively debate by posing searching questions to extend discussion and develop critical analysis. In other good or better lessons, teachers make effective use of individual and group work to maintain interest, develop business skills and encourage independent thinking. For example, business students worked well in groups to assess interest in holding a charity fete at college. They gathered, then analysed, the results of a questionnaire before presenting the data on spreadsheets. Teachers support individual students by providing them with much helpful instruction. Where teaching is less good, progress is slow and lessons have no clear direction. Teachers do not use a sufficiently varied range of methods to stimulate students and challenge them to learn. Little use is made of IT. Full-time business students have no work experience or study visits to enable them to see how businesses operate.

71. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified. However, on some specialist courses, there have been too few staff with appropriate experience. Most lessons take place in suitable accommodation, some recently refurbished. There are no computers in the classrooms on the Oxford site. However, there is a sufficient number of computers for students to use elsewhere on the site.

72. Assessment is good on professional and management courses. Feedback on written work is thorough and helpful to students. Assessment is appropriate on full-time business courses, but the quality of marking is sometimes poor. Comments are too brief and do not point out clearly what is needed to achieve a higher grade.

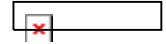
73. Tutorial support for full-time students is unsatisfactory. College procedures are not fully implemented. Most students do not have individual learning plans with clear targets that are monitored regularly. Reviews of students' progress are implemented inconsistently. There is inadequate liaison between subject teachers and additional support tutors to assess the value to students of the additional support they are receiving. Students receive appropriate advice and guidance during their time at college. However, preliminary information about courses was not considered helpful by many students aged 16 to 18. The progress of work-based students is effectively monitored.

### **Leadership and management**

74. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The actions taken by recently appointed managers to improve the provision have not been consistently implemented. Their impact is slight. Students have not been kept well informed about staffing difficulties which have disrupted their learning. Records of course team meetings are inadequate. At curriculum management meetings, there is too little focus on important priorities. Weaknesses found by inspectors were not identified in the self-assessment report. However, managers are addressing the lack of business experience for full-time students and a shortage of appropriately experienced staff on specialist courses. Off-site management provision is well planned and led. The management of work-based learning, in

particular of the administration programme, is effective.

### **Information and communications technology**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- effective teaching and good achievement on flexible IT courses
  
- good range of courses providing opportunities for progression
  
- effective action to improve course management
  
- effective use of well-structured online resources.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficiently varied teaching on many full-time courses
  
- unsatisfactory pass rate on the European computer driving licence (ECDL) course in 2004
  
- weak target setting for individual students.

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

75. The college offers full-time students aged 16 to 18 a wide range of courses from entry to advanced levels. These are available at the main college campuses at Banbury and Oxford. A variety of part-time IT courses is available, ranging from entry level to an access to HE programme. IT training for adults takes place at the main campuses, at IT centres in the community and on employers' premises. At the time of inspection, there were 138 full-time students and 754 part-time students. The number of part-time students has declined significantly from a total of 1,588 enrolled during the previous year.

### **Achievement and standards**

76. In 2004, pass rates on advanced level courses were high in AS-level IT, and above average in AVCE ICT. However, in the same year, pass rates for GCE A-level computing and the national diploma in computing were very low. Too few students succeed in gaining a key skills qualification in IT. Pass rates on level 2 courses in IT have declined and are now low. In 2003, only 8% of students passed their AVCE course in ICT. The college responded by providing additional teaching in the following year and 79% of students gained the qualification. In 2004, retention rates for full-time courses varied from high on the AVCE conversion course in ICT to low on the GNVQ intermediate course. Progression rates from the first year to the second year of full-time courses are low. Little use is made of value added data.

77. Pass and retention rates on courses for adults show considerable variations. They are high on the certificate for IT users and on the access course in IT which also has good rates of progression to HE. In contrast, pass rates have fallen steeply on the ECDL course and in 2004 were low. Students in the IT centres increase their confidence as they develop their IT skills, stage by stage. They study IT applications such as Excel or Publisher. Over a relatively short period of time, they acquire good skills.

78. The standard of students' work is good. Most students are confident and competent in their use of ICT. Many develop good practical skills. Some students are able to create and modify an animation. Others can write code for a particularly complex programme. Media students used IT to plan and estimate the cost of a tour by a pop group. The project enabled them to develop their skills in research, budgeting and the use of spreadsheets.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate for IT users	1	No. of starts	*	730	277
		% retention	*	90	80
		% pass rate	*	73	85
ECDL	2	No. of starts	279	239	339
		% retention	56	56	64
		% pass rate	91	68	39
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	86	70	44
		% retention	63	79	68
		% pass rate	54	84	77
Key skills IT	2	No. of starts	383	430	529
		% retention	82	84	93
		% pass rate	33	18	17

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	56	47	30
		% retention	91	85	87
		% pass rate	75	8	77
AS-level IT	3	No. of starts	19	16	27
		% retention	79	75	74
		% pass rate	73	33	85

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

\* course did not run

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

79. In many lessons, teaching is dull and uninspiring. Lessons for full-time students often follow a similar routine where the teacher's short theoretical explanation is followed by students doing exercises on their computers. This activity often continues too long. As a result, students become bored. Full-time students do not have relevant work experience. This denies them the opportunity to apply their skills in a realistic context. Where teaching is good, often on flexible IT courses, students undertake varied activities to help them to learn effectively. In one lesson, a computerised crossword was devised to check students' understanding. Later, students worked in groups to make successful presentations using different media. In a key skills lesson, motor vehicle students discussed with enthusiasm the relative merits of different IT applications, layouts, fonts and watermarks for a brochure explaining engine cooling systems.

80. Resources are satisfactory. On the Oxford campus, most classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards and data projectors. The layout of several classrooms, in particular at Banbury, makes it difficult for some students to see the whiteboard or to attract the teacher's attention if they need assistance. There are good online materials to promote learning. However, outside the college premises, students do not have access to them. Few staff have recent industrial experience and many lack higher level technical ICT qualifications.

81. Tutors regularly set and mark work. Assignments are clear, relevant and of an appropriate standard, although grading criteria are seldom detailed enough. The standard of written feedback is variable. Teachers at Banbury generally provide more positive comments and clearer guidance than teachers at the Oxford campus. Students receive much useful feedback in lessons.

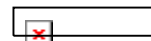
82. The learning support needs of full-time and many part-time students are assessed on entry. Although support is provided, the evaluations of initial assessment and entry qualifications are not used effectively to plan teaching. The process for setting targets in tutorials is not effective and the targets that students record are not sufficiently realistic or specific.

83. Students have good opportunities to progress within the college and beyond to employment and HE. The IT centres meet the needs and aspirations of part-time students. However, the Oxford campus does not offer entry level courses or provision that is flexible enough to meet some students' needs. The lack of entry level courses has resulted in some students being inappropriately placed on the intermediate ECDL course.

### **Leadership and management**

84. Management of the curriculum area is good. Managers provide a clear sense of direction which gives priority to the needs of students. Practical action plans are produced. For 2004/05, the ECDL course has been improved by new systems for tracking students' progress, better learning resources and the appointment of a course manager. A review of the qualifications for full-time and part-time students has led to a planned withdrawal of several qualifications, and their replacement by more suitable ones. Course teams and managers meet regularly and share good practice in teaching and learning. Staff keep abreast of the requirements of awarding bodies. Effective management of the flexible IT centres ensures good practice is shared. However, course management of some evening provision remains weak. Responsibility for the management of key skills IT requires clarification.

### **Health, social care and public services**



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

### ***Strengths***

- generally good promotion of independent learning skills
  
- good pass rates on childcare programmes
  
- wide range of courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient variety of teaching and learning strategies
  
- inadequate feedback to students on courses at levels 1 and 2
  
- unsatisfactory achievements by work-based learners.

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

85. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in childcare, health and social care, public services and youth and community work. Of the 552 students on these courses, 330 are adults. In addition, there are 26 work-based learners following courses in care of the elderly and early years care.

86. Full-time childcare programmes include the GNVQ foundation in caring for children, at level 1, the certificate in childcare and education at level 2 and the diploma in childcare and education, at level 3. Full-time courses at foundation and intermediate level are offered in health and social care. The foundation course is available only at the Oxford campus. For students wishing to progress to level 3 courses, the college provides the AVCE single award in health and social care and, at Banbury only, the national diploma in early years. Full-time courses in public services are provided at levels 2 and 3 at Oxford. For adult students, an access course in youth and community work provides a progression route to HE.

87. A wide range of part-time courses meets the needs of the local community. Courses in childcare at levels 2 and 3 are available in the evening. NVQs in early years care and education are offered at both campuses. Workshops for NVQ students have been conducted in the workplace to overcome problems of distance and travel. There are part-time counselling courses, from introduction to diploma level, during the day and in the evening.

### **Achievement and standards**

88. Pass rates on childcare courses are consistently high. The standard of written work by students on the diploma in childcare and education is particularly high. Students on level 3 courses are developing good IT skills, including Internet search skills. Placement reports demonstrate that students are making progress in achieving necessary skills to work effectively in the early years and care areas. Health and social care programmes show rising retention rates, close to national averages. Pass rates, however, remain below average. In 2004, a high proportion of students who began the first diploma in public services achieved the qualification. By contrast, only 40% of those who started a national diploma in public services were successful. On the access course, whilst retention rates have risen, pass rates have declined, and in 2004 were low. Work-based learners on foundation and advanced apprenticeships fail to achieve their qualifications. Since 2000, there has been no achievement of candidates on foundation or advanced apprenticeship courses. Retention rates are low. Of the 10 learners who began their advanced apprenticeships in 2002, only 4 remain on the programme.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	21	26	12
		% retention	48	69	75
		% pass rate	50	83	78
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	32	45	33
		% retention	66	82	76
		% pass rate	100	86	88
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	33	35	35
		% retention	42	69	74
		% pass rate	71	83	65
First diploma public services	2	No. of starts	*	34	33
		% retention	*	82	85
		% pass rate	*	54	93
National diploma public services	3	No. of starts	15	16	20
		% retention	53	63	60
		% pass rate	88	100	67
Diploma in childcare and education.	3	No. of starts	54	30	55
		% retention	72	47	69
		% pass rate	92	86	97
Access to youth and community work	3	No. of starts	17	15	*
		% retention	59	53	*
		% pass rate	70	75	*

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

\*fewer than 15 students enrolled

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

89. Nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory. Where it is good or very good, teachers succeed in developing students' skills to learn on their own. They encourage students to search for their own materials to support work done in lessons. In a communication lesson, foundation students followed the example of the teacher by making good use of dictionaries to check the spelling of key words linked to their work with children. Imaginative methods are used to good effect. One teacher devised a murder-mystery game to develop students' understanding of Belbin's theory of team members' roles. Public services students were greeted in one lesson by their teacher dressed as a Texan cowhand to illustrate perceptions of conformity. Students responded with lively discussion using their own examples about conformity and compliance in the uniformed public services. In less successful lessons, students make slow progress when the teacher relies too much on one style of teaching. Teachers respond positively to what students say, but their feedback is sometimes imprecise. It fails to specify what students have done well. The quality of marking is mixed. It is mostly thorough and helpful on level 3 courses. Elsewhere, it is often insufficiently detailed. Students are confused when teachers fail to demonstrate confident knowledge of the subject. Several teachers lack sufficient awareness of current ideas on valuing diversity. As a result, they are unable to promote these ideas when opportunities arise in lessons. Too many lessons are disrupted when students arrive late or their attendance is erratic.

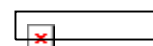
90. Resources are satisfactory. Staff development is well planned in response to the outcomes of annual appraisal and changes in the curriculum. Students on health and social care courses are offered a narrow range of placements in the local community. However, most students value the insights into the world of work which their placements provide. Little use is made of books and journals in lessons. A few lessons do not take place in the appropriate specialist accommodation. If computers or an interactive whiteboard are required in lessons, students have to move to another room.

91. Students make productive use in lessons of the additional support provided by learning support staff. Students feel they are well supported by tutors who are friendly and approachable. New arrangements to monitor students' progress are being implemented with reasonable consistency. However, many students do not play a significant role in negotiating their own targets for improvement. On public services courses, students are encouraged to respond to their tutor online.

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

92. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. At the time of inspection, a key management post was vacant. There is a shared sense of purpose among staff to improve the provision. Staff contribute to honest reviews of their courses. They are responsive to students' views. Additional workshops have been provided on Saturdays to enable counselling students to make further progress. The promotion of equal opportunities in the classroom has not been addressed by the whole team. Inspection revealed weaknesses in teaching and assessment. There has been little sharing of good practice about teaching and learning.

### **Visual arts**



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

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- good progression between levels and to HE

- very high standards of students' work
  
- good teaching
  
- good specialist resources at Oxford
  
- effective curriculum leadership.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on specialist national diplomas and part-time vocational provision
  
- insufficient exploration of design ideas in a few lessons
  
- unsatisfactory planning of a few practical activities.

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

93. The college offers a range of courses which allow students to progress from level 2 to level 4. Almost 600 full-time students are studying on a range of courses that include intermediate GNVQ, AVCE art, diplomas in fashion, design crafts and graphics, and a pre-degree foundation course. The college also offers AS-level and GCE A-level studies in fine art, graphics and photography. There are 207 students studying part time on a range of Open College Network (OCN) and City and Guilds courses, including interior design, photography and furniture craft. Courses are based at the two main campuses, Banbury and Oxford. The furniture centre at Oxford is called the 'Rycotewood Centre' to retain the link with the former college.

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

94. Pass rates are high on most courses, in particular on the national diploma in art and design. However, retention rates are rarely better than average and on many national diploma courses and the part-time pre-degree foundation course, they are low. During the inspection, a few students disrupted lessons by arriving late.

95. Students are motivated to produce very good work. They are articulate in explaining their own work and discussing the work of other students. Sketchbooks are experimental and show the development of ideas. Drawing is lively and accurate. Students demonstrate good analytical drawing skills in their self-portraits. They make good progress in developing their skills in composition. This



was clearly demonstrated in one imaginative project using jelly babies as models. Good progress in understanding colour is evident as students practise mixing and applying colour accurately. Students enhance their two-dimensional work with colour and collage. Photography students take excellent photographs. Fashion students develop their ideas thoroughly before going on to produce well-made garments. A few students are unable to translate their initial ideas into a finished piece of work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	39	56	39
		% retention	82	88	79
		% pass rate	78	94	87
AS-level fine arts	3	No. of starts	48	74	71
		% retention	85	76	62
		% pass rate	68	71	86
AVCE art and design (double award)	3	No. of starts	37	37	45
		% retention	65	70	76
		% pass rate	96	92	88
National diploma general art and design	3	No. of starts	32	35	38
		% retention	75	83	76
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma fashion	3	No. of starts	31	17	25
		% retention	74	71	64
		% pass rate	100	83	94

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
National diploma graphic design	3	No. of starts	44	42	34
		% retention	68	69	62
		% pass rate	93	100	100
National diploma foundation studies full time	3	No. of starts	110	96	110
		% retention	89	95	93
		% pass rate	97	100	98
National diploma foundation studies part time	3	No. of starts	38	37	29
		% retention	74	59	52
		% pass rate	89	100	87

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

***Quality of education and training***

96. There is a significant amount of good and better teaching on visual art courses. Lesson plans and schemes of work are detailed. They provide ample short-term and long-term learning outcomes. In the best lessons, students are stimulated by exciting work. In a lesson on painting still life, brightly coloured clothes were hung on washing lines across the studio. Students first produced a number of compositional sketches before selecting a viewpoint. They painted considered and delicate depictions of the scene. Throughout the lesson, students made written comments on their progress and planned their next steps to achieve a finished painting. In a few less effective lessons, learning

is insufficiently well planned or checked. In a fashion lesson, students designed accessories for garments not yet made. In another lesson, the teacher asked students to write down the different roles found in a design team. A few students presented their responses, which were corrected in discussion. However, the work of other students, which also contained inaccuracies, was not checked.

97. Resources in visual arts are good. Staff are well qualified and the majority have recent or current industrial experience. Studios and workshops are well equipped. Computer facilities on both campuses are good. The newly refurbished Rycotewood centre is set aside for the design and restoration of furniture. Students at this centre gain realistic experience by using equipment which conforms to industrial standards. The library at Banbury has an extensive range of books and magazines.

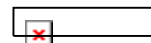
98. Assessment is effective. At the start of the course, students become familiar with the methods of assessment. Most students keep planning and progress diaries for assessment purposes. Teachers' written feedback often combines good analysis with clear guidance. Course teams regularly discuss and maintain careful records of students' progress and achievement. Individual support for students is highly effective and includes considerable time given to ensure students meet assessment deadlines. Students have access to good advice about progression opportunities within and outside the college. Individual learning plans are used well by students to monitor progress and personal issues. Procedures for responding to students' poor attendance are ineffective on several courses. Teachers respond inconsistently to students' lateness.

99. There are good links with industry. The Rycotewood centre (at Oxford) has particularly strong links with well-known furniture manufacturers and retailers. These provide work placements or training in the sale of furniture. Students have recently visited Paris, New York and London and frequently visit local museums and galleries.

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

100. Leadership and management are very good. New managers have made good progress in consolidating the provision on to two campuses. Courses are well managed. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Staff from both campuses are enthusiastic about the future. They are beginning to share good practice, plan assignments and develop annual reviews. Quality assurance is self-critical. Staff appraisal and the lesson observation programme make an effective contribution to teachers' professional development.

### **Performing arts**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on GCE A-level media, GCE A-level film studies and AS-level audio and visual media in 2004
  
- good retention rates on the national diploma in music practice in 2004

- effective linking of theory with practice
  
- strong links with industry partners
  
- good leadership and management.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on AS-level dance and AS-level film studies in 2004
  
- poor retention rates on first diploma in performing arts and national diploma in performing arts in 2004
  
- inadequate practical teaching spaces in Oxford
  
- underdeveloped use of group tutorials
  
- lack of provision at level 1 and for adults.

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

101. This college offers academic and vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 in media, drama, dance and music, including GCE A levels and AS levels in all four disciplines, and first and national diplomas. Most courses are available at Oxford and Banbury. At the time of the inspection, there were 384 full-time students, of whom 329 were aged 16 to 18 and 55 aged 19 and over. There are no courses at level 1, no courses specifically for adults and few part-time students. Strong links with industry provide good opportunities for students to work in a vocational context.

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

102. In 2004, there were high pass rates on GCE A-level media, GCE A-level film studies and AS-level audio and visual media courses. The retention rate on the national diploma in music practice was good at 19% above the national average for 2003. However, in 2004, pass rates on AS-level dance and AS-level film studies were both more than 20% below national averages and in 2004 retention rates on both first and national diplomas in performing arts were well below the national averages at 46% and 49% respectively. In 2004, the rate of progression from level 2 to level 3 courses was high, at 85%.

103. The quality of students' work is good in most subjects. Practical performance and production skills are of a high standard, with students quickly acquiring the confidence to extend their own boundaries and take creative risks. They work well in teams, recognising the essentially ensemble nature of much of what they do. They have disciplined rehearsal and studio etiquette and show good levels of concentration and technical aptitude. For example, in a performing arts lesson, students moved easily from a whole class exercise to work in small groups on the practical exploration of characters' previous histories. They immediately engaged with the tasks, assigning roles and running a familiar workshop exercise in a purposeful and mature way. In many level 3 lessons, students can articulate their own critical responses to professional work using appropriate technical vocabulary.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
First diploma media*		No. of starts			
		% retention			75
		% pass rate			87
National diploma performing arts	3	No. of starts	24	24	39
		% retention			49
		% pass rate			84
National diploma media	3	No. of starts	56	69	48
		% retention			63
		% pass rate			80
National diploma music practice	3	No. of starts	16	22	23
		% retention			74
		% pass rate			82
AS-level film studies	3	No. of starts	16	15	21
		% retention	81	100	86
		% pass rate	92	100	61
AS-level drama	3	No. of starts	37	20	26
		% retention	84	80	81
		% pass rate	94	88	90
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	45	31	22
		% retention	80	90	95
		% pass rate	94	89	76
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	26	40	30
		% retention	92	83	97
		% pass rate	100	100	100

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

\*precursor GNVQ intermediate in 2002 and 2003

***Quality of education and training***

104. Most teaching is satisfactory or better, and some is good or very good. Frequent connections are made between theory and practice and students are encouraged to build their own creative practices on the foundations of the theory they have learned and the professional practitioners they have studied. For example, in a first diploma performing arts lesson on developing truthful acting methods, the ideas of Stanislavski were skilfully illuminated by references to what approaches students might use to explore a contemporary text. These links were reinforced during some 'hot-seating' exercises in which characters' given circumstances and psychological motivations were discovered by sensitive questioning. Teachers effectively use a broad range of teaching styles and encourage students to develop analytical and evaluative skills using the critical language and terminology of the discipline. For example, in an AS-level drama lesson, students discussed the production values of a live professional performance of *Peter Pan* in terms of the directors' interpretation and use of musical instruments to enhance characterisation.

105. In the better lessons, students are strongly motivated to work independently within a team structure, and teachers have a clear but unobtrusive control of the learning process through effective planning. For example, in a dance lesson, the teacher used a well-structured lesson plan to keep students continuously engaged in choreographic tasks that were varied and demanding. Students were regularly praised when they achieved a task, and they demonstrated high attainment. In a few lessons, planning is poor, and students are not challenged to work to their best potential or engage with new concepts.

106. Assignment briefs are detailed and highly contextualised to give industry relevance. Good oral feedback is given in lessons, both by teachers and by other students, who are encouraged to comment constructively on each other's work. Some oral feedback lacks discrimination and does not help students to recognise areas for improvement. Written feedback on work is clear and helpful. Assessment processes are well managed and records of attainment and progress are thorough. Students know how well they are doing, but they are less clear about their short-term targets for improvement.

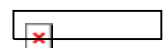
107. Students receive and appreciate good personal support, but group tutorials are held at irregular intervals for many groups and their purpose is unclear. Many students are not receiving their full college entitlement to systematic advice, information or guidance on a range of general, social and welfare issues.

108. Most teachers have good up-to-date knowledge and experience of the profession. Accommodation for media and performing arts is good at Banbury, with well-equipped performance spaces and specialist studios for media with industry-standard equipment. At Oxford, there is a large theatre space and good technical equipment, but inadequate practical teaching spaces for music, drama and dance. Intrusive noise levels inhibit learning. There is no sprung floor for dance on either campus. Good use is made of external links to provide some students with access to professional accommodation off-site. Music students are able to use a recording studio and drama students sometimes work in theatres in Oxford and Banbury.

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

109. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum area has been reorganised, with clear roles and responsibilities established and there is a new common sense of purpose. Team morale is high, communications within and between campuses good, and there is a strong focus on developing a culture of improvement. Staff are eager to learn from each other and to share the best practices they can find.

## **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good retention rates in most AS-level and GCE A-level subjects in 2004
- many lively lessons
- effective monitoring of attendance, punctuality and progress.

### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory GCSE sociology achievements
- insufficient challenge for students in many lessons
- insufficient account of different students' needs in most lessons.

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

110. The department offers full-time courses at AS level and GCE A level in geography, history, law, psychology and sociology. These are available at the campuses in Oxford and Banbury. In addition, AS-level politics and philosophy, and AS-level and GCE A-level religious studies are available at Oxford. Critical studies at AS level is provided as part of the college's enrichment programme. Philosophy and psychology are offered in the evening to part-time students. Several humanities subjects form part of a full-time GCSE programme available at Banbury. Humanities subjects are included within full-time and part-time access to HE courses offered on both campuses. Overall, there are 87 part-time students and 209 full-time students, over 70% of whom are aged 16 to 18.

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

111. In 2004, overall retention and pass rates at AS level were above the national average for FE colleges. Between 2003 and 2004, retention rates on many courses rose markedly. At GCE A level, pass and retention rates were generally close to national averages, except in philosophy where the pass rate was low. In 2004, AS-level and GCE A-level students in religious studies and sociology achieved an above average percentage of high grades. In 2004, pass rates were low in GCSE sociology and on the part-time access course at Banbury.

112. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. AS-level and GCE A-level students have good listening and note-taking skills, and respond well in class discussions. Their written work shows good use of specialised vocabulary. GCE A-level students, in particular, are becoming more confident in analytical thinking. Access students have very good oral skills which enable them to produce developed answers to questions. GCSE law students find difficulty in explaining concepts in their oral and written work. Attendance at lessons observed by inspectors was low at 75%. Two lessons had fewer than half the expected number of students.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	123	127	97
		% retention	84	77	89
		% pass rate	80	68	80
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	52	70	48
		% retention	87	80	83
		% pass rate	82	80	83
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	66	64	85
		% retention	82	72	89
		% pass rate	87	78	86
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	17	20	20
		% retention	94	100	90
		% pass rate	88	65	83
Access to HE part time	3	No. of starts	21	19	16
		% retention	24	68	69
		% pass rate	100	100	73

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

***Quality of education and training***

113. Most humanities teaching is satisfactory or better. Many lessons are enlivened by active participation from students in questioning, discussions, and group work. In one particularly effective history lesson, two groups of students adopted opposing points of view about Hitler's plans and intentions. As evidence was gradually introduced, they had to use it to support their side of the argument, and in wider debate. AS-level psychology students studied 'flashbulb' memories by discussing recollections of the death of Princess Diana and the events in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. In several lessons, good use is made of case studies and ILT. Students on the critical thinking course were enabled to analyse James Stuart Mill's views on punishment, guided by a well-structured worksheet.

114. In many lessons, however, students are given tasks which make few demands upon them. These activities include copying, listening for long periods, and using general knowledge rather than new subject-specific material. Sometimes students spend too long completing simple tasks. Students learn little and sometimes become restless. In several lessons, teachers' lesson plans fail to take sufficient account of the wide range of students' abilities or their specialist needs. Teaching does not modify or extend activities to meet the needs of students working at different speeds.

115. Humanities staff are well qualified and experienced. Accommodation and learning resources are good, although IT equipment is less readily available at Oxford. Humanities subjects have their own base rooms. Rooms are given a clear subject identity, with posters, student summaries and mind maps on display. Libraries are good. The book stock is appropriate for all subjects and particularly good in sociology, psychology and politics. There is a suitable stock of periodicals and computer resources, and adequate space for study.

116. Monitoring and assessment are good. Assignments are regularly set and carefully marked, with cover sheets to summarise comments and to provide suggestions for improvement. Most marking has detailed annotation, gives advice on subject skills and corrects errors in grammar and spelling.

Marked work is usually returned promptly. Assessment of GCSE coursework in 2004 lacked rigour and did not meet some of the examining boards' guidelines. Information is collected about students' progress in relation to their previous level of attainment. However, it is not used for setting targets to motivate students.

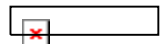
117. There are close links with local schools. Sociology, taught by college teachers, is offered to students in local schools. Collaboration between humanities teachers on both sites is beginning to occur. History teachers are planning a joint students' meeting with a survivor of the holocaust.

118. Full-time students are well supported in their studies by an effective tutorial system, with good opportunities for regular formal and informal interviews. A recent initiative to monitor students' attendance and retention rates has added to the effectiveness of the student support system. Access students receive helpful advice on study skills within their tutorial programme.

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

119. Management is good, and characterised by new initiatives to improve students' success. Managers give clear direction, setting realistic targets and formulating new plans to improve teaching and learning. However, arrangements for quality assurance are not sufficiently rigorous. Action plans do not address weaknesses in the assessment of GCSE coursework. Grades awarded by the college for lessons are overgenerous. They have encouraged staff to overlook weaknesses in teaching and learning in their course reviews.

## **English, languages and communication**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on most courses in 2004
  
- much good teaching and learning
  
- good, formative feedback on written work in English
  
- wide range of language courses on both campuses
  
- accessible and effective personal support for students
  
- vigorous and effective curriculum management.



### ***Weaknesses***

- poor allocation of time and insufficient checking of learning in a few English lessons
  
- limited and dated facilities for ILT
  
- some overcrowded accommodation at Banbury
  
  
- vague targets for improvement on individual learning plans.

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

120. The college offers courses in English, modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language. In modern foreign languages, OCN courses are offered at levels 1 to 3 in French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish. There is a wide range of English as a foreign language courses, from elementary to advanced level, timetabled to suit students' needs. In English, the provision covers GCSE, and AS-level and GCE A-level courses in English language, English literature, and English language and literature. There are almost 700 students. Over 90% of these are part-time adult students. There are 51 full-time students aged 16 to 18. In total, 169 students are studying GCSE English.

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

121. Pass rates are high. In 2004, the proportion of students achieving high grades on English courses at AS level and GCE A level was above the national average for FE colleges. Students on these courses also did better than their GCSE results would predict. Individual students achieved notable successes. One student with serious difficulties, including dyslexia, achieved a grade C in GCSE English. Another student took French AS level and GCE A2 in the same year, achieving an A grade in both qualifications. Retention rates are mixed. They vary even between similar AS-level courses in English. For example, in English literature, retention rates are above average whilst in English language and literature they are below average. In 2004, retention rates were low in part-time courses in French, Italian and Spanish.

122. Many students develop confidence to participate constructively in class discussion. Literature students showed great sensitivity as they explored the meaning of Blake's poetry. Adult students in a GCSE English lesson were interested in discussing how best to write a letter of complaint or protest. English language students show good abilities in analysing linguistic effects. In one lesson, they enjoyed identifying and explaining the humorous ambiguities in headlines. Students of Mandarin and Spanish have learned to cope well with a fast pace in their target languages. They are able to understand and respond appropriately to questions, and they find the experience stimulating and enjoyable. Formal essay work in English is generally of a sound standard and appropriate content. However, there are sometimes weaknesses in expression or development of ideas.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in English, languages and communication, 2002 to 2004***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ Italian	1	No. of starts	23	15	25
		% retention	52	67	40
		% pass rate	100	100	90
Trinity English as a foreign language speaking and listening	2	No. of starts	42	47	85
		% retention	100	100	98
		% pass rate	86	77	90
NVQ French	2	No. of starts	29	19	16
		% retention	72	84	63
		% pass rate	81	69	100
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	274	219	201
		% retention	73	64	68
		% pass rate	43	55	65
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	52	56	73
		% retention	87	71	88
		% pass rate	93	98	91
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	51	61	37
		% retention	86	79	73
		% pass rate	91	96	85
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	41	40	56
		% retention	78	75	82
		% pass rate	88	93	93

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

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

123. There is much good teaching and learning. Lessons in modern foreign languages are highly effective because they stimulate students to keep up with fast-paced Spanish or even Mandarin. In successful lessons, students are encouraged to learn from each other as well as the teacher. In these lessons, students share enthusiasms as well as ideas. Teaching and learning in English literature lessons are energised by the teachers' obvious love of the texts. Teachers make interesting selections of texts for study. In one lesson, students began to compare the famous anti-war play *Journey's End* with Pat Barker's recent novel, *Regeneration*. Teachers frequently use humour to good effect. Students value the friendly rapport with staff. Discussion works well when teachers direct questions at students by name, probe for answers and check understanding. Not all lessons are as effective. In several English lessons, staff did not draw all students into discussion, leaving some silent and students' learning was not monitored. Time is poorly allocated in a few English lessons. This often leads to one activity going on too long.

124. Teachers are well qualified, all with teaching qualifications and many with higher degrees. Most classrooms on the Oxford campus are big enough, but one of the English rooms at Banbury is too small for the groups using it. Little use is made of any educational technology. The language laboratories are outdated.

125. Assessment is appropriate and thorough. Students' work is marked rigorously and constructively. Important pieces of written work are accompanied by feedback sheets containing

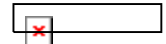
useful comments on how to improve in future. At three-weekly intervals, students' progress is reviewed. The action plans arising from these reviews are not specific enough.

126. Students are well supported, especially informally. Students consider their teachers approachable. Overseas students, in particular, value the support on personal issues offered by their teachers. For full-time students, there is a wide range of opportunities for enrichment, ranging from theatre trips to the opportunity to learn Mandarin or Japanese in evening sessions.

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

127. Leadership and management are good. Managers are energetic and committed. In response to students' poor attendance and underachievement, they introduced a three-weekly review of students' progress. As a result, average attendance across the curriculum area rose from 74% last year to 81% this year. Course teams meet regularly to monitor students' progress and plan developments. Grades for internal lesson observation are overgenerous, but feedback is appropriate and constructive. Course reviews are detailed and realistic. Teams accept responsibility for continuous improvement. Little progress has been made in establishing effective links and sharing best practice between teachers on the two campuses. The range of provision in the curriculum area and attention to individual students' needs demonstrate commitment to equality of opportunity.

### **Foundation programmes**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- much good teaching
  
- high levels of attainment
  
- very good support for students
  
- well-managed provision.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- ineffective target setting in individual learning plans
  
- insufficient access to ILT.

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

128. The college makes provision for 441 students on foundation programmes. There are 283 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and 158 students whose school education has been disrupted due to emotional, behavioural and/or social difficulties. Foundation studies are provided on three sites, two in Oxford and one in Banbury. A further 32 students study foundation programmes in community venues. There are 68 students on the E2E programme.

129. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses for school leavers and adults. Courses start at pre-entry level and are designed to allow progression through entry level to level 1 as students' skills and independence develop. Courses include units that can lead to external qualifications in skills for working life, literacy and numeracy. Students undertake vocational tasters or qualifications with work experience placements tailored to individual needs and interests.

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

130. Achievement on most courses is high. Students succeed well on adult literacy courses and on accredited courses which develop skills for independent living. Positive outcomes have been recorded for students on the E2E course. Retention rates on most courses are satisfactory.

131. Adult students and younger learners show good levels of attainment. Students are able to listen to directions and follow simple instructions. They support each other when appropriate and describe the activities they have undertaken. Many students on the New Directions courses are articulate. They are able to reflect on personal and social issues with great maturity. Students on the Stepping Stones programme make good progress in lessons. Attendance rates vary between courses, from 90% to 70%. Attendance is lowest on the course for disengaged young people for whom there is no appropriate school provision.

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

132. A high proportion of teaching is good or very good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. Their plans show how the needs of individual students will be met. Teachers modify or extend activities, supply additional resources and effectively direct learning support assistants in assisting individual students. Lessons proceed at a good pace with new activities introduced at appropriate intervals. Students are enthusiastic and enjoy what they are learning. They are able to concentrate on suitably demanding tasks for relatively long periods of time. If a student is not making progress, the activity is skilfully modified or changed. In most lessons, teachers include time for students to review what they have learned, checking it against the intended outcomes. In several lessons, students are able to comment appropriately on their own performance and that of others in the group.

133. Most teachers are well qualified and skilled in working with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learning support assistants are clear about their role. They have access to relevant staff training and play a significant role in supporting teaching and learning. Appraisals are closely linked to teachers' professional development. Staff are well supported in attending relevant training. Accommodation and resources for students with autism are particularly well adapted for their needs. Occasionally, accommodation is unsuitable. One lesson for students with severe learning disabilities was held in a small hall where the levels of noise made it difficult for students to learn. Facilities for ICT are inadequate on two of the three campuses. Many rooms do not have a computer. This reduces the opportunities for students' learning. In one lesson, the impact of a lesson was reduced when an overhead projector was used as a substitute for a computer generated presentation.

134. Initial assessment is thorough. It provides a reliable profile of each student's needs, and ensures students are placed on appropriate courses at the right level. The monitoring of students' progress against targets is ineffective. This makes it difficult for staff to measure the progress students are making on their courses. Reviews of progress take place three times a year. For many

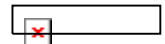
students, this is insufficient.

135. Well-established partnerships with schools and other agencies enable students to make a successful transition to the college. Induction courses are well planned to give students a positive experience of college life. There are good opportunities for students to take part in residential trips and locally organised social and sporting events. Staff establish good working relationships with students. They give them timely and effective pastoral support. Staff meet frequently and regularly to discuss students' work and achievements. Students' success is celebrated. The college recently held a very successful prize-giving event for adult students.

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

136. Leadership and management are very good. Senior managers share with department staff the vision of making foundation studies the centre of college life. Courses are well managed to enable students to achieve good outcomes and gain a successful experience of college. Arrangements for quality assurance have recently been strengthened. Inspectors confirmed the accuracy of much of the self-assessment report. Staff take action after having listened carefully to the views of students.

### **Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages**



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

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

#### ***Strengths***

- high standard of ESOL students' work
  
- high levels of achievement on externally examined literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses
  
- good teaching in ESOL.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor key skills pass rates
  
- underdeveloped links between initial assessment and individual learning plans
  
- poor accommodation

- underdeveloped implementation of the Skills for Life policy.

### **Scope of provision**

137. The college offers courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL at three college campuses, venues in the community and on employers' premises. There are 92 students on literacy and numeracy courses and 460 students are studying ESOL. To develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy of students on other college programmes, the college provides individual help through learning links centres and additional support in lessons. There are almost 800 full-time and 640 part-time students receiving support for literacy, numeracy or dyslexia.

### **Achievement and standards**

138. Pass and retention rates on literacy and numeracy qualifications have risen and are now well above national averages. Pass rates are high on ESOL courses where recent emphasis on the development of students' written work has led to a significant increase in the number of students achieving their qualifications. In contrast, pass rates at level 1 on the key skills qualifications of application of number and communications are low and declining. In 2004, fewer than one in five students passed either qualification.

139. The standard of work of ESOL students is high. They make good progress in reading, writing and speaking English. Their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar is above average. ESOL students are able to assess and record their progress. On the Skills for Life programme, students' attendance is unsatisfactory. Lateness is not consistently challenged.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, 2002 to 2004**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
ESOL	Entry	No. of starts	58	158	235
		% retention	95	100	100
		% pass rate	40	64	73
Key skills application of number	1	No. of starts	339	29	252
		% retention	79	97	95
		% pass rate	19	46	15
Key skills communications	1	No. of starts	234	206	174
		% retention	78	85	87
		% pass rate	22	24	19
Certificate in adult numeracy	1	No. of starts	*	134	85
		% retention	*	76	95
		% pass rate	*	72	73
Certificate in adult literacy	1	No. of starts	*	108	110
		% retention	*	78	94
		% pass rate	*	69	96
ESOL	1	No. of starts	15	66	147

		% retention	100	98	100
		% pass rate	53	71	90
<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
ESOL	2	No. of starts	*	19	70
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	26	86

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

\*course did not run

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

140. There is good teaching of ESOL. Students' interest is maintained by a varied range of activities. Students contribute well to discussion which sometimes enlarges their appreciation of different cultures. Working in pairs, they correct each other's pronunciation and share explanations of points of language. These activities improve students' ability to understand and speak English. Teachers help students understand how the language works by demonstrating its use and giving students appropriate practice. Teachers of ESOL take account of the different needs and abilities of students. In key skills lessons, teachers often fail to do so. In numeracy lessons, teachers explain matters clearly and direct their questions at individual students to check their understanding. Systematic planning by teachers assists students with dyslexia to learn how to improve their study skills. In less well-taught lessons, one activity is not clearly linked to another. Students have too little time to think about what they are learning or to practise their skills.

141. Resources are unsatisfactory. The college has found it difficult to recruit suitably qualified staff to support the integration of literacy, numeracy and ESOL with vocational courses. Accommodation at the campuses in Oxford and Blackbird Leys is unsuitable. Classrooms are too small for ESOL students to take part in group activities. Several key skills and pre-GCSE lessons take place in inappropriate accommodation. However, the accommodation for study support across the college is of a good standard. Students with dyslexia are able to use specialist software, although this is not available on all college campuses. Teachers seldom make effective use of IT, even when computers are available in the classroom. Where computers are not readily to hand, activities requiring the use of IT are stalled until students can visit computer suites. Most worksheets are not well adapted to the individual needs of students.

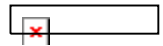
142. Initial assessment is satisfactory. It is carried out promptly at the start of the year and systems are in place to provide students with the level of support they need. However, in some cases, information from initial assessment is slow to reach learning support teachers. It is often not specific enough to address students' needs and it is often not used effectively in students' individual learning plans. Initial assessment of ESOL students is effective. Dyslexia is carefully diagnosed and in most cases appropriate support is provided. The monitoring of students' progress on their courses is not sufficiently effective. Reviews of progress are not frequent enough. Records are poor. They do not show how far students have developed their skills, nor the precise actions they must take to improve their performance. The targets set for students mean little to them. On ESOL courses, students receive constructive feedback on their written work.

143. Provision for ESOL students has recently been extended. It has enabled ESOL students to develop their skills in basic numeracy. A small part of the ESOL provision is available using IT. There are few courses in adult basic skills in the community, despite evidence of local need. However, the college has developed basic skills courses with employers to improve their employees' skills. The key skills of communication and application of number are not well integrated with vocational courses. As a result, students show little interest in developing them.

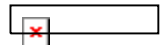
### **Leadership and management**

144. Leadership and management are satisfactory. English as a foreign language teachers have been supported to gain an understanding of the ESOL curriculum and teaching strategies. There are examples of good practice in curriculum planning, teaching and quality assurance. However, this is not shared between different teams. Managers and team leaders are more involved in the collection and analysis of data and in setting targets. Recent initiatives by new managers are beginning to address weaknesses in the provision of key skills. However, the implementation of the Skills for Life policy across the college is ineffective because there are insufficient links between teachers on key skills, learning support, ESOL and discrete literacy and numeracy programmes.

#### Part D: College data



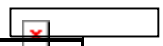
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	24	33
2	36	20
3	31	21
4/5	1	6
Other	8	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2003

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2002/03**



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	1,420	1,099	8
Land-based provision	3	124	0
Construction	441	975	4
Engineering, technology and manufacture	648	831	5
Business administration, management and professional	469	1,882	7
Information and communications technology	1,450	2,307	12
Retailing, customer service and transportation	20	57	0



Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	862	616	5
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	331	461	2
Health, social care and public services	541	1,349	6
Visual and performing arts and media	1,704	2,973	15
Humanities	1,750	1,945	12
English, languages and communication	1,924	1,404	10
Foundation programmes	1,818	2,058	12
Other/unknown	192	476	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,573</b>	<b>18,557</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the college in 2003

**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	466	466	1,216	1,245	1,066	1,352
	Retention rate %	73	71	82	67	64	76
	National average %	75	76	76	70	71	71
	Pass rate %	76	81	58	69	76	76
	National average %	67	69	73	68	70	77
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,833	1,544	1,888	1,652	1,601	1,767
	Retention rate %	72	67	74	70	61	63
	National average %	70	71	71	68	68	67
	Pass rate %	72	65	64	71	76	73
	National average %	68	70	73	67	71	73
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	2,744	2,323	2,237	2,052	2,052	2,033
	Retention rate %	69	78	77	64	66	64
	National average %	70	77	77	68	70	69
	Pass rate %	79	81	77	78	78	78
	National average %	75	77	80	74	71	74
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding	16	13	5	296	333	289

	transfers						
	Retention rate %	88	77	60	66	51	52
	National average %	73	71	74	67	68	69
	Pass rate %	57	60	67	65	71	71
	National average %	54	57	68	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*.

**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)	59	33	8	118
Level 2 (intermediate)	63	26	12	43
Level 1 (foundation)	63	31	6	16
Other sessions	69	28	3	36
<b>Totals</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>213</b>

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