



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## East Durham and Houghall Community College

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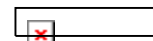
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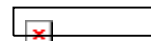
#### **Basic information about the college**



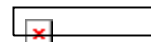
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Name of college:	East Durham and Houghall Community College
Type of college:	General FE/Tertiary
Principal:	Ian Prescott
Address of college:	Burnhope Way Centre Burnhope Way Peterlee County Durham SR8 1NU
Telephone number:	0191 518 2000
Fax number:	0191 586 7125
Chair of governors:	Ian Williams
Unique reference number:	131859
Name of reporting inspector:	Linda Harwood HMI
Dates of inspection:	29 November-3 December 2004

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



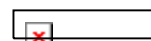
## Information about the college



East Durham and Houghall Community College is a medium-sized tertiary college with 3 main centres, Burnhope Way and Howletch in Peterlee and the Houghall site (formerly Durham College of Agriculture and Horticulture) in the city of Durham. Courses are also provided at a number of community venues in East Durham and there is significant delivery within the workplace. There is provision in 13 of the 14 areas of learning, funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college enrolled 3,582 full-time students and 14,104 part-time students in 2003/04. Around 30% of the full-time students and 7% of the part-time students were aged 16 to 18. Approximately 70% of enrolments of 16 to 18 year olds and more than 85% of those of adults were to courses at levels 1 and 2. The college has 146 work-based learners, of whom 38 are advanced apprentices, 96 are apprentices and 12 are on national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses. They are training in land-based industries, engineering and manufacturing technology, business administration and management, retailing and customer service, health and care, sports and recreation, and visual and performing arts.

The provision in Peterlee primarily serves the population in the eastern part of the county. Within that area there are five 11 to 16 schools, a 5 to 18 special school and an 11 to 18 denominational Roman Catholic secondary school. The land-based provision in Durham serves the region as a whole. The college's extensive workforce development activities are regionally focused, with specialisation in the care sector and in food manufacture and processing. East Durham is one of the most deprived areas in England and suffered severely from the demise of the coal mining industry. Academic achievement at Key Stage 4 in County Durham is low. The college's mission is 'To contribute to the social and economic regeneration of the region, by addressing the educational, training and environmental needs of individuals, employers and community groups.'

## How effective is the college?



The quality of provision is good for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and in hairdressing and beauty therapy, health and social care and childcare, and sport and leisure. It is satisfactory in all other areas. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

### **Key strengths**

- improved retention and pass rates
  
- small proportion of less than satisfactory teaching
  
- good links with local employers

- responsiveness to local community through workforce development
- good specialist resources in horticulture and sports
- successful 14 to 16 programme
- good support for students
- governors' careful monitoring of the performance of the college.

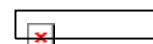
***What should be improved***

- the proportion of good or better teaching, particularly for 16 to 18 year olds
- use of information and learning technology (ILT) in teaching and learning
- range of provision and low levels of recruitment in some curriculum areas
- responsiveness to literacy and numeracy needs in the community
- relationship with local secondary schools to facilitate development planning at a strategic level
- resources and accommodation in hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality and catering and animal care/equine studies
- rigour of course review and self-assessment in several curriculum areas

- o the management of the Skills for Life strategy and literacy and numeracy support across the college.

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
Land-based provision	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are high pass rates on national certificate courses in equine and animal care. Resources in horticulture and arboriculture are good, but there is some poor accommodation in animal care and equine. Assessment practice on NVQ courses is good. Achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is low, but improving.
Construction	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There are high pass rates on most courses. Classroom teaching is generally satisfactory and sometimes good, especially in the workshops where most students develop good vocational skills. Students are well motivated. The range of provision is poor. Provision for 14 to 16 year old pupils is good.
Business and information and communications technology	<b>Satisfactory.</b> There is a wide range of courses in information and communications technology (ICT) with clear progression routes. ICT applications are taught well, though much teaching of theory on business and ICT courses is uninspiring. There are high success rates on the certificate in supervisory management. Retention rates on advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) and ICT flexible workshop courses are low. Apprenticeship programmes in administration are very effective.
Hospitality, sports and leisure	<b>Good.</b> Hospitality and catering contributory grade is <b>satisfactory</b> . There are high pass rates on many courses. Teaching and learning are good in sports and leisure and satisfactory in hospitality and catering. There are very good sports facilities and effective community links. Resources are poor in hospitality and catering and there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop higher level skills.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	<b>Good.</b> There are high retention and pass rates on most full-time courses. There is much good teaching. Students are punctual and attendance is good. Good enrichment opportunities are provided for students. Accommodation and resources are poor and do not reflect current industry standards. Curriculum leadership is good.
Health and social care and	<b>Good.</b> Pass rates are high on many courses. There is good and

childcare	innovative teaching on level 3 courses. High-quality work placements enable students to develop good practical skills. There is a good range of provision, responsive to community needs. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but self-assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses is insufficiently rigorous.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates are satisfactory overall. Assignments engage the interest of students. The assessment of students' work is effective and informs their learning. Vocational rigour is insufficiently pursued and small group sizes limit the scope of teaching and learning.
Humanities and English	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching and learning in humanities, English and access to higher education (HE) courses are satisfactory overall. Students' achievements in access to HE modules are good and progression rates are high. Retention rates on advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses are high, but there is declining recruitment on to humanities and English courses. There are no clear strategies to recruit and motivate students and the use of ICT for staff and students is underdeveloped.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	<b>Good.</b> There is much good teaching, especially in practical lessons. Students develop good social skills. There is a wide range of provision and effective links and partnerships with community agencies and local schools. Leadership and management are effective and there is good teamwork. Students have insufficient access to pre-vocational training in other programme areas.
Literacy and numeracy	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy lessons are good. The management of this discrete provision is good, but management of whole-college literacy and numeracy support is underdeveloped. The high standards set by the Skills for Life department are not demonstrated across the college. There is no mechanism to measure the impact of support on students' achievements.

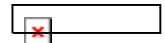
### How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear focus on teaching and learning and the college has introduced a range of strategies to raise standards. However, it is too soon to assess their impact on all of the college's provision. There has been significant improvement to retention and pass rates of students since the last inspection and these are now mostly at, or above, the national averages. The new management structure is clear and roles and responsibilities are understood by staff. However, the new role of team leader has yet to be fully developed. Management at course team level is satisfactory overall. There is insufficient rigour in course review and self-assessment in several curriculum areas. Governors now monitor students' achievements, course performance and the financial position of the college rigorously. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

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

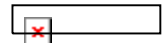
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. There is a commitment to meeting the social and economic needs of its community. Provision is made for many students who are experiencing the hardship associated with social deprivation or who are disaffected with education. Significant financial support is provided to help students stay on their course. Retention rates are high and rising. The college's commitment to equality and diversity is clear and strategies to embed equal opportunities are in place. The college offers courses in a range of community locations to provide for students who are not usually well represented in further education (FE). Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

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



Support for students is good. The tutorial system provides good support through a team of dedicated personal tutors and development mentors back this up with additional one-to-one support. A good range of support services is provided through student services at the main site and there are very good arrangements for assisting students with financial support. Students at other sites can access these services through the friendly and helpful reception staff. All full-time students have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy support needs. There is no systematic assessment for part-time students. Additional learning support is provided, but there is no evaluation of the quality or impact of this on students' achievements. Teachers provide much informal help and support which is valued highly by students. Appropriate advice and guidance are available for applying to HE and employment.

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



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

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

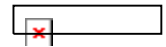
- interesting lessons
  
- helpful, supportive teachers
  
- good support for personal issues
  
- good enrichment activities

- o friendly atmosphere.

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

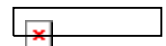
- o insufficient restaurant facilities and expensive food
- o insufficient access to computers
- o too few social areas
- o lack of lockers and storage facilities.

**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 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 & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	56	40	4



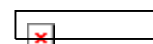


19+ and WBL*	72	26	2
Learning 16-18	54	43	3
19+ and WBL*	72	26	2

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

*\*work-based learning*

## **Achievement and standards**



1. Achievements and standards have improved overall since the last inspection. Students are more likely to complete their courses and to achieve their qualifications. Average attendance in lessons during inspection was 80% which is slightly above the sector average. During the period 2001 to 2004, enrolments have declined for 16 to 18 year olds and the number of students on some courses is low.

2. Standards of work overall are satisfactory or better. Students on many vocational courses develop good skills to prepare them appropriately for work in the industry, for example, in construction, health and social care and childcare, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Students on access courses make good progress and achieve higher success rates than expected from their prior attainment levels. Adult students on Skills for Life programmes and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make particularly good progress in developing personal and social skills.

3. There have been improvements in achievements in key skills, from a low base. In 2003, the success rate of enrolled students who achieved the qualification for the key skills of application of number, communications and ICT, was 10% for students aged 16 to 18 and 17% for adults. These success rates are below the national average for the sector as a whole. The retention rates in 2003, at 84% and 86% for students aged 16 to 18 and adults, respectively, were high. In 2004, there is a trend of rising success rates for both students aged 16 to 18 and adults which are above the national averages. The best results are at level 2 with both retention and success rates being well above the national averages.

4. The completion of apprenticeship frameworks is low. Of the 151 apprentices who have started an apprenticeship at the college since 2001, 62% are still in learning and of those who have left, 30% achieved the full framework and 53% did not gain any qualifications. Of the 50 apprentices who have started an advanced apprenticeship since 2001, 74% are still in learning and of those who have left, 23% achieved the full framework and 38% did not gain any qualifications. However, at the time of inspection, there is evidence that students are making better progress and the standards in work-based learning provision are often high.

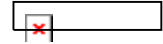
### **16 to 18 year olds**

5. Achievements for students aged 16 to 18 are generally satisfactory or better and have improved since the last inspection in November 2002. At levels 1 and 3, retention rates rose between 2001 and 2003 and have risen further in 2004. Retention rates on level 2 courses declined in 2003 to below the national average, but recovered in 2004. In 2004, retention rates at all levels are above the national average figure. Pass rates at all levels in 2004 are above the national average.

### **Adult learners**

6. Achievements of adult students have also improved since the last inspection. Retention and pass rates at all levels are above the national average for similar colleges in 2004, with the exception of pass rates at level 1. There are some high success rates for students who engage in distance learning, for example, in health and social care and supervisory management.

### Quality of education and training



7. The quality of teaching, learning and attainment was graded in 157 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 62% of lessons, satisfactory in 34% and less than satisfactory in 3%. This is close to the national average, but the college has less unsatisfactory teaching than the sector average. The grades awarded for learning are similar to those for teaching, though those for attainment are lower. Teaching grades have improved since the last inspection in November 2002. Generally, teaching and learning are better for adults than for students aged 16 to 18. Teaching and learning on work-based learning programmes are good. Some of the best teaching and learning is on entry level courses, especially foundation programmes, where the grades are much higher than the average for the college. At level 2, teaching grades are the lowest in the college. At this level, there is much teaching that is satisfactory.

8. There is significant variation in the quality of teaching between different areas of learning. The best teaching is to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and on health and social care and childcare, sport and leisure and hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. The more effective lessons are well planned and organised. In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and industrial experience which they share with students. Effective use of questioning allows teachers to check learning thoroughly. Teachers have high expectations of their students. In health, social care and childcare, teachers use praise effectively to motivate students. Good practical demonstrations develop clear understanding of complex situations. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, teachers provide good explanations, and in practical lessons, they respond effectively to the needs of individual students.

9. Unsatisfactory teaching was found in only 3 of the 10 curriculum areas inspected: literacy and numeracy; land-based provision; and visual and performing arts, and there were only 5 unsatisfactory lessons in total. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the other seven curriculum areas. However, in some of these, much of the teaching is only satisfactory and fails to inspire or motivate students. There is insufficient use of ILT to support learning in several curriculum areas. Where teaching is less effective, planning is weaker, teachers talk too much and there is insufficient attention paid to achieving good learning outcomes for all students. Small class sizes on several courses restrict the range of practical activities and limit the opportunities for learning from other students in the group.

10. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and there is some good specialist equipment and resources. Internal accommodation on all the sites is well maintained and most provide a good learning environment. Specialist equipment is adequate in most areas to meet the needs of the curriculum. There are good sports facilities, including two sports halls, an outdoor all-weather pitch and an Olympic-size boxing ring. However, in some areas the accommodation is not satisfactory. Accommodation and resources in hairdressing and beauty and hospitality are particularly poor and they have a detrimental effect on the students' experience. Refectories at the three main sites are good. Computers are well maintained and available on all sites.

11. Reasonable adjustments have been made to comply with the legislation under the disability discrimination act, but some accommodation is still not accessible. The college has made an application for funds to help support a new build, which is designed to address all the shortcomings and restrictions that the current accommodation presents. The plans are linked to the overall strategy and mission of the college. Currently, there is under-utilisation of space in many areas. The estates team have made considerable financial efficiencies by making alterations to accommodate

changes to meet curriculum needs.

12. There are sufficient qualified and experienced staff in most curriculum areas to meet the needs of the programmes, and the range of students. Advanced practitioners work with new staff to develop the quality of their teaching skills. Staff have good access to professional development and industrial updating. The college has been highly successful in forging links with local industry and businesses through the workforce development unit. Careful recruitment of staff for this area has helped to ensure that, in addition to having the necessary qualifications and background, staff also have the skills to engage employers.

13. The college has developed comprehensive internal verification, standardisation and moderation procedures which are supplemented with more detailed course-specific procedures in different curriculum areas. These operate effectively in most areas. In a minority of cases, internal verifiers provide too little feedback to assessors. The requirements of awarding bodies are met. Issues identified in external verifiers' and moderators' reports are acted upon through a systematic process which is monitored effectively by managers. Staff development days allow time for teachers to undertake standardisation and moderation of coursework. An audit process is used to ensure compliance with college-wide procedures and this is targeted at areas of concern.

14. Initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy skills is routinely carried out for all full-time students, but not for part-time students. In most areas, too little use is made of this information in planning teaching and learning and determining whether students are on the right course. Initial assessment of students with specific learning difficulties is particularly thorough and includes assessment of social skills and behaviour. This information is used well in placing students on courses and in groups, as well as developing individual learning plans.

15. Assessment is generally well planned. On vocational courses such as construction and hairdressing, students are involved in decisions about the timing of assessments of practical vocational skills. Assessment schedules are designed to ensure that students' assignment workload is evenly spread. In many curriculum areas, there are effective tracking systems in place to monitor students' progress, although these do not always make use of the formal course monitoring record designed to support the process. Assignments are well designed and fit for purpose. Teachers mostly monitor assignment work carefully. Occasionally, students are less well monitored and fall behind. In most areas good feedback, both written and verbal, is given to students, which helps them improve their written and practical work.

16. There are examples of the developing use of a wide range of assessment methods. In hairdressing, students' self-assessments are used to plan teaching and learning in future lessons. Workforce development assessors make good use of recordings of students' answers to questions, as well as digital images of their work. Art and design students identify their own strengths and weaknesses before teachers assess their work. Peer observations are used in assessing singing in music.

17. The college has developed its own individual target setting system for advanced level courses such as GCE A level and AVCE. In some areas, this is used effectively to motivate students to attain the best possible grades and to monitor progress, but in others it is not applied consistently.

18. Overall, the college provides a good range of courses for the East Durham community. It has successfully attracted additional funds to enable it to work with smaller groups and involve those in the community who might not otherwise be attracted into FE. Good collaboration with other providers and organisations within the community provides flexible provision to meet their needs. There is good collaboration with local training providers and employers, and highly effective targeting of specific sectors by the workforce development team. For example, the college has worked very successfully with the care sector in the East Durham area and has provided on-site English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision for one local employer. Students at the college are involved in a range of enrichment activities which include sporting, social and cultural events. These broaden students' knowledge and increase their employability.

19. Since the last inspection, greater emphasis has been placed on making sure that students are on the right programme. Low class numbers have also been a significant factor in curriculum planning and this has resulted in significant reductions in some areas. For example, the number of AS-level and GCE A-level subjects available has reduced from 37 to 15. As a result, students from the area have to travel elsewhere for GCE A-level courses, for example, in mathematics and science. Overall there is a wide range of provision, but there is insufficient opportunity for progression in some areas. For example, neither hairdressing nor construction provide the opportunity for students to progress into employment through the work-based learning route and in construction there is no level 3 provision. There is insufficient provision in numeracy and literacy.

20. A successful programme of vocational courses for 14 to 16 year olds has attracted 440 school pupils in the current academic year. Good progression is offered into other college courses and to employment. Although the college works effectively with local schools at an operational level, there are severe difficulties at a strategic level, and these relationships have not improved since the last inspection. There has been a decrease in the number of year 11 leavers progressing to full-time courses at the college from some local schools. This is contributing to the low enrolments in some areas which challenge the viability of some provision.

21. Support for students is good. Potential students receive information about the college and its courses in a variety of ways: through the prospectus and other literature; in schools; and through events such as open evenings and taster days. Interviews for substantial courses are normally arranged through student services with the relevant subject or vocational teachers.

22. The tutorial system for full-time students provides good support through a team of specialist personal tutors who deliver group tutorials on a range of appropriate topics and who also carry out individual reviews at least 3 times each year. Individual learning plans are used as the basis for individual reviews and their use is developing, although some agreed actions are too general and lack precise deadlines. Subject teachers contribute to individual learning plans, but targets set in relation to additional learning support are treated separately. Development mentors provide back up to the tutorial system with additional one-to-one support, for example, where students require considerable support with organisational skills or need help to catch up with a backlog of work.

23. A good range of support services is provided through student services at the main Peterlee site and there are very good arrangements for financial support. Helpful staff assist students with enquiries, such as those about finance, including educational maintenance allowances and adult learning grants, transport and careers. Students at other sites can access these services through the friendly and helpful reception staff who make phone calls and appointments, but accommodation and facilities for student services on these sites are limited. Information about student services is provided through the student diary, personal tutors and at induction. There is little written information to supplement this throughout the year. For example, there are no leaflets about counselling and other services. Student services provide appropriate support for students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as hearing impairment and dyslexia. Free childcare for pre-school children is normally available to those who need it at one of the two college nurseries.

24. All full-time students have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy support needs. The results of these assessments are used to determine key skills levels where appropriate, and they are passed to course leaders and personal tutors. Too little use is made of them in planning the teaching and learning of subjects and vocational skills. There is no systematic assessment for part-time students. Additional learning support is provided in a variety of ways, including in lessons and workshops. There is insufficient evaluation of the quality or impact of this. There are no formal arrangements for ensuring that learning support staff and subject teachers plan learning together, although there is an assumption that subject teachers will pass on schemes of work. This does not always happen and some learning support workers have little knowledge about the level or course being studied by the students they are supporting.

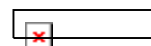
25. Appropriate advice and guidance are available for applying to HE and employment. A careers library and a range of careers software are available at the main site. There is insufficient specialist careers information at the Houghall site where land-based courses are delivered. Across the college, personal tutors and teachers are regarded as the main source of careers information, advice and

guidance, particularly for younger students.

26. Teachers provide much informal help and support which are valued highly by students. Arrangements for following up absence are good in some areas, but in others they rely too heavily on teachers completing a form to report unauthorised absences. There are plans to address this and improve the early follow up of absence more systematically. Parents are informed about progress through individual learning plans, parents' evenings and informal contact. The college has appropriate policies in place covering child protection and bullying. Welfare staff support residential students on the Houghall site.

27. The various aspects of student support are managed by different senior managers and the overall management of student support relies heavily on the work of a sub-committee of the academic board. There is insufficient co-ordination of the provision of literacy and numeracy support with other aspects of student support.

## Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, there has been good progress in improving many aspects of leadership and management. Two new senior managers have been appointed to help address the inspection weaknesses. These appointments have been well received by college staff and have contributed to the many improvements. There has been a strong focus on teaching and learning, improving retention and pass rates, quality assurance, curriculum and data management. Two new heads of faculty and 27 new team leaders are now in place to strengthen the management and accountability within the curriculum. The college has introduced a range of strategies to raise standards. These include the appointment of six advanced teacher practitioners, new quality procedures, an assessment policy and audit practices and a clear focus on recruitment with integrity called 'Right Student, Right Course'. Staff at all levels are committed to the college's improvement strategies. However, it is too soon to assess their impact on all of the college's provision.

29. There has been significant improvement to retention and pass rates of students since the last inspection. Senior managers set targets for students' pass and retention rates and their attendance. All heads of faculty and team leaders meet with senior managers annually to agree their targets. They evaluate termly, through the curriculum review process, the extent to which targets are achieved. Arrangements for reviewing performance in the college are well understood. However, whilst these reviews are rigorous, targets set within the plans are not always specific or measurable.

30. The new management structure is clear, and roles and responsibilities are understood by staff. However, the new role of team leader has yet to be fully developed. Team leaders have received some training, but they have not participated in a structured management development programme nor do they observe their teaching staff. The management of both additional learning support and the Skills for Life strategy are underdeveloped. There is not a coherent system for additional learning support and no Skills for Life policy, which has led to some confusion for staff. The principal holds termly staff meetings when key college priorities are discussed. There is a regular newsletter and a staff intranet. There are regular faculty and course team meetings, all of which have standard agenda items, such as teaching and learning and students' performance. The principal and senior managers are perceived by staff to be approachable.

31. The college's development plan sets out the priorities and targets for the next three years. Governors, managers and staff have been involved in establishing the direction of the college. However, the college does not have any operational plans at curriculum level and some strategies are unclear. There is no clear strategy for the off-site provision and for recruiting more students in the community on to numeracy and literacy courses. Some staff are uncertain about the key college priorities. There is insufficient evidence of labour market intelligence being used to inform curriculum

planning. Self-assessment, although thorough and well monitored by senior managers, is too descriptive and lacks sufficient quantitative evidence in some curriculum areas. Although the self-assessment report is subject to a validation process, which is attended by managers from other local colleges, it lacks rigour.

32. Management at course team level is satisfactory overall. It is good in hairdressing and beauty therapy, sport and recreation and in provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The management of work-based learning is now satisfactory and improvements have been made to framework completion, although this is still low. The management of workforce development is good. Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the quality and use of data by managers. Heads of faculty and team leaders have received training in analysing data. They use a good range of information to make judgements on the quality of their courses. The range includes detailed analysis of performance data benchmarked against similar colleges and lesson observation grades. However, some team leaders are still not confident with data and need more substantial training and development.

33. The college has a clear focus on improving teaching and learning, and these are now satisfactory overall. A lesson observation process has been introduced that requires all staff to be observed every two years. All observers have been trained to fulfil their role. Even staff who are graded as satisfactory receive support from an advanced practitioner to enable them to improve. In some areas, the grades awarded for teaching and learning in internal observations were more generous than those awarded by inspectors.

34. There is a clear quality assurance framework. The performance and standards unit oversees the co-ordination of quality processes. Central to the implementation of the quality policy is the curriculum review which is held termly to monitor course performance. This has contributed to the data issues in the college being resolved and to a greater ownership of data by managers. The course review process informs the self-assessment process, but is insufficiently self-critical. The analysis of the views of students by teams is variable. Students are surveyed at key times in the year and at the end of their programme. The college also receives feedback from focus groups of students. Responses by senior managers to issues raised by students are posted around the college.

35. Governors are now better informed about the educational performance of the college. Their commitment is clear and they have played a key role in driving forward improvements. After the last inspection, governors met monthly to monitor progress and established a quality and standards sub-committee. There are clear lines of communication between the chair and the principal who meet weekly. However, the principal has not yet been appraised. The chair also holds an open forum at the college for staff. Governors take opportunities to meet with students and staff at presentation and open evenings. A residential event provides governors with opportunities to review college strategy. The chair and vice chair have attended training on the college's information system to enable a better understanding of the data reports. Governors have also produced a self-assessment report devised from service standards. Monitoring of students' achievements, course performance and the financial position of the college is rigorous. Governors have a good range of expertise which the college uses to good effect.

36. Staff development is given a high priority. Considerable training on teaching and learning has been organised for all teams and part-time teachers are paid to attend events. All teachers are now required to attend 30 hours of teaching and learning staff development which is monitored by their line manager. However, not all staff have participated in training. Most staff have had their annual appraisal although for some teachers this has been delayed. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Newly appointed staff are supported through a good induction programme. Mentors support all new staff and established staff are supported through advanced practitioners.

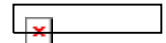
37. The college has a number of effective partnerships that benefit students and the local community. There are a number of successful projects with local schools, private training providers and employers through workforce development. The college has a positive relationship with a local HE establishment that helps students to progress to degree courses. The college is involved with the Aim Higher and Excellence Challenge initiatives. However, the poor relationships at the last

inspection that existed between the local schools, the local education authority and the management at senior level in the college still exist.

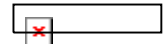
38. The college's commitment to equality and diversity is clear. The advanced practitioner for equality and diversity is working to embed equal opportunities in all aspects of college activity. The lesson observation process now comments on equality and diversity issues. Training has been undertaken by approximately 75% of the staff. There is a range of policies and implementation plans that meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), disability discrimination legislation and the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. Progress with the associated action plans is monitored by the equal opportunities committee. The college analyses students' retention and pass rates by gender, disability and race. The promotion of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 has been slow and measures for addressing issues raised by the legislation have yet to be developed. The college has been slow to recognise the positive aspects of its diverse student population.

39. Financial management of the college is satisfactory. Senior managers monitor the college's financial position carefully. Despite significant changes following the last inspection, the college has met its student number targets and recurrent funding targets in the last two years. During the inspection, the average class size was 10 which is close to the national average and an improvement from the last inspection. Retention and pass rates are satisfactory overall and all of the provision is satisfactory or better. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Land-based provision



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

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on national certificate in animal care and equine
  
- some good resources in horticulture and arboriculture
  
- good assessment practice on NVQ courses
  
- effective tutorial support.

### **Weaknesses**

- poor resources and accommodation in several areas
- unsatisfactory teaching in some areas of animal care and equine
- low achievement by work-based learners.

### **Scope of provision**

40. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time land-based courses including agriculture, animal care, arboriculture, equestrian, horticulture and floristry on a specialist campus in Durham. In most areas, there are opportunities for progression from foundation to level 3. Short courses are available in most areas. There are currently 606 students, of whom 207 are aged 16 to 18. In total, there are 378 female students. There are approximately 210 students on full-time courses and 99 on NVQs; 76 are on work-based learning programmes, mainly in horticulture. There has been intermittent recruitment on some courses which has resulted in their cancellation, thus creating a gap in the provision. Low recruitment has meant that progression to level 3 has not been possible, for example, in the national diploma in agriculture.

### **Achievement and standards**

41. Retention rates are higher than the national average with the exception of those for 16 to 18 year olds on the national diploma course in animal management. Pass rates have risen over the last two years and are higher than the national average with the exception of adults on courses of less than one year. Retention and pass rates have generally risen over the last two years and are high for NVQ livestock markets and the national certificate in horse care. The pass rate for the national certificate in animal care is high. Completion of apprenticeship frameworks is low, but rising in 2004.

42. The standards of most students' practical work are satisfactory and many students in animal care and equine handle animals with confidence. Work is good in floristry. Students observed were able to construct a floral garland and complete this work to commercial standards. Written work is at least satisfactory and some is good in NVQ equine and horticulture garden design. Students' attendance, at 86%, is above the national average.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in land-based provision, 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 national certificate animal care	2	No. of starts	29	25	33
		% retention	86	76	91
		% pass rate	92	100	100
City and Guilds national certificate horse care	2	No. of starts	12	17	13
		% retention	75	76	85
		% pass rate	100	92	91
City and Guilds national	2	No. of starts	**	**	40



certificate horticulture		% retention	**	**	85
		% pass rate	**	**	82
BTEC national certificate forestry and arboriculture	3	No. of starts	23	22	*
		% retention	52	73	*
		% pass rate	83	100	*
City and Guilds national diploma animal management	3	No. of starts	32	32	30
		% retention	66	66	73
		% pass rate	76	95	100

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

\* BTEC national certificates level 3 were changed to City and Guilds national certificate level 2

\*\*course did not run

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

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The more successful lessons are well planned, learning objectives are clearly stated and they incorporate a variety of learning activities. Teachers' enthusiasm motivates students. Effective learning strategies are applied in many lessons. In one lesson, foundation level students used an interactive whiteboard to improve their understanding of plant structures. This also provided opportunities for group participation and for students to improve their writing skills. The weaker lessons fail to engage students, especially in animal care and equine. In one lesson, too much emphasis was placed on verbal questioning of students. They showed discomfort and disengaged themselves from the lesson. Many questions were directed inappropriately and were too difficult to answer for the level of study.

44. There are good resources in horticulture and arboriculture, including an extensive garden, which is open to the public, a plant sales area, and an arboretum, which includes 700 different tree species, some of which are unusual and rare. There are high quality hand tools, demonstration plots, a large practical teaching room, and modern glasshouses.

45. In animal care and equine some classrooms are poor. They are cramped, cold and noisy. An adjacent aviary makes it difficult to hear the teacher in one classroom. The dog-grooming room is small and only accommodates one dog. There is no social area for students, who may have break periods of up to 3 hours between lessons. Moving from the main site to the animal care, equine and farm units is difficult as they are a considerable distance apart. The roadway is muddy, slippery and illuminated poorly; this deters students from making good use of the resources.

46. Good links with industry are promoted through industrial liaison groups. These groups cover most aspects of the curriculum. The faculty has responded to the training requests that come from these groups, including a more practical skills-based national certificate course for horticulture and arboriculture. A further valuable link is the arboricultural enterprise company which is managed by staff. This offers full-time arboriculture students essential work experience within the industry.

47. Initial assessment is satisfactory. It is carried out during the induction week when students at risk of not completing their course and those with additional support needs are identified. In equine, initial assessment takes account not only of basic skills, but also of vocational experience. The tutorial system is effective. Group tutorials are held weekly and individual tutorials are held every 8 weeks. Tutors provide valued additional support when it is required. Students appreciate the approachability of the student support service. A designated support tutor provides useful support for those students at risk of leaving their course.

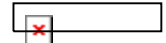
48. Progress reviews take place every 12 weeks for work-based learners. However, some of the

targets set are not specific enough and do not provide sufficient detailed guidance to enable students to complete an element of work. Work-based learning NVQ assessment is well planned and recorded. Feedback is accurate and structured and helps the students to evaluate their own performance and prepare for further assessments. The quality of feedback on assessments is variable on full-time courses.

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

49. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improved teamwork and staff development have assisted managers in bringing about significant improvements to teaching and learning. Communication within the faculty has improved as a result of the introduction of team leaders into the organisational structure. Regular course team meetings are held at least monthly. However, minutes record discussion insufficiently and the subsequent action points are rarely assigned or reviewed at further meetings. Course reviews lack thoroughness. The analysis of data in some reviews is weak and target setting is poor. The self-assessment report accurately identified many of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

### **Construction**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- good practical training and learning in brickwork
  
- highly effective provision for 14 to 16 year olds.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on the intermediate construction award
  
- inadequate range of provision
  
- poor specialist resources in some wood and decorative areas.

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

50. The college provides a narrow range of construction courses from pre-foundation to advanced levels in brickwork, wood occupations and painting and decorating. There are currently 317 students, of whom 23 are females. This proportion of females is above the national average for those studying construction. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18. Most programmes are full time with a small amount of part-time day and evening provision, mainly for adults. There are currently 60 students on foundation courses and 75 on the intermediate construction course. Few students progress to advanced courses. The college does not offer apprenticeship programmes for work-based learners. In partnership with a local training provider, the college offers a series of short courses for gas technicians. There are 182 students on these courses. There are also 77 school pupils aged 14 to 16 following a range of craft courses.

### **Achievement and standards**

51. Pass rates on foundation construction courses for 2003/04 are at, or above, the national average. Those for gas domestic heating courses have been consistently high over a three year period. Pass rates for the NVQ in domestic natural gas rose to above the national average in 2004. The intermediate construction course had high pass rates in 2003 and 2004, but the retention rate was low at 47%. Some of the early leavers from this course have gained employment in the industry. Retention and pass rates for adult students are satisfactory overall. Most adult students make good progress and produce work of appropriate standards early in their studies.

52. The standards achieved by brickwork students are high. Most students develop good vocational skills early in their programme and above what would be expected for their level of study. They are able to build walls with complex shapes using a variety of bonding systems, they can construct raking brickwork and semi-circular arches and build cavity walls. Students' work in carpentry and joinery and painting and decorating is satisfactory. One intermediate course student had designed the interior decoration for a room and then carried out the painting of walls and woodwork to a high standard. Most students have a satisfactory understanding of theory. Students' attendance at lessons during inspection was high at 87%, which is around 10% above the national average for the construction area.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Foundation construction award	1	No. of starts	*	22	49
		% retention	*	100	80
		% pass rate	*	70	77
Domestic gas central heating	Short	No. of starts	131	232	157
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	95	94	98
NVQ domestic natural gas	2	No. of starts	*	52	18
		% retention	*	67	83
		% pass rate	*	57	73

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

\* course did not run

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

53. All the teaching and learning observed by inspectors was satisfactory or better. The best lessons are in brickwork. Most lessons are planned well and have good schemes of work. In the effective lessons, teachers vary the learning activities and make good use of questioning and answers to

develop their students' knowledge and understanding, which they check regularly. Theory teaching is generally satisfactory. A few teachers make effective use of ILT in teaching. In the less effective lessons, students retrieve information passively from textbooks and fill in the blank spaces in their assessment books. Students do this with little understanding of the principles involved. Teachers dominate the learning process by excessive intervention and they talk too much. When this happens students are unreceptive and their learning is poor.

54. Most students are well motivated to succeed and have good relationships with their teachers. Students with additional learning needs are supported effectively in lessons by specialist tutors and they make good progress towards their learning goals. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach and assess students. Short-term targets are set regularly and the progress of students is reviewed frequently against these targets. Regular assessment takes place and students' progress is recorded carefully on wall charts in the workshops. Students are clear about what they have achieved and what they have to do to progress. Teachers' feedback on assessment is constructive and identifies clearly the areas that need improvement and what needs to be done to satisfy industrial standards. The assessment and internal verification process is satisfactory and complies with awarding body requirements.

55. Some learning is restricted by the lack of specialist resources particularly in the carpentry and joinery and painting and decorating workshops. The bays in the carpentry and joinery workshop are inadequate to enable students to produce work at the necessary standards and develop the range of skills and variety of work required. The roofing rig is outdated and has been used so much that students have difficulty in producing high standards of roofing work. In the painting and decorating workshop the windows and doors have been painted many times, making it difficult for students to demonstrate the necessary industrial standards of paint finish. Classrooms are well resourced and close to the workshops, which helps teachers to relate the theory to practical work effectively.

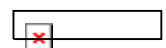
56. The college has a useful partnership with a local training provider to deliver training in gas installation. The standard of education and training is high and students gain good skills and technical knowledge in many aspects of the gas installation industry. The retention and pass rates for these students are high and, in 2004, they were well above the national average.

57. The college has good partnerships with local schools to extend opportunities and encourage participation in construction education and training for 14 to 16 year olds. These students are motivated and enjoy the programme, which allows them to develop skills in bricklaying, painting and decorating, and joinery. Skills achieved by some students in bricklaying are especially high. Retention and pass rates are high on the programme and the vocational award achieved by successful students is recognised by industry. Students benefit from good purpose-built workshops that are equipped appropriately and meet industry standards. Learning materials are of a high standard and well presented.

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

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are good communications between construction staff and their specialist colleagues who provide a student support service to construction courses. Regular meetings are held, they are minuted and action points are agreed and progressed. Targets are set for retention and pass rates and these are monitored adequately. A process for formally monitoring the quality of provision has not been established. Course reviews and the self-assessment report are descriptive and do not critically evaluate the provision. The self-assessment report overstates the strengths and does not recognise the main weaknesses.

### **Business and information and communications technology**



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

### **Strengths**

- high success rate on the certificate in supervisory management
- good teaching of ICT applications
- a wide range of ICT courses with clear progression routes
- a very effective apprenticeship programme in administration.

### **Weaknesses**

- low retention rates on AVCE ICT and ICT workshop courses for adults
- much uninspiring teaching of theory
- insufficient work experience for full-time ICT students.

### **Scope of provision**

59. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses in ICT and business. The wide range of full-time courses in ICT offers good progression opportunities from foundation to advanced levels. There are 60 full-time students taking general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses at foundation and intermediate levels in ICT, AVCE, AS level and GCE A level. Part-time ICT courses include European computer driving licence (ECDL) and a range of qualifications for information technology (IT) users at introductory and intermediate levels. In addition to flexible workshops, part-time ICT courses are also held in several community centres. Computer workshops in Peterlee have extended opening hours and offer flexible attendance patterns. Specialist qualifications offered include digital imaging and there is an access to HE course in ICT. Most of the 350 part-time students are taking courses in ICT. In business studies, the range of courses is less extensive and there are 33 full-time business and administration students. Courses include AS-level and GCE A-level business, and NVQ levels 2 and 3 in administration and accounting. The college also offers an apprenticeship programme in administration with provision for both apprentices and advanced apprentices. A supervisory development certificate is offered through distance learning with tutor support.

### **Achievement and standards**

60. Pass rates are satisfactory overall. AS-level and GCE A-level business pass rates are high, but in Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) foundation accounting courses, they are below the national average. Pass rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate ICT courses have declined. An

increasing number of administration apprentices who complete their work-based training are achieving full frameworks.

61. Retention and pass rates are high on the certificate in supervisory management course studied through a correspondence route. The retention rate is below the national average on the AVCE in ICT. At the time of the inspection, in-year retention rates on full-time courses had risen compared to the same period in 2003. Many adults studying ICT fail to complete their studies and retention rates are significantly below national averages on introductory courses.

62. Students develop good practical skills in using a range of software applications. Full-time ICT students do not have work experience placements. Few students adopt current business practice and standards in their work. However, the college has established good relationships with employers for administration students and apprentices. Full-time administration students enjoy spending half of their studies with local businesses and much assessment relates to work activities. Portfolios of work are well presented and provide evidence of a wide range of administrative skills. Apprentices are keen to develop understanding through their work placements and several have recently gained technical certificates to demonstrate additional skills in business. AS-level and GCE A-level business students understand the nature and demands of advanced courses and analyse information carefully before presenting their findings. All full-time students work diligently in lessons. Teachers do not tolerate poor timekeeping, student absences are quickly followed up and students' behaviour in lessons is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate for IT users	1	No. of starts	*	444	186
		% retention	*	36	33
		% pass rate	*	92	80
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	38	23	41
		% retention	79	83	86
		% pass rate	83	89	67
ECDL	2	No. of starts	149	103	49
		% retention	69	61	73
		% pass rate	56	79	47
NVQ administration	2	No. of starts	32	27	46
		% retention	78	56	67
		% pass rate	68	73	65
Certificate in supervisory management	2	No. of starts	211	170	133
		% retention	76	82	82
		% pass rate	92	89	96
AVCE ICT	3	No. of starts	28	25	33
		% retention	46	60	58
		% pass rate	92	93	79
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	24	19	15
		% retention	71	84	100
		% pass rate	88	56	93

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

\* course did not run

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

63. The teaching of practical skills is good and motivates students. Teachers design interesting projects to encourage full-time students to try out various formats and tools to maximise the potential of various software applications. Several GNVQ foundation ICT students who achieved low general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) grades at school recognise what they now need to do to succeed in their studies. They work enthusiastically with teachers and learning support assistants to learn new skills. Teaching is stimulating and places emphasis on promoting students' creativity and initiative through practical tasks. In one lesson, students had poor skills in business correspondence before the teacher encouraged them to improve. By the end of the lesson, each student had successfully written a business letter to an acceptable standard using word processing. Teaching on ICT courses in the community and in flexible workshops is also good. Teachers understand students' initial lack of confidence and deal sensitively with groups of mixed ages and a wide range of abilities. Adults work with standard texts to develop and practise their skills, but teachers adapt these to meet individual needs.

64. Much teaching of theory is unimaginative. Although teacher exposition is clear with supporting learning materials or visual aids, there are few instances of topical business issues or case studies being used to enliven debate and learning. On AVCE courses, the teaching of complex theory is not put into an appropriate context and students find it difficult to apply the theory. Occasionally the pace of lessons is too slow. Students sit passively and are reluctant to ask questions. Accounting students have insufficient opportunities and resources to undertake independent study effectively.

65. Apprenticeship programmes are well organised. Careful thought is given to the choice of work placement and apprentices are well supported during induction. Realistic on-the-job training plans are well developed. Apprentices receive detailed individual guidance from assessors who encourage them and expect high levels of commitment. Their progress is reviewed regularly and they receive constructive feedback indicating how they can improve. Apprentices attend college for half a day each week where they follow an efficient approach to the development and assessment of key skills.

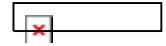
66. Accommodation and computer equipment at the main sites are satisfactory overall. Some classrooms have poor audio-visual equipment that occasionally restricts approaches to teaching and learning. The computer workshops in Peterlee are furnished and equipped to a high standard. Some community centres are drab and unwelcoming. However, they have satisfactory standards of ICT facilities. Teachers are qualified appropriately for the subjects and levels they teach.

67. Full-time students receive effective tutorial support that includes help with personal issues. Students know where to go for advice and are well supported when making decisions about progression. The quality and sufficiency of oral and written feedback to students are satisfactory. Internal verification procedures are thorough.

### **Leadership and management**

68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of the provision is spread across several departments. Most full-time and part-time courses come under one faculty, though the distance learning, community and apprenticeship provision are each managed separately. Managers meet to review and evaluate the provision. However, the overall planning of the provision takes little account of industry's needs, particularly in business. Self-assessment processes involve staff across departments, but the self-assessment report is not sufficiently evaluative of the business and ICT provision.

## Hospitality, sports and leisure



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

Contributory grade for hospitality and catering is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- good teaching and learning in sports and recreation
  
- very good sports facilities and opportunities
  
- good support for students
  
- good community and schools links
  
- good management of workforce development in NVQ food and drink manufacturing operations.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low retention rates on some courses
  
- insufficient opportunities for developing higher level skills in hospitality
  
- poor resources in hospitality.

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

69. The college offers a wide range of courses from levels 1 to 4. Students can gain qualifications



through full-time, part-time, work-based learning, distance learning and franchised modes of study. Full-time students also work towards appropriate additional qualifications. There are currently 920 students enrolled on courses, 163 of whom are on full-time courses in sport, leisure and recreation, mainly at level 3. The college has four well-established sports academies providing specialist skills coaching for 204 students who are following full-time courses alongside their sporting activity. The college has achieved FA Charter Status for women's football and is an approved centre for coaching courses. There are 29 full-time and 12 part-time students in hospitality and catering, 170 enrolments on distance learning and franchise courses in food hygiene and healthy eating and 152 on NVQ in the workplace.

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

70. There are high pass rates on most courses, including NVQ level 2 food and drink manufacturing and NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking, GCE A2 sport, BTEC national diploma sports science, and GNVQ leisure and recreation. A number of courses had 100% pass rates in 2004. However, retention rates on some courses, for example, the City and Guilds sports progression award and BTEC national diploma in sports science, were low in 2004. The college has taken steps to improve retention rates. Full-time programmes in hospitality have an extended induction which has resulted in a better match of students to courses and improved retention rates in the current year. On many full-time courses, the retention rate is currently 100%.

71. Students' attendance and punctuality on full-time courses are good and the standard of students' work observed at the time of inspection was satisfactory or better. Students are able to work well both independently and collaboratively and there is good development of technical and practical skills. In cake decorating, detailed work produced is of a very high standard and students' portfolios show clear progression from planning to execution of designs. Students in hospitality are well prepared for employment and progression to higher level courses. They demonstrate good customer and social skills. Sport and recreation students at all levels produce good written work using appropriate technical language and terms. In practical lessons, students demonstrate a high level of technical and analytical skills appropriate to future careers in coaching.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, sports and leisure, 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 6951 progression award sport and leisure	1	No. of starts	51	24	15
		% retention	78	67	53
		% pass rate	78	81	100
GNVQ leisure and recreation	2	No. of starts	33	26	19
		% retention	70	88	89
		% pass rate	91	100	100
NVQ food and drink manufacturing operations	2	No. of starts	129	*	74
		% retention	96	*	88
		% pass rate	100	*	95
AVCE in leisure and recreation (double award)	3	No. of starts	45	19	27
		% retention	40	58	74
		% pass rate	39	91	100
BTEC national diploma sports science	3	No. of starts	16	33	19
		% retention	94	64	47
		% pass rate	80	100	100
AS-level sports games	3	No. of starts	29	45	32

and recreation		% retention	83	82	91
		% pass rate	71	89	72
GCE A2 physical education	3	No. of starts	20	18	22
		% retention	95	100	100
		% pass rate	68	100	100

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

\* course did not run

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

72. There is much good and some very good teaching and learning on sports and recreation courses. Detailed planning underpins effective teaching of both the practical and theoretical aspects of sport. Aims and objectives are shared with the students and are reviewed effectively at the end of the session. In the best lessons, teachers encourage reflective practice. In one excellent coaching session, students were encouraged to develop their own analytical skills through activities facilitated by the coach tutor. A theory lesson on blood pressure involved students taking a partner's blood pressure under supervision and, through a well constructed worksheet, interpreting the results.

73. In hospitality lessons teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better practical and theory lessons, teachers build upon students' experiences effectively and make clear links to related theory and technical language. However, there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop higher level skills. The lack of a lounge area results in students losing additional opportunities to practise their bar service and to develop further and review customer service skills. Different groups of students have to share the kitchen and its limited facilities. This hampers the development of higher level skills for the more able students and reduces opportunities for them to work on individual tasks.

74. Across the area, staff are well qualified in their vocational specialism and all have, or are working towards, a recognised teaching qualification. Most have relevant industrial experience which is used to good effect to assist learning and which benefits students. There are very good resources within sports and recreation that promote good teaching and learning. Sports facilities are very good and include floodlit artificial pitches, extensive playing fields, an on-site sports centre which includes boxing and judo gyms and a sports hall, and three well-equipped fitness areas. There is also an on-site physiotherapy clinic. However, some of the equipment is old and in need of replacement and some library resources are very dated.

75. Resources for hospitality are poor. Some machinery is dated and there is inadequate ventilation in either the public restaurant or the training kitchen. Students' changing facilities and storage are unsatisfactory. There is inadequate stock control with some frequently used items exceeding their use by date.

76. Extensive links with external organisations promote and widen inclusion. Well-developed and effective employer links through the workforce development unit of the college contribute significantly to student numbers, employer engagement, and retention and pass rates in hospitality and catering. An effective Increased Flexibility (IF) programme offers good progression opportunities and there are currently 40 students aged 14 to 16 from 5 local schools studying catering craft courses. There are good community and school links and the sports facilities are well used by local community groups. 'Courses through sport' provision enables parents to achieve certificated qualifications in a range of courses. Pupils from local schools participate in after school sports activities, for example, some 3,000 girls play football. Plans are well advanced for an academy for Sports Students who have a disability.

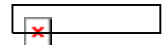
77. The assessment process and practices are satisfactory and written feedback enables students to improve their performance. Support for students, including for work-based learners and part-time

students, is good. Initial assessment is effective and additional support is provided quickly when required. Students benefit from focused and directed individual reviews. The effective use of individual learning plans helps students to manage their learning.

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

78. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The faculty management team have set a clearer direction which is leading to an improved quality of education and training. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice between the sports and hospitality sections. The sport academies are well managed with effective systems that support academic and sports development. The appointment of a new curriculum leader for hospitality has been welcomed by staff and students. The management of the work-based learning and franchised provision is good. There is effective management of the workforce development programme in NVQ food and drink manufacturing operations.

### **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
  
- interesting teaching which motivates students
  
- a comprehensive enrichment programme
  
- effective feedback and monitoring of students' work
  
- effective provision for 14 to 16 year olds
  
- good curriculum leadership and effective communication.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- deficiencies in accommodation and some resources

- o lack of opportunities for key skills assessment.

### **Scope of provision**

79. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses from entry level to level 3 in hairdressing, beauty, and holistic therapies. There are a total of 417 students, 121 of whom are aged 16 to 18. Full-time courses range from NVQ levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty and holistic therapies. Part-time courses, mainly followed by adults, are offered in a range of holistic therapy courses and NVQ levels 2 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Taster courses are offered to give prospective students an insight into their chosen course or career. The college has 60 pupils from 6 local schools attending a vocational programme for 14 to 16 year olds. There are few males in training in this area.

### **Achievement and standards**

80. There are high pass rates on most courses. In 2004, the pass rate in hairdressing level 1 was 100% and at level 2 it was 98%. Pass rates on beauty therapy courses are all above national averages and retention rates are high. There were high pass rates in 2004 on NVQ level 2 beauty therapy courses at 90% and on the aromatherapy diploma course at 100%. However, retention rates declined on the diploma in reflexology course.

81. The development of practical skills is generally good. The best lessons are well planned to support every individual to progress and achieve satisfactory outcomes. The commercial practice lessons for level 2 hairdressing and beauty therapy are very good examples of students working in a demanding and realistic working environment. There are good practical assessments in nail enhancements and most students achieve at least one assessment in each lesson. Students have excellent practical and customer care skills. Too few students progress to a full-time level 3 programme. Progression from level 1 hairdressing and beauty to level 2 qualifications is 100%. Progression to employment is good at 88% in 2004.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
NVQ hairdressing 1 year	1	No. of starts	50	41	28
		% retention	90	76	77
		% pass rate	76	100	100
NVQ hairdressing 2 year	2	No. of starts	15	58	60
		% retention	60	59	80
		% pass rate	89	92	98
NVQ beauty therapy 1 year	2	No. of starts	*	40	15
		% retention	*	40	67
		% pass rate	*	100	90
NVQ beauty therapy 2 year	2	No. of starts	26	54	28
		% retention	92	30	68
		% pass rate	63	88	84
Body massage	3	No. of starts	*	26	29
		% retention	*	77	76

		% pass rate	*	100	91
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Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* fewer than 15 students enrolled

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

82. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned and interesting. Teachers are well organised and they use a variety of teaching styles and a good range of learning resources to support individuals' needs. In practical lessons, there is very good individual support and guidance to help students acquire skills. In one lesson, the teacher gave excellent explanations of what was expected and supported individual students as they carried out a variety of tasks such as tinting, permanent waving, cutting, setting and blow drying. The teacher referred constantly to vocational standards and employer and client expectations. Commercial timescales were used for completion of the tasks. The students were focused completely, and achieved good results. However, in some lessons vocational standards were not observed and the standard of work was not as good. There is little use of ILT in teaching and it is not well used by the students in their coursework.

83. Teachers have a good relationship with students and draw effectively on students' own ideas and experiences. They ensure that students work hard and they have high expectations of them. Questioning is effective in engaging all students and in checking their understanding. In practical lessons, teachers demonstrate and explain techniques clearly. In most practical lessons, there is a good range and variety of clients to support skill building or assessment. Many employers provide high quality work experience for full-time students.

84. Some effort has been made to improve the delivery of key skills. The curriculum team work closely with the college key skills team. Students value the key skills workshops. Most written learning materials are of a high quality. Students find the workbooks particularly useful. However, there are few opportunities for key skills assessment in most lessons and there are insufficient assessments for work-based learners.

85. The assignment schedule is well planned and understood by students. In beauty therapy courses, teachers monitor and review students' progress particularly well. Feedback on written work and assignments is very detailed. Students understand what they have to do to improve, and are praised for effort and achievement. Students' portfolio evidence is well organised and of a high quality. Homework is set on a regular basis. Internal verification and assessment procedures are thorough.

86. Students benefit from good enrichment opportunities, including visits to hairdressing and beauty trade events, internal competition and fund raising events. Students provide hair and beauty treatments for local charities and school students attending end of term events. The provision for 14 to 16 year olds is delivered well, attendance is good and standards of practical skill development are high.

87. Teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date knowledge of industrial practice. Most have recent work experience. Each year, the majority of teachers update and develop new or existing skills. Accommodation is out dated and does not meet industry standards. The reception area is too small to accommodate clients and students in training. There is insufficient retail stock. Library textbooks are poor and the range is insufficient. There are no CD ROMs and only a few videos for loan. The range and variety of consumables is satisfactory.

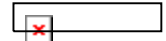
88. Students value the good support and guidance subject teachers give them. Initial diagnostic assessment and selection procedures are effective. The results of initial assessment are used to inform staff of individual students' needs and preferred learning styles. Additional learning support is delivered in lessons or in individual sessions. Pastoral support provided for students is good. Reviews of individual students' progress are carried out effectively. They are very detailed and give

set timescales and clear guidance for improvement. The tutorial system is effective. A hairdressing tutorial designed to identify and develop listening and reading skills made good use of vocational links. Attendance is good and students are punctual to lessons.

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

89. Leadership and management are good. There is clear direction from the programme area leader on target setting and good management of resources. Weaknesses from the previous inspection report have been addressed. There is effective course review and action planning, active curriculum development and monitoring of standards. Team members meet formally every week and there are regular informal meetings to discuss students' attendance and progress. Part-time staff are invited to attend meetings and minutes are available for staff not able to attend. Communication is very good. Staff feel they have every opportunity to contribute to the planning process.

### **Health and social care and childcare**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- high pass rates on many courses
- innovative teaching on level 3 courses
- high-quality placements leading to development of good practical skills
- flexible and responsive provision to meet community needs
- effective tutorials fully integrated with programmes.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficient use of ICT in teaching and learning
- slow response to meeting specific learning support needs

- o insufficiently rigorous self-assessment.

### **Scope of provision**

90. The college offers a wide range of flexible provision, both full time and part time, in health and social care and early years education. Students are able to work towards qualifications from level 1 to level 4 through classroom-based, distance learning and work-based learning routes. There are currently 110 enrolments, mainly 16 to 18 year olds, on full-time courses. There are 125 enrolments on substantive part-time courses and 153 enrolments on NVQ care levels 2 and 3. These courses are followed by adult students. More than 400 adults are engaged in distance learning short courses, the majority of whom are following courses in safe handling of medicine and infection control. Through effective collaboration with local schools, 70 pupils aged 14 to 16 are currently studying a vocational GCSE in health and social care and 24 are on the entry level introduction to caring skills.

### **Achievement and standards**

91. Pass rates for most qualifications are high. In the award in caring for children and the AVCE in health and social care, the percentage of high grades is well above the national average. Work-based learners generally achieve their learning goals. Students who engage in distance learning have a high success rate. Retention rates are above average on most courses, although they have declined in 2004 in AVCE health and social care, the diploma in childcare and in NVQ in care levels 2 and 3. Attendance is good and students are punctual to lessons.

92. Standards of work for most students in lessons, in the workplace, in students' files and in their coursework are high. Students develop appropriate skills and can effectively link theory to work practices. In a childcare lesson, students used their understanding of child development successfully to make appropriate learning materials for creative play.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	120	186	332
		% retention	90	80	78
		% pass rate	75	98	97
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	17	*	18
		% retention	71	*	78
		% pass rate	100	*	93
Certificate in safe handling of medicines	2	No. of starts	778	1,234	1,488
		% retention	79	82	82
		% pass rate	94	96	99
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	33	17	19
		% retention	67	65	78
		% pass rate	100	91	90
AVCE (double award) in health and social care	3	No. of starts	*	16	18
		% retention	*	81	56
		% pass rate	*	92	100

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

*\*fewer than 15 students enrolled*

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

93. There is much good teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned and they incorporate a wide range of activities to develop students' knowledge and understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and valuable professional experience which they share with their students. Their enthusiasm for their subjects motivates students to learn. Where teaching is most innovative, students learn through a series of activities which enable them to make judgements and draw conclusions from their own experience. They can then test this with reference to an appropriate theoretical framework. In one lesson, students participated in a simulation which demonstrated feelings of inclusion and exclusion. Most students acquire the appropriate skills and underpinning knowledge to be effective in the workplace. Many adults already working in the sector upgrade their expertise through an effective NVQ programme. Others acquire specialist knowledge of infection control, safe handling of medicines, and drug awareness through distance learning. In the few lessons where teaching is less effective the pace of the lesson is too slow, too much reliance is placed on worksheet activities or there is insufficient structure to the learning.

94. Teachers are well qualified and engage in training to enhance their professional knowledge and expertise. Resources are satisfactory and include up-to-date textbooks, videos, simulation dolls, a range of baby equipment and a computer room. There are, however, no interactive whiteboards and ICT is not integrated sufficiently with the learning process; this limits students' opportunities to develop high level research skills. Work placements provide very good opportunities for students to develop their practical skills. Students are carefully matched to providers. This ensures that the needs of each are met.

95. Assessment is frequent and thorough. Effective procedures and practices are in place to ensure careful marking and monitoring of students' work. Assessors for NVQ courses in care use handheld computers to make a record of their observations in the workplace. This is an efficient and effective use of new technology. The care NVQ internal verification sampling, however, is not sufficiently systematic and not standardised across the programme. Assignments are carefully crafted to consolidate and extend learning. Redrafted work shows that the feedback students receive helps them improve the standard of their work. Students know what level they are working at and what they have to do to improve. The identification of specific additional learning needs, however, is too late to be of real benefit to some students following one year courses.

96. Students receive good support and guidance on academic and personal issues. The tutorial system is well planned and integrated fully into the care programme. Students have the opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding of specific aspects of care, guided by tutors who are specialists in the area. At the same time they are engaging in effective personal and social development. Flexible and responsive timetabling ensures that adult students can attend at times which fit in with their personal and domestic arrangements.

97. Response to community and employer needs is good. The college has responded effectively to requests from care sector employers for NVQ programmes and short courses to meet their training needs. Progression routes are available across levels, although there is no level 1 course in health and social care.

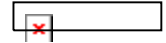
### **Leadership and management**

98. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Management at course level is effective. Teachers meet regularly to discuss curriculum issues and the progress of individual students. Arrangements to assure the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lesson observations are not carried out by team leaders or subject specialists, but the strengths and weaknesses identified are followed up by team leaders. New teachers have mentors who provide useful induction



and support, but formal lesson observation is not early enough to provide timely feedback on performance. Self-assessment is not sufficiently rigorous and many course reviews are superficial, with insufficient identification of key strengths and weaknesses.

## Visual and performing arts and media



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

### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on level 2 performing arts course
- stimulating activities to engage students' interest
- effective assignments to support and develop students' learning.

### **Weaknesses**

- low pass rates on AS-level art course
- insufficient vocational rigour in some lessons
- low recruitment limiting activities in teaching and learning.

### **Scope of provision**

99. The college provides a wide range of full-time and part-time courses from foundation level to level 4. Students have a choice of academic and vocational courses and can mix subjects and qualifications to suit their own needs. There are courses in dance, music, drama, musical theatre, fine art and design, media and film studies. There are currently 125 students who are aged 16 to 18, mostly studying on full-time courses and 346 adult students, mainly on part-time courses. Managers are aware of widening participation opportunities and lessons are arranged at community venues particularly for adult students.

### **Achievement and standards**

100. Achievements are mostly satisfactory and in line with national averages. Retention and pass rates are high on level 2 performing arts lessons though there are low pass rates in AS-level art

where the predominantly adult students are reluctant to take examinations. The comparatively few full-time students and recent changes to qualifications make patterns of achievement difficult to determine. Some students progress internally and to HE and related employment. Several of the current staff are former students of the college. The standard of students' work is satisfactory overall. Drama students were recently successful in winning a national prize, but the standard of performance seen during inspection week was not high. Attendance in several lessons was poor.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Credit achievement	1	No. of starts	101	131	225
		% retention	95	82	92
		% pass rate	59	78	69
Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) performing arts (short)	2	No. of starts	107	133	44
		% retention	100	59	100
		% pass rate	100	62	93
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	36	27	17
		% retention	86	89	88
		% pass rate	52	88	93
AS-level art	3	No. of starts	15	*	18
		% retention	67	*	83
		% pass rate	40	*	40

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

*\*fewer than 15 students enrolled*

***Quality of education and training***

101. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers work very hard to provide and support performance opportunities and they give much of their own time at weekends freely to rehearsals prior to performance. Assignments are often challenging and stimulating and give students opportunities to test their skills in an appropriate forum. For example, performing arts students have regular public performances where they can demonstrate their acting, singing, instrumental and dancing skills. Media students are involved in interesting sound effect projects, for example, creating appropriate sounds to depict a leg breaking or to complement a sex scene on screen. Art and design students are encouraged to look beyond European influences in their projects. However, many students, particularly those in performing arts, do not fully appreciate the discipline, commitment and rigour of the profession they hope to enter. Attendance was poor during a production week. Students are often unprepared and let down their peers through unreliability and staff do not always use lesson and rehearsal time effectively. In one practical lesson, though the teaching was good and the learning satisfactory, most students worked in inappropriate clothing that inhibited their learning. Low recruitment on several courses affects the learning dynamic in lessons and restricts choice of practical activities.

102. Resources are satisfactory. Many of the performing arts staff are local practitioners who are able to provide some insight into the related industries. However, recognised vocational standards are not being implemented in some cases. Not all staff have teaching qualifications, but several are working towards acquiring appropriate certificates. Physical resources are mainly fit for their purpose. Although the theatre is dated in design, it provides a suitable venue for performance. Dance facilities are basic and there are no mirrored walls as teaching aids or barres. Music accommodation is rudimentary and little consideration has been given to the impact of noise on

other activities. Media classrooms and art rooms are pleasant and are adorned with appropriate displays. One art tutor has painted a large colour wheel on the studio window so that students can permanently refer to it. There is sufficient technician support for most teaching and learning activities.

103. Assessment of students' work is good. Initial assessment is made centrally on enrolment and specific needs are identified. Teachers design challenging assignments with clear and unequivocal grading criteria. Written work is marked and returned promptly, often with exhaustive commentary, and students know what they need to do to improve. There are good opportunities for frank performance evaluation and discussion of how subsequent productions might be improved.

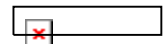
104. Enrichment opportunities are satisfactory and give students the opportunity to develop their cultural and sporting interests. Through the enrichment programme, performing arts students are providing the cabaret entertainment on the overnight Hull/Rotterdam ferry.

105. Aspects of advice and guidance are satisfactory. The tutorial support, both in groups and individually, is appreciated by students who feel their tutors are helpful and supportive. The use of short courses as an induction to the rigours of performing arts is not successful because there is no opportunity for appropriate vocational practice. Poor attendance is not being addressed successfully.

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

106. Curriculum management is satisfactory. The team leader has a heavy workload, with a substantial teaching commitment in addition to his administrative, impresario and management responsibilities. The course team is able to access the management information system and use it to form judgements and subsequent planning. The procedures for self-assessment are appropriate, but the final document contains much description and intentions rather than evaluation. Staff feel overall that the observations of teaching and learning have a positive effect on their teaching although the internal grade profile for teaching and learning is higher than that given by inspectors. Staff development opportunities are linked to teaching performance.

## **Humanities and English**



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

### ***Strengths***

- very high achievement in access to HE modules
  
- high retention rates in AS-level and GCE A-level subjects
  
- well-produced topic guides which enhance students' learning
  
- very good teaching in psychology.

### **Weaknesses**

- teaching on some courses fails to involve and motivate students
  
- inconsistent development of ICT as a teaching and learning tool
  
- declining recruitment on to humanities and English courses, limiting the viability of the provision
  
- insufficiently rigorous self-assessment and action planning.

### **Scope of provision**

107. The humanities, English and access to HE areas of the science, humanities and languages faculty provide a small number of courses at level 3 and one at level 2. There are day and evening access to HE modules in quantitative methods, biology, English, psychology, sociology and study skills, which can be combined in various ways to form a full award. The college provides AS-level and GCE A-level courses in psychology and English language and literature, a GCE A-level course in sociology and GCSE English. There are currently 166 students, 22 on the GCSE courses, 24 on AS-level and GCE A-level courses and 79 on access courses. Recruitment on to humanities and English courses is declining.

### **Achievement and standards**

108. Retention rates are mostly at, or above, national averages; in some cases they are significantly higher. Pass rates for 2004 are above national averages for GCE A-level and access to HE courses. Pass rates for AS-level courses are below national averages, but have generally risen over the last three years. Achievement on access modules is very high with good progression to HE courses.

109. The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Oral skills are stronger than written; much class discussion work shows good attainment whilst much written work is satisfactory. Some students have difficulty in recalling knowledge, which slows their progress in lessons. In psychology courses, students demonstrate a good understanding of research studies and are able to use technical terms proficiently. In English courses, students carry out textual analysis satisfactorily using a range of critical and grammatical terms. In quantitative methods, students are successful in using spreadsheets to produce simple charts. Students' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory on most courses. Flexible attendance patterns assist the recruitment, and retention and pass rates of adult students.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	61	34	23
		% retention	85	79	87

		% pass rate	37	19	50
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	52	61	36
		% retention	65	79	81
		% pass rate	53	79	66
AS-level English language and literature	3	No. of starts	41	26	26
		% retention	85	69	88
		% pass rate	43	78	83
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	29	20	29
		% retention	100	90	86
		% pass rate	69	89	84
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	22	19	16
		% retention	95	84	94
		% pass rate	81	81	93
Modular access programme	3	No. of starts	*	355	353
		% retention	*	76	76
		% pass rate	*	87	98

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

\* course did not run

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

110. Teaching is satisfactory or better. The best teaching is in psychology, which leads to good and effective learning. Most lessons are planned to include a variety of approaches which engage students in active learning. In an English lesson, students prepared their own performance of the opening scene from *Othello*. In psychology, students prepared and asked their peers to answer challenging questions to check knowledge recall and in sociology, students prepared a brief presentation to explain a theoretical concept the class had studied the previous week. Most lessons have appropriate learning objectives, but in the many satisfactory lessons observed, the slow pace of delivery and lack of extension tasks does not encourage students to achieve highly. Some lessons contain too much teacher-led work, which does not meet the needs of all students. This leads to poor recall of previous work, especially where tasks to check and consolidate learning and prepare for the next lesson are not set regularly. In the very good lessons in psychology, work is planned to meet individual needs, students' learning is assessed after each activity, praise is awarded regularly and students' participation, confidence and quality of learning are all good.

111. Teachers are well qualified, have a very good knowledge of their subject and answer students' queries effectively. Most classrooms provide a satisfactory learning environment for students, but a number of areas lack relevant displays of students' work. Subject bases are not clearly identified to welcome students and accommodation is under-utilised. Students are given carefully prepared course guides in most subjects, but there is insufficient use of ICT. The few, networked, faculty computers are in one teaching room not accessible to students, even though, at certain times, the library computers available for individual use are fully booked. Library books for some subjects are outdated and inadequate, but most students have their own textbooks.

112. Students are set target grades and their progress is monitored regularly. Individual support is offered freely by staff and resit revision workshops are organised appropriately. The assessment of students' written work is satisfactory, but varies in approach, quality and helpfulness across subjects. Feedback on written work is not consistent in content or presentation, although good practice is

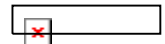
evident in some subjects. The best marking is thorough and it is easy for students to see how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.

113. Students appreciate the enrichment opportunities offered to them. Teachers give good personal support in lessons. Two timetabled additional support sessions for access to HE students did not run during the inspection week. This resource is under-utilised.

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

114. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and average class size has increased. However, the good practice seen in some lessons is not being followed in other areas of the faculty, even though the team of teaching staff is small. Course monitoring folders do not contain consistent records for the AS-level and GCE A-level value added system nor is the provision of additional learning support recorded routinely. Attendance during the week of inspection was below college and national averages. There is a lack of overall strategy on course provision and the self-assessment report and associated action plan do not address adequately the severe decline in recruitment.

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



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

#### ***Strengths***

- highly effective teaching and learning
  
- good development of social skills
  
- effective leadership and teamwork
  
- high standard of support for students
  
- good accommodation and general resources.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- inadequate access to pre-vocational courses

- inappropriate target setting for students.

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

115. The college offers a range of courses, both full time and part time, at entry level in skills for working life and independent living skills. The core of all the programmes is literacy, numeracy, IT and tutorials. The rest of the programme is made up of units from independent living skills, profile of achievement or work skills with further choices from a range of options, team building and enrichment. External accreditation is used where appropriate.

116. Independent living skills include personal and home management, cookery and budgeting and where necessary, independent travel training. Work-based skills provide the opportunity for students to experience work in a variety of vocational options and participate in links with some other curriculum areas such as care, construction, hairdressing and land-based studies.

117. The profile of achievement is an individual certificate programme to record students' progress. Citizenship, art, horticulture, craft enterprises and light sports contribute to the options programme. In language and culture lessons, French and German are taught and visits are arranged to France, Germany and Belgium. Personal development skills modules include sexual awareness, relationships, leisure and sport activities. Accreditation is through national qualifications.

118. There are several 14 to 16 year olds on a school link programme and one full-time student aged 14 to 16. There are 31 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 30 full-time students aged 19 years and over; 16 part-time adult students are enrolled on a practical cookery course. Students can progress to other college vocational courses and to employment as well as to supported employment.

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

119. The achievements of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are high. Students are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop skills and knowledge. They achieve units of City and Guilds Wordwise, Numberwise, Profile of Achievement and Edexcel Skills for Life. Non-accredited achievement is good and it encompasses many different aspects such as taking part in performances and visits abroad. There is much personal achievement, from gaining in confidence to learning new skills and greater independence. Students make good progress in literacy and numeracy and in improving their social skills such as communication and problem solving. The standard of students' work is high, especially in practical subjects such as art, craft, cookery and ICT.

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

120. There is much good and some very good teaching and learning. Teachers use effective teaching methods and strategies for entry level students. In the better lessons, teachers change activities frequently, thus meeting the needs of students with short attention spans. In one lesson, for example, students switched from writing new spellings in their dictionary to using packet convenience food to read instructions and cook a pasta meal. Innovative techniques and activities using multi-sensory experiences make learning fun so that students make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Tasks are well planned to meet the needs of different course and student groups overall and within lessons. Teachers have high expectations of students. Students visiting France or Germany visit markets to buy their own food for lunch.

121. Staff are well qualified and experienced and have access to appropriate training. Social services and care staff accompany adult students to various sessions, and link teachers accompany a group of pupils from a local special school to art and craft lessons. There are appropriate and

ample general resources. Students learn life skills in realistic domestic settings using a range of good resources. There are good ICT resources and students are confident using the range of equipment. However, there are insufficient specialist resources, such as specialist software or large screen computers to meet complex student needs.

122. There is good pre-course initial assessment using basic skills materials as well as staff observations. These inform decisions regarding which group and course the student will be placed on as well as informing the individual learning plans. Students' progress is measured, tracked and monitored in the six-weekly tutorial reviews. However, the individual learning plans do not always capture the needs of the students. Instead, they are often linked to external qualification criteria. The short-term learning goals identified are broad and are not detailed enough to indicate the small incremental steps required to enable significant learning to take place. Teachers do not use the plans to set challenging targets and identify steps to move students forward.

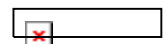
123. A range of programmes and courses is offered in response to identified needs of the students and local community. However, there is an over emphasis on life skills courses and few opportunities for developing skills for employment. Students on Welfare to Work, (skills for working life), develop confidence and the communication skills required to progress to employment, but other students are not offered an external work placement. There is insufficient access to vocational training in other programme areas and this limits progression.

124. There is good information and guidance available on programmes offered in the college. Prospective students are encouraged to attend an induction in July and are given very good support by the staff. Effective support mechanisms are in place and students value the support they receive. Students benefit from a supportive pastoral tutorial system in addition to their individual reviews. Learning support assistants are directed to work with groups or individual students. There are effective links with support agencies such as Connexions, Social Services, the Health Authority, employment agencies and local schools. This liaison ensures that there is smooth transition for students.

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

125. Management of the area is good. The curriculum leader has a clear understanding of the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The focus of the work is to develop independence, social skills and the potential for employment and active community participation. Support is provided by college managers to facilitate appropriate development of programmes and opportunities. Effective leadership is provided by the faculty manager and the curriculum team leader. Team members have worked with another college to develop learning materials and a tutorial programme designed to address personal development, relationships and health issues. Staff hold weekly team meetings and provide input to self-assessment and the reorganisation of curriculum qualifications. The energy and enthusiasm of the team is transmitted to students who thoroughly enjoy attending college.

### **Literacy and numeracy**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- rising pass rates on key skills communications and application of number, particularly at level 2



- increased use of external accreditation to facilitate progression
  
- much good teaching in the Skills for Life workshops.

### ***Weaknesses***

- insufficiently detailed planning to address individual needs in some lessons
  
- insufficient use of ILT
  
- inadequate management of literacy and numeracy across the college
  
- insufficiently analytical self-assessment.

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

126. There are 103 students undertaking entry level key skills, delivered through the Skills for Life dedicated team. A further 90 students, mainly adults, attend workshop sessions in literacy, numeracy or IT. Most full-time students receive tuition in literacy and numeracy key skills lessons as part of their main programme. In some vocational programmes, literacy and numeracy skills are combined fully with the assignments for the main subject. However, many areas have not completed the mapping necessary for this approach. There are 40 ESOL students, including some who recently arrived from the newly enlarged European Community. In other areas of the college, 156 students are receiving additional learning support. The Skills for Life team also offers literacy and numeracy to a small number of students in the community. Plans are at an advanced stage to offer literacy, language and numeracy support to employees at a large local factory. The college's community provision is small given the nature of the area in which it operates and attracts few students from areas which are usually under-represented in FE.

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

127. Students' achievements are satisfactory. Pass rates have risen for key skills at level 2 and there has been a move to introduce external accreditation at entry level and levels 1 and 2 in literacy and numeracy. A large proportion of earlier Skills for Life students were awarded college certificates for attending and completing courses.

128. Records of work show that students are making good progress in many workshop lessons. Students from the Skills for Life workshop lessons have followed a number of good progression paths. For example, one student who is visually impaired has now moved on to a counselling course, another student with severe short-term memory loss following illness has now commenced a beauty course. Some 14 students referred from local comprehensive schools have gained a national test level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy, thereby enabling progression to special teaching

assistant posts. Adults are articulate in lessons and the standard of students' oral and written work in discrete literacy and numeracy lessons is high. Most students are well motivated and work hard in lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Basic literacy course 1 year	Entry	No. of starts	*	60	118
		% retention	*	30	94
		% pass rate	*	28	94
Key skills communication 1 year	1	No. of starts	91	580	306
		% retention	11	79	71
		% pass rate	11	10	27
Key skills application of number 1 year	1	No. of starts	156	446	600
		% retention	40	79	88
		% pass rate	40	10	34
Key skills communication 1 year	2	No. of starts	174	162	162
		% retention	91	88	94
		% pass rate	74	40	71
Key skills application of number 1 year	2	No. of starts	38	195	140
		% retention	45	86	82
		% pass rate	45	11	48

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

\* course did not run

***Quality of education and training***

129. The standard of teaching and learning in discrete literacy and numeracy lessons is high, with all lessons observed by inspectors judged to be good or better. Teachers construct interesting and stimulating lessons to meet the needs of their students. Students work hard and develop good speaking and listening skills. In one very good lesson, students were studying a newspaper report of a puppy which had been left in a wheelie bin. The teacher organised a rhythmic syllables counting game to help students read the article, at the same time as ensuring that the puppy's situation provoked much discussion. She used the outcomes of the discussion to develop a writing frame, from which students could produce a simulated eye witness account of the event. She carefully ensured that the task was adapted to suit the needs of individuals and the final results were some stunning crime reports from students who were at entry level. In the cross-college lessons, primarily key skills at levels 1 and 2, teaching and learning are generally less successful. There is limited use of effective target setting to inform the planning of lessons, additional learning support tutors are not always used effectively and there is insufficient use of ILT to support literacy and numeracy learning. However, in a successful key skills level 1 lesson, hairdressing and beauty therapy students were developing their writing and IT skills by organising an 'Advice Page' for a hairdressing magazine. The tutor skilfully helped the students integrate professional hairdressing expertise with computer design and writing competence.

130. Resources in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. The workshop lessons are housed mainly in spacious, well-equipped rooms with good access to networked computers. Well-qualified, caring staff provide a supportive educational environment for students in discrete provision. However, some staff with cross-college responsibility for teaching or supporting literacy and numeracy have not

received any specialist training and therefore lack the specific skills required to work with students at this level. The college is committed to providing training in the future. Members of the Skills for Life team have worked with support staff from the vocational areas to share good practice and help them support their students' literacy and numeracy skills more effectively, but as yet this has not had widespread impact. There is a failure to utilise ILT sufficiently within literacy and numeracy lessons and there are no interactive whiteboards in the department to assist those students who may have some physical difficulties in writing.

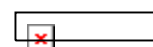
131. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress are generally satisfactory. All full-time students complete an initial assessment which determines their standards of literacy and numeracy, but diagnostic assessment is delayed regularly. This has resulted in the setting of general targets rather than specific targets for individual students. However, within the workshop sessions each student works to very detailed individual targets. Teachers ensure that in every lesson there is a period of collegiate work in order to develop speaking and listening skills. Students' progress is measured against an individual learning plan twice each term, but some targets for students are too general to be of much use and they are not shared with all relevant parties. Students generally receive encouraging, timely and constructive feedback on their work.

132. Personal support for students is good in the Skills for Life department. However, across the college there is insufficient liaison between additional support teachers and vocational teachers which results in a lack of cohesion in meeting students' needs. Sometimes the support is not timely, not detailed adequately nor tailored directly to individuals' needs. At the time of inspection, some students were still waiting for their support needs to be finalised.

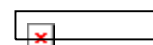
### ***Leadership and management***

133. The discrete Skills for Life provision is well led and managed, and continuing professional development is bringing about improvements in teaching and learning. However, the management of literacy and numeracy across the college is inadequate. In some curriculum areas, key skills are put into the context of the students' main programmes of study and good liaison exists between the vocational lecturer and key skills teachers. In other areas this is not the case. Strategies for the improvement of existing practice exist, but current management structures do not ensure that recommendations are always followed. The college's self-assessment report and course reviews are insufficiently rigorous. However, the college has made some progress in dealing with the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report.

## **Part D: College data**



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



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	43	47
2	27	39
3	15	7
4/5	0	0
Other	15	7





Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	56	38	6	52
Level 2 (intermediate)	53	45	2	47
Level 1 (foundation)	64	36	0	22
Other sessions	83	14	3	36
<b>Totals</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>157</b>

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