



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Southampton City College

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

[Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[How well is the college led and managed?](#)

[To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?](#)

[How well are students and trainees guided and supported?](#)

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

[Part B: The college as a whole](#)

[Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors](#)

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

[Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[Construction](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Business administration, management and professional studies](#)

[Information and communications technology](#)

[Hospitality, leisure and travel](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Health, social care and public services](#)

[English, languages and communications](#)

[Foundation programmes](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

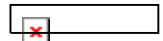
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age](#)

[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

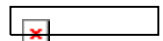
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

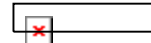


Name of college:	Southampton City College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Lindsey Noble
Address of college:	St Mary Street Southampton Hampshire SO14 1AR
Telephone number:	(023) 8057 7400
Fax number:	(023) 8057 7473
Chair of governors:	Beryl Pratley
Unique reference number:	130696
Name of reporting inspector:	Neil Edwards
Dates of inspection:	6-10 December 2004

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



Southampton City College is a medium size general further education (FE) college situated close to the city centre, in the St Mary's area of Southampton. The college provides adult and community learning at several locations throughout the city as well as at the main campus. Adult learning also takes place at the premises of some local employers. The college provides marine engineering training at a purpose-built site in Woolston on the river Itchen, a few miles from the main campus. The college delivers a wide and predominantly vocational curriculum to students aged 16 to 18 and to adults. There were 1,050 students aged 16 to 18 and 4,200 aged over 19 enrolled at the time of inspection in term one, with final over 19 enrolment for the previous year being 9,854. The college delivers work-based learning in engineering, construction, hospitality and to a small number of learners in hair and beauty. The college also delivers technical certificates on behalf of other local work-based learning providers.

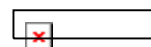
Within the Southampton metropolitan area, there are two other FE colleges, one in the east of the city and one in the west. Most adult and community learning is delivered by Southampton Local Education Authority (LEA) in collaboration with local partners. The college delivers a substantial amount of this provision on behalf of the LEA. There are five work-based learning providers in the Southampton area. The University of Southampton and Southampton Institute of Higher Education also provide some specialist post-16 FE. There is one school sixth form in the area and within a four-mile radius of the college there are five Learndirect centres and access points.

The Southampton metropolitan area is a unitary authority. Southampton has a large population with a broadly equal female to male ratio. The percentage of the population from minority ethnic groups is 7.6% which is higher than the South East average of 4.9% and lower than the national average of 9.08%. Unemployment is 2.5%, but in some wards it is as high as 5.6%, well above the national average of 3%. A high percentage of residents have no qualifications and the proportion of adults with national vocational qualification (NVQ) levels is lower than local averages.

In Southampton, approximately 68% of school leavers stay on in education and training. The number of students taking part in higher education (HE) is also low compared to other local areas. Employment in the traditional engineering and manufacturing sectors is declining, whilst opportunities are growing in the service-based sector. Just over 30% of businesses are in distribution, hotels and restaurants. Fewer than 30% are in banking, finance and insurance, and 10% are in construction.

Southampton has the second largest container port in the country. Some £75million of regeneration money has been used to improve inner-city jobs, homes and businesses. The areas around Southampton have some of the most deprived wards in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Some of the most depressed areas are clustered around the main college campus. The Southampton travel-to-learn area has recently been the subject of a local area review by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

How effective is the college?



Teaching is satisfactory in most areas and the standards of practical work are good. Retention rates have improved on most courses at levels 1 and 2, although numbers of students have declined. The college provides a good range of courses that meets the needs of students and the local community,

curriculum areas and satisfactory in six curriculum areas. The marine engineering provision was judged to be good. The provision for work-based learning was satisfactory in one curriculum area and unsatisfactory in two curriculum areas. The college's main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- clear strategic direction
- good governance
- the quality of students' practical work
- improving retention rates on many courses at levels 1 and 2
- good support for students
- the wide range of provision, particularly up to level 3
- well-planned programme for refurbishment and renewal of buildings.

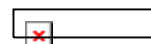
What should be improved

- leadership and management of work-based learning
- retention and pass rates on apprenticeship programmes
- the proportion of good or better teaching and learning
- some workshops and other practical areas

- student enrolments to meet targets
- the use of data to inform thorough quality assurance at course level
- systems to ensure appropriate arrangements for staff cover.

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

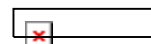


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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
Construction	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . Pass rates on most courses are high, although framework achievements and progress on apprenticeship programmes are poor. Practical teaching is good, although theory lessons are often dull and uninspiring. The standard of students' practical work is good. Leadership and management of work-based learning are unsatisfactory.
Engineering	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for marine engineering is good . The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . Pass rates on most courses are high, although retention rates and the achievement of complete frameworks for work-based learning are poor. Attendance and timekeeping in marine studies is very good. There are a wide range of engineering programmes designed to meet employers' needs and the standard of practical work on all courses is very good. Leadership and management of work-based learning are unsatisfactory.
Business administration, management and professional studies	Satisfactory. Most courses have high retention and pass rates, although they are low on some courses. Teachers make good use of computers to promote and support learning. Students value the wide range of formal and informal additional support. There is insufficient use of quality assurance procedures to inform improvement.
Information and communications technology	Satisfactory. There are good achievements on computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and retention rates are high on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) and systems support programmes. There are low retention rates on the national diploma in

	computer studies. On full-time courses, students are taught well and receive good support, although on part-time courses there is insufficient attention to individual learning needs. The management of part-time provision is unsatisfactory.
Hospitality, leisure and travel	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning in hospitality and catering is satisfactory . There are high pass rates on level 2 food preparation and cake decoration, although pass rates on NVQ level 1 food and drink service are low. Teaching is good across the provision, which is enriched through a good range of additional qualifications and other activities. There are some poor resources to support learning but overall support and guidance for students is very good. There is insufficient co-ordination of quality assurance across the provision.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. There are high retention and pass rates on hairdressing level 1 programmes, although there are low retention rates on most beauty programmes. The standard of students' written work in both hairdressing and beauty therapy is good. Good support is given in both tutorial and learning support for full-time students. Resources are poor and the hairdressing and beauty salons are outdated and overcrowded.
Health, social care and public services	Good. There are high pass rates and good retention rates on many courses, although pass rates are low on full-time early years and counselling courses. Teachers demonstrate the use of a good variety of skills to meet individuals' needs. Support for students is good, with particularly effective and extensive support for part-time students. Recent changes in curriculum organisation and the move to task-based learning in early years have been well managed.
English, languages and communications	Good. There are very high pass rates on the certificate of proficiency in English course, although retention rates are low on some English courses. There is much good teaching and learning with good and effectively used resources. Student support is good, as is leadership and management. There is insufficient use and practice of the target language in modern foreign languages lessons.
Foundation programmes	Good. Students achieve well on literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes, although attendance on literacy and numeracy courses is low. There is much good teaching on literacy and numeracy programmes and particularly good use of computers to support learning on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes. There is a lack of challenging activities for learning in some lessons for those with learning difficulties. Leadership and management are good.

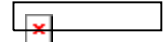
How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, senior managers and governors provide a clear strategic direction for the college and leadership is good. Curriculum management is satisfactory in most areas, although the leadership and management of work-based learning are unsatisfactory. The retention and pass rates on most courses have improved and are generally at or above national averages. Quality assurance arrangements are generally satisfactory. The self-assessment report covers all areas of the college and has correctly identified most of the college's

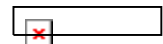
college and closely monitor performance to achieve its financial objectives and further improve student achievements. Equality of opportunity is adequately promoted. Financial management and value for money are satisfactory.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



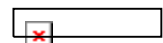
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. A high priority is given to those with additional needs because of learning difficulties and disabilities and for those from under-represented groups. The college has effective links with local schools and a wide range of local community groups and organisations which have helped successfully widen participation. The college has assessed its accommodation against the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) criteria and this has resulted in significant improvements to access with ramps, automatic doors and lifts. There is good provision of adaptive technologies such as induction loops for those who are hard of hearing. The college meets its statutory duties under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. There is effective promotion of race relations through induction, staff training and publicity materials. Student performance and staff and student recruitment are monitored and evaluated thoroughly, although an action plan to address the resulting conclusions is not yet in place.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students receive good pastoral and academic support. Support and guidance for students are managed well. Information on all aspects of student support is comprehensive. A good range of specialist services such as additional learning support, dyslexia support, careers guidance, counselling, welfare and financial advice, nursing and chaplaincy are easily accessible. The learning support and student services teams include an appropriate range of specialist staff. The college provides effective pre-course guidance for all students. A comprehensive induction provides students with a good introduction to their courses. Good childcare facilities are provided and students are assisted in obtaining financial support for childcare. Tutorials provide good pastoral support for students. Tutorials are generally well planned and follow comprehensive frameworks developed for the range of students. The quality of tutorial support is less effective for part-time students, although in health and social care it is good. Guidance for those going on to HE or progressing within the college is good. Cross-college monitoring and tracking of student support is underdeveloped. Informal communication is sometimes ineffective and this occasionally results in students receiving poor support. There is insufficient evaluation of the impact of learning support, although improvements to this are planned.

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

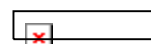
- the learning accommodation and facilities in new and refurbished parts of the main site
- the friendly, helpful and approachable staff
- the safe, friendly and welcoming environment
- the good additional and personal support they receive
- the library facility
- the learning resource centre used by early years and business studies students
- the social activities
- the access they have to information and communications technology (ICT)
- being treated better than at school
- the good advice guidance and counselling services.

What they feel could be improved

- car-parking arrangements at the main campus
- the advertised part-time courses being cancelled
- the outdated resources in some areas of the college

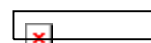
- the quality of some accommodation in older buildings
- the variety and price of food in the refectory
- better provision of library books for English as a foreign language students.

Other information

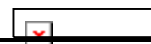


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

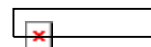


Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	56	33	11
19+ and WBL*	63	30	7
Learning 16-18	59	32	9
19+ and WBL*	65	30	5

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. Data on students' achievements were provided by the LSC for 2002 and 2003 and by the college for 2004.

16 to 18 year olds

2. Enrolments by students aged 16 to 18 for courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were 1,676, 1,203 and 523, respectively, in 2002/03. Retention rates for most long courses at level 1 and 2 and for short courses improved steadily between 2001 and 2004, from below to above or close to the national averages, although retention rates on level 3 courses remain below the national average. Pass rates show improvement in each of the years between 2001 and 2004. Pass rates on short courses were slightly above the national average between 2001 and 2003, and have improved to well above national average in 2004. For students who achieve their qualifications, progression to higher level FE courses, HE and employment is good. Attendance during the inspection was 75%.

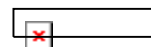
3. There are particularly high retention rates on level 1 trowel occupations, GNVQ in ICT and the information technology (IT) systems support courses. There are high retention and pass rates in NVQ level 1 hairdressing. There are low retention rates on the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) business studies course, national diploma in computer studies and most beauty therapy courses. The college has very high pass rates on the certificate of proficiency in English as well as high achievements on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes. Pass rates on some courses are low. These include the NVQ level 1 food and drink service and level 2 electrical installation programme. There are particularly poor retention rates and framework achievements on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes in construction and engineering. The apprenticeship programme in hospitality and catering is relatively new and learners are making steady progress.

4. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory on most courses. Attendance and punctuality are particularly good on marine engineering programmes. There is low attendance on most literacy and numeracy courses. Students' work in engineering is good. In marine engineering, students work with a wide range of high-quality materials and produce work to an excellent standard. Students are industrious in their work and demonstrate high levels of practical skill. In one practical lesson, students were working on a new boat for the maritime centre where the standards of jointing and finishing were of a high industrial standard. Students achieve a good level of practical skills in food preparation and cooking. They work with a wide range of food commodities and are able to incorporate these into complex dishes. Students in practical construction lessons also work to high standards. Practical work is carried out safely and students develop a good range of craft skills and produce high-quality practical work in bricklaying, wood crafts and plumbing. Students in hairdressing develop good skills in cutting and colouring and are making good progress. Although the standards of written work are generally satisfactory, the quality of theory work in some areas is not always of a high standard.

Adult learners

5. Enrolments by students aged 19 and over for courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were 6,636, 3,768 and 2,649, respectively, in 2002/03. Enrolment for short courses was 6,624. Retention rates have improved significantly for courses at levels 1 and 2 and are around the national average for level 3. Pass rates show year-on-year improvement between 2001 and 2004 and are now well above the national averages for all adult courses. Pass rates on short courses were slightly above the national average in 2001 and declined slightly in 2003. These have improved to above national average in 2004. Progression to HE, other FE courses and employment is good.

Quality of education and training



6. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 169 lessons and tutorials. Teaching was good or better in 60% of lessons, satisfactory in 31% and less than satisfactory in 9%. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory or better, although there were some significant variations between curriculum areas. The best teaching was observed in health and social care, English language and communications, hospitality, leisure and travel, and literacy and numeracy. The proportion of good or better lessons is lowest in ESOL, engineering, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The grades awarded for learning overall were slightly higher than those for teaching. Grades awarded by inspectors for teaching and learning were lower than those in observations of lessons undertaken by the college.

7. In areas with significant numbers of students aged both between 16 and 18, and aged over 19, teaching was better for students aged 19 and over in construction, engineering, business administration and English, language and communications. Teaching for students aged 16 to 18 was better in ICT and health and social care, while in foundation programmes the quality of teaching was the same for both groups. Teaching is most effective on level 1 and level 2 programmes.

8. Teaching and learning are well planned in most curriculum areas. In the better lessons, teachers provide varied, interesting and relevant activities. Students enjoy the lessons, show high levels of motivation while consolidating and extending their learning significantly. Teachers in these lessons have a good understanding of the individual learning needs of their students, and pay particular attention to meeting these. They use a good range of strategies to engage the least able in learning, whilst ensuring there is sufficient challenge for the most advanced. Teachers make effective use of question and answer techniques to develop learning and check students' understanding. In English as a foreign language and literacy and numeracy lessons, group work is used particularly well. In task-based learning sessions on early years programmes, students are successfully encouraged to develop the skills to learn independently. Teaching of theory and practical skills is good for hospitality students. Generally, ICT is used well to foster learning, especially in business studies and health and social care. However, it is not used sufficiently in engineering or construction. In many areas, additional learning support helps students with very specific needs to make good progress.

9. In the less successful lessons, lesson planning is often weak, and students are unclear about the learning objectives for the lesson. In these lessons, the teachers' instructions are perfunctory or confusing and students are unsure of how to proceed with activities and tasks. In other weaker lessons, students are not sufficiently stimulated or stretched. Questions are rarely directed to individuals, and many students remain passive and uninvolved for considerable periods. Teachers do not check students' understanding often enough. In some lessons, students receive too little praise or encouragement.

10. Full-time teaching staff are well qualified and experienced and over 80% have recognised teaching qualifications. Many part-time teachers have valuable experience of current working practice which they bring to the college, and over half of these hold an appropriate teaching qualification. Currently, the college has 175 full-time staff. There are also 169 part-time teaching staff equating to 27% full time. In the last two years, there has been a considerable emphasis on the recruitment of learning support and volunteer staff to work alongside and supplement the work of teachers. The support they provide is valued by their teaching colleagues and the students they help. There are shortages of teachers and technicians in a few areas. Some specialist teaching has been affected and in a small number of cases students work without supervision when staff are absent.

11. The college has a strong commitment to training and developing its staff. The most recent annual staff development plan clearly identifies priority areas. Currently, around 10% of full-time and part-time staff are working towards recognised teaching qualifications supported by the college.

Substantial numbers of staff are working towards assessor and verifier awards. A team of advanced practitioner teachers provide a good range of staff training to meet group and individual needs identified in the college's teaching and learning observations. However, attendance at these is sometimes low. There is inadequate industrial updating for staff in a number of areas, including engineering.

12. The college has a clear development strategy for renewal of its teaching and learning accommodation. It is part-way through an extensive and carefully planned programme of building and refurbishment. Newly built and refurbished accommodation is of a good standard. There is a particular emphasis on providing well equipped and attractive teaching and learning areas and reducing the currently high proportion of underutilised space. Newly established, well-equipped learning resource centres provide good settings for learning in business studies and for care and early years students. However, the open learning areas lack appropriate privacy for some individual learning support.

13. Some of the older buildings have classrooms that are bland and uncomfortable. Some of the practical areas planned for refurbishment are unsatisfactory. These include training kitchens, salons for hair and beauty, and workshops in construction and motor vehicle engineering. In hair salons and motor vehicle workshops, some accommodation has health and safety hazards. Workshop accommodation for marine engineering is spacious and appropriate. Standards in community venues used for part-time adult courses are generally satisfactory.

14. Library facilities are mainly good. The library is spacious, with ample private study areas and books, and a range of audio and video materials. There are sufficient computers for student use, although some software is outdated, and not all computers are able to run specialist programmes. Elsewhere in the college, students have adequate access to ICT facilities. In most curriculum areas, equipment is satisfactory or better, with appropriate stocks of textbooks and other materials. English as a foreign language students make good use of a modern language laboratory, and teachers use audio cassette players effectively in lessons. Some equipment is outdated particularly in catering areas and in hair salons, and tools in some construction workshops are poor.

15. Access for students with mobility difficulties is good in newly built areas and poor in some of the oldest accommodation. New building work and improvements already underway are planned to improve access to many of the college buildings. Refectory facilities are spacious. Car parking space for students and staff with restricted mobility is good, although restricted for others. The college has reduced its car parking areas in order to rationalise valuable space.

16. Assessments are generally well planned and managed and are thorough in most areas. However, in some areas of construction, engineering, IT, and hospitality and catering, there are some unsatisfactory assessment practices. In most areas, a good range of appropriate assessment methods are used. In management studies, for example, a good range of vocationally relevant and challenging assignments are set, although in hospitality and catering, there is insufficient assessment of apprentices in the workplace. On most courses, students receive prompt and constructive written and verbal feedback which effectively helps them to improve their performance. However, in construction, the quality of assessors' written feedback is not always clear. For most students, assessment briefs are well written and follow awarding body guidelines.

17. Students are well informed about their progress and performance. Progress is monitored effectively at regular tutorials. Tracking of student progress is good in most areas and progress towards learning goals and qualifications are recorded appropriately. In most curriculum areas, individual learning plans are up to date and contain detailed information on achievements and enrichment activities. However, in ICT and on some English short courses individual learning plans are used poorly. Employers, parents and other interested parties are kept informed of student's progress at twice yearly parents' evenings and annual reports. Tutors and support staff have more frequent meetings with parents and employers as necessary.

18. Internal verification is generally well managed and effective. Procedures are clear and well documented and are followed by most staff. On electrical installation and bricklaying courses, internal verification is poor and in beauty therapy internal verification records are not clearly

recorded. The college has introduced monitoring arrangements to try to improve matters.

19. The college provides a good range of courses that meets the needs of the students and the local community. A needs analysis has been undertaken and a strategy has been developed that clearly defines the approach to future curriculum development. A strategic decision to focus on vocational and professional provision has led to the withdrawal of general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) and advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) courses that are provided by neighbouring colleges. This decision has meant that student numbers have fallen in the short term. There is a good range of vocational choices for students aged 16 to 18 at levels from entry level to level 3. The focus for the college is on provision below level 3. The majority of students are studying at level 1 and level 2.

20. Courses are offered in most vocational areas, including construction, engineering, business, hospitality and catering, leisure, and health and community care. The college is one of only five colleges nationally to offer courses in marine engineering. There is a good range of provision for adult students. Around 50 students are enrolled on access to HE courses and about 350 are studying on other full-time courses at the college. A wide range of part-time courses are provided for adults at the college and at a number of other venues in the City. Around 9,000 adult students study at the college part time. Courses are available in most vocational areas and for leisure activities such as yoga, dressmaking and pottery. There is a satisfactory range of additional qualifications available to students. Short courses are available in areas such as first aid, health and safety, food hygiene and moving and handling. There is a good range of short courses in health and care. Bespoke provision for local businesses has been developed, such as courses for door supervisors, licensees and basic skills for employees of a bus company.

21. The college's arrangements for developing students' key skills are satisfactory. Full-time students aged 16 to 18 are assessed at the beginning of the course and placed on one of three progression pathways. Key skills are delivered by vocational tutors supported by teachers who are part of the key skills team. In the past, there have been very small numbers of students who have achieved key skills qualifications. This issue has been recognised and addressed by the college and there is evidence of some improvement in students' achievements in 2003/04. Work-based learners study key skills early in the course in order to improve their framework achievement.

22. Links with local schools are very good. Staff from the college attend assemblies, careers events and evening events at all the Southampton schools. Taster days are provided for Year 11 pupils, and students are used as 'ambassadors' to encourage pupils to progress at 16. 'Masterclasses' are run for more able pupils in Years 8 to 10 in areas such as catering, stage production, digital arts and marine technology. There is good provision for young people aged 14 to 16. More than 700 pupils from local schools attended the college in 2003/04 to access vocational courses. They study a wide variety of courses including hairdressing, construction and engineering. The quality of teaching and learning for young people aged 14 to 16 is mostly good.

23. Students receive good pastoral and academic support. Cross-college support and guidance is well managed and there is comprehensive information on all aspects of student support. A good range of specialist services such as additional learning support, dyslexia support, careers guidance, counselling, welfare and financial advice, nursing and chaplaincy are easily accessible. There is insufficient evaluation of the impact of learning support, although improvements to this are planned. The learning support and student services teams include an appropriate range of specialist staff. Staff sensitively encourage students to take up identified additional support. Support services are well publicised through the induction process and through publicity material. Students have good awareness and make effective use of the services on offer.

24. The college provides effective pre-course guidance for all students. Students feel that they have been well prepared for their programmes and that they have chosen courses appropriate for their needs and abilities. All full-time and substantive part-time students undergo effective initial assessment, identifying additional learning or other support needs and preferred learning styles. Initial assessments are marked efficiently and results are given to students and tutors quickly. In most areas, they are used well to inform individual learning plans. Arrangements are put in place to support students at the start of their programmes. However, some late enrolments are not assessed

and there is little group support to cater for literacy numeracy and ESOL students' needs identified from this group. Initial assessment for part-time students in ICT is unsatisfactory. Although there is some established quality assurance of initial assessment, there is insufficient monitoring of the use of assessment in properly developing individual action plans.

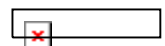
25. A comprehensive induction provides students with a good introduction to their courses. Most course information is relevant and up to date. This information is reinforced through well-structured tutorials. Students appreciate their induction programme and feel that it effectively settles them into college life. Student attendance is carefully and effectively monitored through automatic weekly reports

26. Good childcare facilities are provided on the main site which are fully used and additional facilities are secured where needed. Students are assisted in obtaining financial support for childcare. The student services manager has overall responsibility for child protection and the implementation of the college's child protection policy, however, there is insufficient awareness of child protection issues amongst staff.

27. Tutorials provide good pastoral support for students. Each full-time student has a personal tutor and attends individual tutorials at least twice a term, normally more often. Tutorials are generally well planned and follow comprehensive frameworks developed for the range of students. However, there is no formal mechanism to use tutor views in course development reviews. Tutors conduct individual tutorials in a manner sensitive to individual needs and equality of opportunity. The tutorial support is highly valued by students. Weekly structured group tutorials keep students well informed about available services, grants, college events and other relevant issues. However, group tutorials in construction are poor. The quality of tutorial support is less effective for part-time students, although in health and social care it is good. Tutorials are monitored through observation and effective training is provided for tutors, although not all tutors take up this opportunity.

28. There is a well-equipped facility close to the main library with specialist careers advisers and Connexions service staff. Guidance for those going on to HE or progressing within the college is good. Cross-college monitoring and tracking of student support is underdeveloped. Informal communication is sometimes ineffective and occasionally students do not receive effective support.

Leadership and management



29. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has made good progress in addressing weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The principal, senior managers and governors provide a clear vision and strategic direction for the future of the college. Changes to the management structure have improved communications and clarified responsibilities. The college suffered a severe financial deficit in 2001 and is slowly improving its financial position. However, enrolments in recent years have been below target. The college's recovery plan is realistic and sets clear targets for student enrolments and cost savings.

30. The principal provides good leadership and has been very effective in managing the change in the college's strategic direction. The college's management was restructured in 2003. Accountabilities are clear and lines of communication are short. The revised senior managers' roles are closely aligned to meeting the key objectives and strategic priorities. Most heads of school and most newly appointed curriculum team leaders are clear about their roles. Most have benefited from training and support from senior managers. However, not all teaching staff are clear about the different responsibilities of these middle managers. A new strategic plan is currently being devised in consultation with governors and staff. The senior management team has focused its efforts effectively on improving the students' experience, including the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum choice, workforce development and improved accommodation.

31. Communications in the college have improved. The principal and senior managers have responded positively to staff and student surveys. The management style is now more open and consultative. The college intranet, monthly newsletters and regular staff conferences have improved communications and kept staff informed about the college's progress in meeting its objectives. Course teams meet regularly, but minutes do not always identify clearly who is responsible for actions or give a timescale for monitoring and completion. The college has good links with the local community and businesses. It is an active member in the Southampton partnership for learning that is chaired by the principal.

32. Governance is good. Governors have a wide range of expertise. They are well informed about the college's strengths and weaknesses and understand the key issues facing the college. The board are committed to the success of the college and set appropriate and demanding targets. They have recently restructured their meetings to enable all members to be fully involved in the monitoring of targets and the financial performance of the college. Attendance at corporation and committee meetings is good. Members have good working relationships with senior managers.

33. The college has a comprehensive accommodation plan which is aligned closely to future curriculum requirements. New buildings will replace the unsatisfactory accommodation and provide much improved classrooms, workshops and staff accommodation. The first phase, completed in September 2004, provides a welcoming and stimulating learning environment and a one-stop facility for student guidance and support. At the time of the inspection, the accommodation across the rest of the campus was variable and some was poor. In some curriculum areas, workshop standards are well below those expected in industry.

34. Curriculum management is satisfactory in most areas. Well managed areas include: health and social care; English; languages and communications; and foundation programmes. Team working is generally good and many areas share good practice. Strategies to improve poor retention and pass rates and improve the quality of teaching and learning are being implemented successfully in many curriculum areas. The college's retention and pass rates are now at or above national averages in many areas. However, the proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who complete their course and successfully gain their qualification at level 3 is lower than the national average. Some aspects of management are underdeveloped. Courses that perform poorly are identified, but departments have yet to systematically use data to set and monitor targets. At the time of the inspection, there was no curriculum leader in beauty therapy and the management of part-time provision in ICT is unsatisfactory. The management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory in engineering and construction. Outcomes for both these areas are poor. The sharing of good practice is not consistently applied across the college. The college has found it difficult to recruit sufficient well-qualified teachers in some curriculum areas. In a few areas, staffing issues, for example, difficulties in finding substitute teachers, have affected students adversely.

35. The system for observing lessons is well established. Teachers are observed at least annually. However, the outcomes are not always linked to appraisal. Overall, the grades awarded by the college are higher than those awarded by inspectors during the inspection week. Teachers who receive unsatisfactory observation grades are well supported by mentors and advanced practitioners. The college is committed to workforce development. A comprehensive staff development plan provides good opportunities for all staff to develop their skills through internal and external training events. It takes into account the college's strategic objectives, action plans, lesson observation and staff appraisal outcomes. There is insufficient take-up of staff industrial updating. The effectiveness of the impact of training is not consistently monitored. The college holds three staff conferences a year when staff are updated on issues and developments in the college and FE. Recent topics have included SENDA, race equality, curriculum development, action for business and the challenges and opportunities facing the college. In 2003/04, only a small proportion of part-time staff were appraised and full-time staff in some areas have not had a recent appraisal.

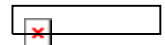
36. Quality assurance arrangements overall are satisfactory. The self-assessment report covers all areas of the college's activity. In most curriculum areas, the college has correctly identified the strengths and weaknesses of provision. The grades awarded by the college are mainly in line with inspectors judgements, although the quality of provision in care, English, Languages and communication have improved since self-assessment and inspectors found these areas to be good.

There is inconsistent use of data or outcomes of lesson observations to review performance at course level. Course reviews are mostly satisfactory, although some are insufficiently rigorous because they do not set out clear strategies and targets for improvements. In a few areas, new systems have not yet had time to impact on students' achievements. The monitoring of the college's internal verification procedures are incomplete and practices across the college vary considerably. There is insufficient systematic follow-up to ensure improvements are implemented. The roles and responsibilities between curriculum staff and those in the work-based learning unit are insufficiently clearly defined. The quality assurance procedures in work-based learning are unsatisfactory and there is inadequate action planning at reviews.

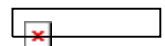
37. Promotion of equality of opportunities is satisfactory. The equality and diversity policy is up to date and incorporates a race equality action plan. The action plan has clear objectives, but does not include specific targets or actions to address these. Most staff have taken part in equality and diversity training and equality of opportunity is covered during student induction. Actions to widen participation are good. Links with local schools are good, and a wide range of courses are available to meet the needs of young people aged 14 to 16. A larger proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds are recruited than in the local community. The college works well with partners in the community. People with a wide range of learning needs are well supported. The tutorial programme is used effectively to promote equality and diversity and there are positive images in publicity materials. The college collects student data by ethnicity, gender, disability and age. This has been analysed, but has not yet led to an action plan to address the issues. The retention and pass rates for minority ethnic students are generally lower than that of other groups. Few course reviews have strategies to address this issue or how to redress some gender imbalances.

38. The college's management information system is much improved and is now satisfactory. New software and registration systems have been introduced. Procedures to ensure timely and accurate student data are effective. The data is used well by senior managers to monitor the college's progress in achieving its targets. However, it is not used consistently by middle managers. Teaching staff have access to the staff intranet where student details and attendance information are kept. However, the management information system cannot be used for timetabling or tracking students' progress. Financial management is satisfactory and financial controls have improved. The college has financial category C status. Governors receive monthly management accounts which enable them to monitor the college's financial position. The college's financial position is improving, but it failed to meet its funding target in 2003. The financial difficulties in recent years have been addressed effectively through wage controls, purchasing controls and other savings. Senior managers have introduced detailed budgeting at course level, enabling heads of school to be much clearer about the way they deploy resources. These are reviewed regularly with the director of curriculum. This is improving value for money, by helping to ensure that teachers' time is used efficiently and that courses cover their costs and make a contribution to the college budget. However, the college has yet to achieve its targets for student numbers. In 2004, the college made a small operating surplus and expects to break even in 2005. With the overall improvement in success rates, the college is providing satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- high retention rates on level 1 trowel occupations

- good standard of students' practical work

- good teaching and learning in practical lessons.

Weaknesses

- low and declining pass rates on level 2 electrical installation

- poor achievements on apprenticeship programmes

- dull and uninspiring teaching in most theory lessons

- poor target setting for work-based learners

- unsatisfactory leadership and management of work-based learning.

Scope of provision

39. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time construction craft courses at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. These include trowel occupations, wood occupations, decorative occupations, plumbing, heating and ventilating and electrical installation. Technician courses include the national diploma in construction and national certificates in construction, civil engineering and building services engineering. The college also offers Higher National Certificates (HNCs) in construction and building services engineering. There are 283 full-time students, of whom 77% were aged 16 to 18. Most of the 471 part-time students were aged 19 or over. There were also 126 foundation and advanced modern apprentices. Nearly 130 pupils aged 14 to 16 from 15 local schools attend the college for between 3 to 4 hours a week for five terms to gain the foundation construction crafts award. Female students account for 5% of construction students.

Achievement and standards

40. Pass rates on level 1 craft courses, level 2 plumbing and level 3 technician courses are high and have been consistently above the national averages over the last three years. On the level 2 electrical installation course, the pass rate is low and has steadily declined between 2001 and 2003. In 2004, it declined to 43%. Retention rates on level 1 trowel occupations improved to over 90% in 2003 and again in 2004. On level 2 plumbing, retention rates improved steadily to 75% in 2003, although they declined to 50% in 2004. Although the retention rates on level 1 wood occupations and level 3 technician courses were below the national averages in 2003, they improved to 93% and 68%, respectively, in 2004 and are now above the national averages.

41. Retention and pass rates on apprenticeship programmes are poor. Of the 151 apprentices who started between 2001 and 2004, 67 have left their programmes. Only 5 learners have completed their apprenticeship framework successfully and a further 19 have achieved their NVQ. Apprentices make slow progress towards the completion of their qualifications. Of the 126 apprentices currently on programme, 13 have already exceeded their planned duration on programme. Some apprentices have made little progress towards their NVQ despite nearing the end of their programme duration.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds 2360-05 electrical installation part 1 theory (2 year)	1	No. of starts	*	34	72
		% retention	*	91	65
		% pass rate	*	81	89
NVQ trowel occupations (1 year)	1	No. of starts	18	28	18
		% retention	89	79	94
		% pass rate	69	91	94
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	46	41	31
		% retention	87	68	68
		% pass rate	63	57	81
NVQ plumbing (3 year)	2	No. of starts	16	14	24
		% retention	0	50	75
		% pass rate	0	100	94
City and Guilds 2360-07 electrical installation part 2 theory (1 year)	2	No. of starts	4	50	37
		% retention	75	90	92
		% pass rate	67	56	53
National certificates and diploma (2 year)	3	No. of starts	66	64	57
		% retention	74	69	54
		% pass rate	96	98	89

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

42. Teaching and learning in practical lessons are good. Teachers regularly check on students' progress and understanding. Teachers make good use of differentiated learning materials to help

students in mixed ability groups. Practical work is carried out safely. Students work well in practical lessons. They develop a good range of craft skills and produce high-quality practical work. For example, in a bricklaying lesson, students constructed good lightweight blockwork walls incorporating openings spanned by internal lintels to meet industrial standards. Work-based learners develop good practical skills in the workplace. Their employers and supervisors set high standards that the apprentices achieve. For example, one carpentry and joinery modern apprentice installed solid oak doors to a very high standard in the modernisation of a period property. In contrast, theory lessons are often dull and uninspiring. Lesson planning is poor and the learning needs of all students are not always considered. Students and staff do not make sufficient use of ICT to support learning. Specialist computer software is available, although rarely used. Key skills are developed appropriately, in a vocational context. Craft students' written work is satisfactory, although the quality of some technician students' drawings and sketches is poor. There are good opportunities for progression to employment, although there are few opportunities for full-time students to gain work experience outside the college.

43. The shortage of teachers and technician support has resulted in frequent cancellation of lessons and delayed student progress on some programmes. Adequate cover is not provided when staff are absent for some sessions. Some classrooms are poorly equipped and do not provide a good learning environment. The poor layout of some workshops makes it difficult for the adequate supervision of students.

44. The quality of assessment varies from adequate to unsatisfactory. Assessment decisions are not always clear and there is often insufficient feedback to students to help them improve their performance. In some cases, assessors' comments have graded work as excellent when the work contained major errors. Trainee assessors who assess in the workplace are not always observed or sufficiently checked. On some courses, there are effective sampling plans, internal verification checklists and internal verification records. On other courses, internal verification is not planned clearly.

45. Reviews of progress of work-based learners are poor. Too few specific or measurable targets are set. Individual learning plans do not contain milestones against which progress can be measured. Employers or work-based supervisors are seldom involved in the setting of targets.

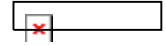
46. Support for students is satisfactory. All full-time students and work-based learners have initial diagnostic assessment to identify the additional support needed. However, some dyslexic students that were identified in need of additional support have not received adequate support. Students receive a thorough induction to health and safety. The organisation and delivery of tutorial support is often poor and students feel that their time in tutorials is not well spent.

Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff meet regularly and their meetings are clearly recorded. Course files are good, well organised and standardised across all courses. Individual programme self-assessment reports are not sufficiently thorough and there are no clear strategies to address the weaknesses identified. The curriculum self-assessment report is insufficiently self-critical. It overstates some of the strengths, and omits a number of significant weaknesses. In addition, the development plan is not sufficiently detailed.

48. The leadership and management of work-based learning in construction are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of clarity about staff responsibilities for work-based learning. Employers do not have sufficient information about the training undertaken in college to help them plan on-the-job training for their apprentices. There is insufficient analysis of data to monitor the performance of work-based programmes. Quality assurance arrangements for work-based learning are unsatisfactory. There are no checks made of the process to review learner progress. There is insufficient promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace. There is no systematic checking of the adequacy of employers' equal opportunities policies or that they operate in accordance with the college policy. Apprentices' understanding of equal opportunities is not adequately checked or reinforced.

Engineering



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

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

Contributory grade for marine engineering is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses

- very good attendance and punctuality on marine courses

- good range of provision

- high standard of learners' work.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates on apprenticeship programmes

- insufficient use of ICT in teaching

- inadequate health and safety in motor vehicle workshops

- weak target setting for work-based learners

- unsatisfactory management of work-based learning.

Scope of provision

49. The college provides a range of courses in marine, motor vehicle, mechanical and electrical/electronic engineering. Courses are also provided for apprentices through work-based learning. Courses include NVQs levels 1, 2 and 3 and national certificates and diplomas in engineering. Marine engineering programmes include yacht and boat and ship building, marine craft fitting, boat production and maintenance as well as marine technology. Courses in other areas include vehicle maintenance and repair, electrical and electronic engineering, and fabrication and welding competences. Marine engineering training is undertaken at the college Woolston site on the River Itchen. There are 128 full-time and 383 part-time students as well as 183 work-based learners undertaking apprenticeships. Many of the apprentices attend college for key skills and theory lessons. In addition, 18 students attend evening-only courses. The department has links with local schools and provides training for 217 Year 10 and 11 pupils on a schools link and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) programme.

Achievement and standards

50. The pass rates on NVQ level 1 maintaining automotive vehicles, City and Guilds fabrication and welding, national certificate and national diploma course are good. Pass rates are also good on the City and Guilds yacht and boat building joinery and the City and Guilds marine craft fitting competences II for 2002/03. Pass rates on most other courses are improving, although the pass rate on the City and Guilds electrical and electronic engineering part II course is poor. Retention rates on most courses are satisfactory and are close to national averages. However, retention and pass rates on engineering apprentice programmes are poor; only 28% of those starting in 2000/01 have fully completed the framework. Most full-time and part-time students are progressing well. Students are industrious in their work and demonstrate high levels of practical skill. In one practical lesson, students were working on a new boat for the maritime centre. They were proud of their work and dismantled and re-assembled components if they did not meet the exacting standards required.

51. The standard of learners' work is very good. Many national certificate and diploma students have been awarded merits and distinctions and work to a high standard. One learner's project, an oil filtration system, is now being used in industry. Other learner's projects have included the building of a model lift mechanism, including electronic circuitry and mechanical mechanisms. Very good marine work is produced by learners who are building a new work boat for centre. Students in marine engineering work with a good range of materials including hardwoods, softwoods, marine plywood, fibreglass and glass reinforced plastic. Apprentices in the dockyard and in a hovercraft manufacturer carry out highly responsible work to a very high standard for the Royal Navy and Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI). Pupils from local schools who are learning engineering are proud of their well-made weather vanes, made from twisted and rolled steel bar and welded with the help of the tutors. Attendance and punctuality on marine courses is very good. Attendance for lessons observed was 88% and this level of attendance and punctuality is maintained throughout the year. Apprentices acquire a wide range of workplace skills and carry out complex tasks.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ maintaining automotive vehicles	1	No. of starts	37	33	41
		% retention	65	82	76
		% pass rate	42	59	81
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	92	108	90
		% retention	75	85	83
		% pass rate	62	61	72
City and Guilds 2290/02	2	No. of starts	48	32	26

fabrication and welding competences part II		% retention	56	81	50
		% pass rate	41	50	85
City and Guilds 2450/03 yacht and boat building and ship joinery craft	2	No. of starts	36	*	26
		% retention	69	*	62
		% pass rate	88	*	50
City and Guilds 2320/02 electrical and electronic engineering part II	2	No. of starts	31	27	23
		% retention	94	81	83
		% pass rate	76	64	42
National diploma in engineering	3	No. of starts	15	*	13
		% retention	53	*	77
		% pass rate	73	*	90
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	56	45	52
		% retention	61	47	67
		% pass rate	91	90	83

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

52. The majority of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers provide good support for students. Most students work industriously in workshop lessons and develop good practical skills. In a practical electrical engineering lesson, students worked purposefully on a variety of tasks including testing diodes. The teacher checked each learner's progress regularly and gave appropriate help and advice. Course materials, task sheets and assignments are clear. In marine engineering lessons, learners are encouraged to give practical examples of work carried out by their employer to add interest to the lesson. In the less effective lessons, there is insufficient checking of learners' understanding. In one lesson, where students were working on the identification of vehicle engine parts, they received insufficient help and guidance from the teacher. ICT is not used sufficiently in lessons to support teaching and learning. Some low-quality whiteboards and poorly prepared overhead transparencies are in use.

53. Teachers have good relevant industrial and commercial experience. The training workshops for general engineering are satisfactory. The machining area is equipped with a good range of modern and refurbished lathes and milling machines and the computer-aided engineering section is well equipped with computerised numerical control (CNC) machinery and digital measurement equipment. The welding workshop is often cramped, although it has a good range of welding units and fabrication equipment. Much of the machinery is old, but it is adequate. Classrooms used for theory lessons are poorly furnished and often noisy. The quality of vehicles is satisfactory for motor vehicle maintenance, although there are some poor health and safety practices in motor vehicle workshops. Learners do not always wear protective overalls or safety footwear. One workshop is cramped and untidy.

54. First-year and second-year engineering apprentices are making satisfactory progress. Many have completed key skills tests in their first year and are building their key skills portfolios. Progress on performing engineering operations at NVQ level 2 course is also satisfactory. Progress for third-year and fourth-year apprentices has been slow and many are still working to complete key skills towards the end of their training period. There is insufficient use of work-based evidence for key skills. Tutors have no records of their learners' key skills progress or successes.

55. Assessments are undertaken to an appropriate standard and meet the awarding bodies' requirements. During practical lessons, students receive immediate verbal feedback on the quality of their work. However, in theory lessons, the monitoring of students' performance is weak and remedial action is not fully recorded. Lead internal verifiers keep assessors updated and ensure good practice is carried out. A comprehensive system of monitoring students' progress is implemented at the marine training centre.

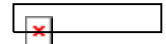
56. Target setting for work-based learners is weak. There is no record of checks made of equality of opportunities or health and safety during reviews of work-based learners. Portfolios are of a satisfactory standard with an adequate range of evidence.

Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course teams meet regularly. Course leaders compare their course performance with published national averages and set targets for improvement. Curriculum leaders and course leaders meet regularly to standardise assessment and internal verification procedures across the area. Tracking of learners key skills achievements is inconsistent. The college's self-assessment of engineering correctly identified some of the key strengths and weaknesses in the provision. A small number of marine engineering students were not taught over a three-week period after their specialist tutor had left the college. No adequate cover arrangements were put in place.

58. Leadership and management of the work-based provision are unsatisfactory. The number of work-based learners in motor vehicle, marine engineering and engineering has grown from 120 in 2002/03 to over 180 in 2004/05. Systems for tracking the progress of work-based learners are unsatisfactory. Although data are available it is not used routinely to assure the quality of the programme or help to identify trends in performance.

Business administration, management and professional studies



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on NVQ level 3 and 4 programmes

- high pass rates on GNVQ business programmes

- good use of information and learning technology (ILT) to promote and support effective learning

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on NVQ business administration level 1

- low retention rates on the AVCE business single award

- insufficient checking of students' learning in lessons

- lack of rigour in the use of quality assurance to inform improvement.

Scope of provision

59. The college provides courses in business studies, business administration, professional, management and trade union studies. Some business administration and management NVQs are assessed in the workplace. Full-time programmes are provided in business studies at levels 1, 2 and 3. There is extensive part-time provision in accounting, business administration and management. The trade union studies programme enables students to progress through union representatives and health and safety programmes as well as taking specialist IT courses. There are 30 full-time and 312 part-time students currently enrolled in the curriculum area.

Achievement and standards

60. Pass rates are high on full-time GNVQ business studies and on NVQ level 3 business administration and level 4 management programmes. The GNVQ intermediate pass rate has been an average of 25 percentage points above the national average over the past three years. The pass rates in 2002/03 for NVQ level 3 business administration and level 4 management programmes were 91% and 100%, respectively. Pass rates are low on NVQ business administration levels 1 and 2 programmes. The pass rate at level 2 in 2002/03 was 17% below the national average. Retention rates are high on NVQ business administration, accounting and management levels 3 and 4 programmes, but low on the AVCE business studies single award programme. Retention and pass rates on trade union education programmes are in line with national averages.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration, management and professional studies, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ business administration	1	No. of starts	152	56	25
		% retention	64	63	72
		% pass rate	54	57	72
GNVQ business intermediate	2	No. of starts	16	18	15
		% retention	81	56	73
		% pass rate	100	100	82
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	32	48	43

		% retention	88	90	88
		% pass rate	57	51	55
AVCE business single award	3	No. of starts	26	47	*
		% retention	46	66	*
		% pass rate	58	61	*
NVQ management	4	No. of starts	22	25	*
		% retention	64	84	*
		% pass rate	93	52	*

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory or better. Lessons are generally well planned and learning objectives are explained clearly to students. In the better lessons, teachers use a variety of methods to enliven interest and promote learning. In a GNVQ lesson, the teacher used a variety of activities with great skill to create considerable student engagement with the topics of invoices and statements of account. The lesson was lively and focused on the individual learning needs of the students. Teachers develop and use good materials to support learning. They use ILT effectively on full-time courses in the business learning centre, to provide purposeful, focused activity that leads to effective learning. In management and trade union education, teachers use a wide variety of different activities and relate these to the students' own working lives. In a management lesson, the teacher made effective use of students' own experience as managers to investigate the issues of resource acquisition and control. Students are stimulated by these approaches and respond positively. Teachers and assessors also provide good direction and support for business administration learners in the workplace. Students work hard and enjoy good working relationships with their teachers. The less-effective lessons are insufficiently well planned and lack a variety of appropriate teaching methods. For example, teachers in some lessons use a narrow range of assessment techniques and fail to check adequately that students are achieving the desired learning outcomes. Insufficient opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate what they have learned.

62. Teachers are well qualified with appropriate business, industrial, professional and teaching experience. They have good access to continuing professional development, but most have had insufficient vocational updating. Part-time teachers in management and trade union education provide current vocational expertise that benefits learners on these courses. Accommodation is satisfactory. Many rooms are dull and lack subject identity. However, the trade union education rooms are full of relevant displays that stimulate students' interest. Students have very good access to computers, particularly in the business learning resource centre. The library holds a large stock of business books and learning materials, although many of these are outdated.

63. Arrangements for the assessment of students' work are satisfactory and there are effective systems for tracking and monitoring students' progress. Written assessment is thorough and well designed and there is a good system for internal verification. Students are aware of the assessment requirements of their course. Their assessed work is returned promptly. However, some comments are brief, of little value and do not indicate clearly what students need to do to improve the standard of their work.

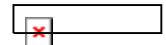
64. The curriculum area offers a good range of provision at levels 1 to 4. AVCE students who succeed with their course can progress to the college's HNC business programme. There is no formal work experience for full-time students. Links with local businesses are not used well to enhance learning.

65. Support for students is good. Students receive good initial advice and guidance to ensure that they are placed on appropriate courses and to change their course when necessary. They receive initial diagnostic screening to assess their literacy and numeracy skills. The tutorial system is effective and supports students' academic progress and pastoral needs. Full-time students have individual learning plans which are regularly reviewed with their tutors. Additional learning support is identified and well integrated within lessons. Parents of full-time students are regularly informed of progress.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Course teams manage the provision effectively. New initiatives, such as regular morning meetings of the business team and the new open workroom, help communications. However, there is insufficient use of data to help to measure and monitor progress, and to set targets for improvements. The minutes of team meetings and course review action plans lack detail, and self-assessment reports are too descriptive and not sufficiently evaluative. Managers also make insufficient use of the general findings of the teaching observation process to identify good practice or highlight areas for improvement. Staff have a strong commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. They provide accounting and management programmes in different modes of learning and accreditation to suit individuals' different circumstances.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on CLAIT courses

- high retention rates on GNVQ and IT system support courses

- good teaching on full-time courses

- good support for full-time students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on the national diploma in computer studies

- insufficient attention to the individual learning needs of students on part-time courses

- o unsatisfactory management of part-time provision.

Scope of provision

67. The college offers courses in ICT for full-time and part-time students. There are five full-time courses which include a national diploma at level 3, a first diploma at level 2, a progression award for systems support technicians and a GNVQ foundation course. Additional courses in programming, web design and digital photography are also provided. A range of shorter courses at levels 1 and 2 are offered through drop-in facilities both at the college and at seven schools in the city. Courses are available during the daytime and the evenings. There are currently 55 full-time students enrolled, of whom 5% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The large majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Some 580 students are enrolled on part-time courses.

Achievement and standards

68. Students achieve well on CLAIT courses where success rates are well above the national average. Retention rates on the GNVQ intermediate and IT systems support courses are also high. The IT systems support technician course was started last year and all of the 23 students who started passed. However, the retention rate on the national diploma course is low, at less than 50% for the past two years. Pass rates on most courses are in line with the national average.

69. The standard of students' work is satisfactory overall and there are some examples of high attainment. First-year national diploma students have a good understanding of computer systems. They are able to disassemble and reassemble a computer system, identify the main components, install an operating system and connect computers together in a local area network. Second-year students on the national diploma demonstrate good programming skills. Part-time students in the community learn good word-processing skills and are able to incorporate graphics and text from the Internet into their documents. Attendance at the time of inspection was satisfactory and most students arrive for lessons on time. Students on full-time programmes are making satisfactory progress with their key skills. Keyboarding skills of both full-time and part-time students are often poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ IT foundation	1	No. of starts	*	17	22
		% retention	*	94	82
		% pass rate	*	56	78
Certificate for IT users (new CLAIT)	1	No. of starts	22	37	29
		% retention	91	59	83
		% pass rate	50	59	96
GNVQ IT intermediate	2	No. of starts	28	41	18
		% retention	86	90	62
		% pass rate	79	73	62
European computer driving licence (ECDL)	2	No. of starts	53	176	113
		% retention	62	53	88

		% pass rate	33	35	52
National diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	19	59	37
		% retention	5	53	41
		% pass rate	0	84	87
National certificate in IT	3	No. of starts	55	*	21
		% retention	45	*	38
		% pass rate	76	*	75

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

70. There is much good teaching on full-time courses. Students are actively engaged by a variety of activities. Teachers check students' understanding regularly and use a range of teaching strategies to engage the less able students, whilst providing additional tasks to stimulate those who are more able. Constructive feedback is provided, both verbally and in writing, to enable students to extend their skills and knowledge. In one lesson, the teacher demonstrated particular sensitivity in the way in which less able students were encouraged to participate. Appropriate materials were provided to accommodate the variable reading abilities of students. Insufficient attention is paid to individual learning needs in lessons on part-time courses. Lessons are generally unplanned and students' skills and knowledge are not tested sufficiently. In the majority of lessons, students work from books and request support when needed. When support is provided, teachers do not use questions to check that students understand the topic being studied. A minority of teaching is uninspiring and didactic. Handouts are of a good quality, but do not take account of individuals' abilities or differing language requirements. There is insufficient regular formative assessment of students' learning.

71. The accommodation and the quality of computer equipment are satisfactory. Large, open plan areas are equipped with computers that were upgraded in 2003/04. Outreach centres are also equipped adequately. The college has a computer suite offering a good range of graphics packages and is equipped with colour printing facilities and scanners. Not all centres have Internet access and outreach centres do not link to the main college network. Teachers are generally appropriately qualified for the courses they are teaching.

72. The assessment of students' work on full-time courses is satisfactory. Assessments are well planned and students are aware of the requirements and the deadlines for completing work. Students are also aware of what is required to achieve higher grades. Teachers provide good verbal and written feedback on marked work to enable students to develop their skills. Targets are set for completion of tasks, but they are often too broad and do not sufficiently guide students.

73. The range of courses is adequate. Key skills are integrated into the main areas of study for full-time students. Dedicated training sessions are held weekly to support students' learning. Students have opportunities to broaden their experiences and enhance their personal development through a suitable variety of enrichment activities. However, timetabling arrangements mean that they are not always able to choose from the full range of activities. There are no work experience opportunities for students on vocational courses and there are insufficient links with local companies. The GNVQ foundation course does not offer an appropriate progression route to the first diploma course. Students who have taken this route experience an overlap in course content.

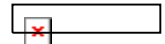
74. The support for students on full-time courses is good. Students receive impartial guidance that enables them to choose the appropriate course or programme. They are assessed for additional learning support needs and support arrangements are planned and managed coherently. The induction process enables students to settle into their programmes quickly and includes a clear explanation of their rights and responsibilities and the demands of the programme. Teachers have

good professional relationships with students in their groups and are aware of their individual academic and personal needs. Students value the frequent and regular reviews which enable them to progress and manage their time more effectively.

Leadership and management

75. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory. Full-time provision is managed effectively. Recent changes to the management structure have improved communications. Meetings are often informal and are not always recorded clearly. The management of part-time provision is unsatisfactory. The marketing of the adult and community learning provision at outreach centres is poor. There is insufficient support for learner support coaches working on the flexible learning programmes at the college and at outreach centres. The arrangements for the monitoring of students on part-time courses are ineffective. Insufficient use is made of data or targets to inform improvement. Self-assessment involves all full-time staff. However, the self-assessment report is too descriptive and insufficiently evaluative.

Hospitality, leisure and travel



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates for level 2 food preparation and cake decoration

- good teaching to support learning

- good range of provision

- very good support and guidance.

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of apprenticeship on-the-job training

- poor retention rates on part-time NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking

- low pass rates for NVQ level 1 food and drink service

- poor resources in some practical areas

- insufficient co-ordination of quality assurance.

Scope of provision

76. The college offers a range of programmes in hospitality, catering, travel and leisure. At the time of inspection, there were 202 students. Of these, 113 students were on hospitality programmes, 68 students on leisure and travel programmes and 21 apprentices in catering and hospitality. Apprentices attend college one day a week for off-the-job training including technical certificates, key skills, practical skills training and some assessment. The apprenticeship programme started in 2003/04. Most students are aged 16 to 18, although on part-time programmes the majority are aged 19 or over. Courses in hospitality and catering include NVQ levels 1 to 3 in food preparation and cooking and food service as well as a national diploma in hospitality supervision. The number of students on level 3 programmes is small. Leisure and tourism programmes include GNVQ foundation and intermediate leisure and tourism and AVCE travel and tourism. A range of additional programmes is offered to students including cake decoration and sugar flowers, short cookery courses, a resort representative course and air fares and ticketing. There are good links with schools with Key Stage 4 pupils working towards a GCSE in catering.

Achievement and standards

77. The pass rates for NVQ food preparation and cooking at level 2 for one year and two year courses have been high reaching 100% during the year 2002/03. Retention rates for the part-time course have been below the national averages. At NVQ level 1 food and drink service, pass rates are low and are below the national average. Numbers of students recruited to NVQ level 3 in food preparation and cooking are very small, although there are good retention and pass rates. Students who follow the AVCE single award travel and tourism programme achieve the double award successfully. Students on cake decoration courses achieve high grades consistently. The college has provided apprenticeship programmes since 2003. Although no work-based learner has achieved the full apprenticeship framework, many are making good progress towards their NVQ qualifications, technical certificates and key skills.

78. Students achieve a good level of practical skills in food preparation and cooking. They work with a wide range of food commodities and are able to incorporate these into complex dishes. The promotion of special events within the restaurant helps the development of both cookery and food service skills. The standard of work achieved in sugar craft is high with an excellent range of presentation pieces. In travel and tourism assignments, students produce work of high quality which helps them to develop research skills. Students at the college have had good success in competitions locally, nationally and internationally for several years. Students successfully progress into employment, both locally and with national companies.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, leisure and travel, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ catering and	1	No. of starts	20	30	15

hospitality - food preparation and cooking 1 year		% retention	70	73	80
		% pass rate	93	77	75
NVQ catering and hospitality - food and drink service 1 year	1	No. of starts	*	24	16
		% retention	*	79	81
		% pass rate	*	44	69
Cake decoration introductory	1	No. of starts	16	17	**
		% retention	81	65	**
		% pass rate	100	100	**
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	27	26	16
		% retention	81	73	81
		% pass rate	73	68	77
NVQ catering and hospitality - food preparation and cooking 1 year	2	No. of starts	38	15	18
		% retention	53	73	67
		% pass rate	65	100	100
NVQ catering and hospitality - food preparation and cooking 2 year	2	No. of starts	72	41	41
		% retention	31	56	54
		% pass rate	91	91	100
Travel agents certificate - primary	2	No. of starts	36	40	21
		% retention	75	76	76
		% pass rate	70	71	56

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

*course did not run

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

79. Teaching is good across all programmes. Teachers produce well-developed and comprehensive schemes of work identifying key stages of learning. Lesson plans are clearly written, although do not always differentiate between learners' abilities. Students develop good practical skills and apprentices benefit from skills learned in college and within the industry, although work-based training is not sufficiently recorded. Assignments are relevant to industry and involve students in researching information both within the college and outside. During a travel and tourism lesson, students identified the holiday requirements for a group, researching the total holiday package and providing an accurate costing. Students make good use of ICT in their assignments. Work-based learners make good use of ICT during their one day each week at college, in particular for the development and achievement of key skills. Each student has a clearly written individual learning plan which identifies the main learning goals. Action plans support these learning goals, and students are involved in the setting of weekly targets which teachers monitor well. In some theory lessons, however, teachers use an insufficient range of strategies to meet the needs of all students.

80. There are some poor resources for learning. The range of equipment in food preparation areas is not fully reflective of industry standards. Some of this equipment is outdated and is not fully operational. There is an inadequate range of small equipment to support the types and style of dishes produced at level 3 craft work. The college does not provide a realistic working environment for travel and tourism students. Learning resource centres have a satisfactory range of current

subject books, periodicals and video learning materials. There is good access to the Internet and this is used well by all students. Teachers have developed useful learning packs which help students acquire the appropriate theoretical knowledge. The college has a range of staff development activities, although these do not sufficiently support staff to enable them to update their industry skills. Experienced teachers act as mentors for new staff. Some work-based learners benefit from using computerised planning systems at work which helps them develop appropriate key skills.

81. Assessment is satisfactory. Initial assessment clearly identifies the specific support needs of students. Regular ongoing assessment is clearly planned. Student progress is well monitored on a regular basis through tutor reviews and workplace visits by assessors. For some assignments, clear milestone dates are set for the completion of tasks. Internal verification takes place regularly and meets the awarding body requirements. However, there are insufficient workplace assessments and verification for apprentices on work-based learning. Students' work is marked clearly by tutors with helpful comments where needed.

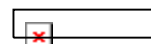
82. The range of courses offered by the college is good. There are good progression routes for students in catering and leisure and tourism. Courses for pupils aged 14 to 16 and GCSE courses complement the provision. Students on full-time courses are able to study a broad range of additional qualifications, which improves their employment prospects. All students, including part-time students on NVQ food preparation and cooking courses, undertake key skills. Students experience a wide range of enrichment activities to broaden their knowledge and experiences. Students undertake a variety of employer visits and residential trips abroad. The college promotes an industry week where guest visitors work with students in college to prepare them for the relevant industry. Many students are involved in fund-raising activities for local charities. There is a useful employers' forum for the work-based learning provision. The college has provided courses for employers.

83. Support and guidance for students are very good. Initial assessment clearly identifies specific support needs including those for literacy and numeracy and language. Learners with disabilities receive individual support and have access to specialist resources. The induction process for students details their rights and responsibilities. College-based students have regular tutorials both individually and in groups. There is a strong emphasis on pastoral support and students have good access to a wide range of specialist support agencies. Work-based learners have regular visits from college assessors and reviewers. Apprentices are helped to gain initial employment or secure new employment if needed. Employers are not always made fully aware of the support needs of their learners. The college maintains regular contact with parents and carers through consultation evenings and progress reports provided throughout the year.

Leadership and management

84. Leadership and management of hospitality, catering and leisure and travel are satisfactory. All areas meet together monthly and staff in each curriculum area hold meetings twice a term. The minutes from these meetings provide insufficient detail in identifying actions and responsibilities. Communication with senior managers is good. Staff conferences are held three times a year and the college newsletter helps to keep staff informed. Annual staff appraisal is not implemented fully. Staff are not fully aware of targets for retention and pass rates and there is lack of clarity about staff responsibilities of the work-based learning provision. Course reviews completed by staff contribute to the self-assessment report. There is insufficient co-ordination of quality assurance procedures within the area. Job roles and responsibilities do not adequately identify who has overall responsibility for internal verification and other quality procedures. Promotion of equal opportunities is included in the initial induction, although there is insufficient promotion and monitoring at other times of the year. Inspectors agreed with many of the findings identified in the college's self-assessment report.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on NVQ hairdressing

- good practical skills developed in hairdressing

- good standard of portfolios and written work

- very good additional support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most beauty programmes

- poor resources in hairdressing and beauty

- insufficient progression opportunities for students in beauty

- inadequate quality assurance.

Scope of provision

85. The college provides a range of courses in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. These include pre-entry programmes in both areas. In beauty therapy, courses are offered at levels 2 and 3 including a national diploma. There is no level 1 course available in beauty. In hairdressing, most students are at NVQ level 1 with a small number of students undertaking NVQs levels 2 and 3. All students aged 16 to 18 study key skills in addition to their main qualification. The college also offers a range of short part-time holistic therapy programmes for adult students including massage, manicure and hair treatments. There are 68 full-time and 210 part-time students in hairdressing. In beauty therapy, there are 103 full-time and 129 part-time students. Some 94% of students are female and 6% are male. Some 81 pupils from local schools participate in hairdressing or beauty therapy training and study for an entry level qualification.

Achievement and standards

86. There are high pass rates on NVQ hairdressing programme at levels 1 and 3. Pass rates are also high on the diplomas in Indian head massage and nail art. Retention rates on the hairdressing NVQ level 1 full-time programme have improved over the last two years. On the hairdressing level 3, retention rates in 2002/03 improved to 73% which is just below the national average. Rates have declined in 2003/04. Retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 two-year programmes were low in 2003/04. On the majority of beauty therapy full-time two-year programmes, retention rates are low. There are declining numbers of students enrolling on the national diploma in beauty therapy and the majority of part-time programmes. On full-time hairdressing courses, students develop good practical skills in cutting and colouring and are making good progress. Attendance and punctuality at lessons are satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ hairdressing 1 year	1	No. of starts	77	95	91
		% retention	75	69	90
		% pass rate	95	98	96
NVQ hairdressing 1 year	2	No. of starts	32	22	22
		% retention	47	73	73
		% pass rate	80	81	88
NVQ hairdressing 2 year	2	No. of starts	63	41	52
		% retention	35	59	65
		% pass rate	91	92	65
NVQ beauty therapy 1 year	2	No. of starts	19	56	63
		% retention	74	66	67
		% pass rate	100	78	76
Manicure certificate short	2	No. of starts	35	57	39
		% retention	74	67	67
		% pass rate	81	97	100
Indian head massage short	2	No. of starts	37	37	30
		% retention	57	65	77
		% pass rate	90	92	100

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

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching and learning are satisfactory on most hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes. Students on level 1 courses in hairdressing make rapid progress through their qualification and assessment. Students work alongside higher level students to gain experience. Key skills are well integrated into vocational work. In one communication lesson, students worked productively preparing a presentation for their next assessment. The students used a variety of methods to develop their presentation skills including research through the Internet. They showed confidence and enjoyed the challenge of the subject. In some practical lessons in beauty therapy, students have no clients to work on and they have to practise their skills on each other without any planned learning outcomes for the students acting as clients.

88. Resources in hairdressing and beauty therapy are poor. The hair and beauty salons are outdated and often overcrowded for the number of students using them. These do not reflect the

high standards of many salons outside. In one hairdressing salon, students have to walk through a theory classroom to gain access to the salon, which disrupts theory lessons. There are no computers for students to develop their IT skills in the context of hair and beauty studies.

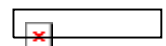
89. There is effective assessment planning in hairdressing. Students receive clearly written and verbal feedback on progress and all students in hairdressing have schemes of work in their portfolios. Portfolios are neat and tidy and contain a wide variety of evidence. They are clearly cross referenced and some contain digital photographs. The standard of students' assignment work is very good and this is presented well with clearly written feedback from tutors that helps students to reflect upon and improve their work. Students on full-time level 2 beauty therapy programmes spend insufficient time in a realistic work environment. This has resulted in students making slow progress in completing assessments. Some students have not yet had experience working with clients in order to develop their commercial skills.

90. There is very good support for students on full-time programmes. Students receive good tutorial support where clear targets are set on a regular basis that helps them improve and develop their professional and personal skills. All full-time students are assessed at their induction. This is recorded clearly and appropriate learning support is given to students if needed. Support within the classroom is given either by a curriculum support tutor or learning support assistant. This is recorded meticulously. One student is supported very effectively by a signer. All students in the group are learning to sign through the use of music so they can help their colleague and have a better understanding. This sets a particularly good example to others. Students who receive learning support speak highly of the support they get.

Leadership and management

91. Leadership and management in hairdressing are satisfactory, although the leadership and management in beauty therapy are unsatisfactory. In beauty therapy, there is no co-ordinator in place to manage the area and there is a shortage of teachers on full-time programmes. Both hairdressing and beauty therapy have developed a wide variety of programmes to suit the needs of the local area and the needs of the students. Staff development is good. Teachers have appropriate qualifications and skills and keep up to date with developments in their industry. Teachers are well supported to gain professional updating and additional qualifications. Students' progress is thoroughly monitored during a comprehensive tutorial programme to ensure they gain access to appropriate support. However, in beauty therapy, students are not making effective progress to develop their practical skills and prepare for assessments. Staff do not use data to monitor improvements and in undertaking quality assurance. Self-assessment is completed once a year. The completed report has not been shared with all staff. The self-assessment report is mostly accurate and reflects the key issues identified through inspection. Action planning is clearly recorded, although actions are still outstanding in some cases. Most teaching staff have not yet been appraised in the last year.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- high pass rates and retention in health studies, NVQ level 2 care and NVQ in caring for children

- good variety of approaches to learning that support individuals' needs
- good additional qualifications for full-time students
- successful learning support for part-time students
- good management of change.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in full-time early years courses
- low pass rates in counselling and NVQ promoting independence courses.

Scope of provision

92. There are 91 full-time students, mostly aged 16 to 18, on early years education courses from entry level to level 3. Some 28 full-time students study the national diploma in health studies and 15 are first diploma students in caring. There are 62 full-time and part-time students enrolled on dental technology at diploma level with a distance learning option for students living in the West Country. There are counselling courses at certificate level with a total of 101 enrolments. NVQs in care are offered at levels 2 to 4, with 183 students enrolled, the majority at level 2. Some 38 students are enrolled on NVQs in early years at levels 2 and 3. First aid has 198 enrolments and 100 students are taking other care or early years courses such as the certificate in community mental health care. Some 137 of the students are male. Most courses are taught at the main site, with some provision in the community.

Achievement and standards

93. Pass and retention rates are high in health studies, NVQ level 2 in care and NVQ in caring for children and young people. They are consistently above national averages, particularly in NVQ care where both retention and pass rates were 100% in 2003/04. Pass rates for full-time early years courses, counselling courses and NVQ level 3 in promoting independence, are unsatisfactory. They have been consistently below national averages from 2001 to 2004. The college has recognised these issues and has taken steps to address them, including making changes to curriculum organisation. However, it is too early to judge their effectiveness. In early years, in 2003/04, the level 3 results improved significantly, but the retention rate was unsatisfactory. Other pass and retention rates are satisfactory and improving.

94. Students' written work and portfolios are satisfactory or better. Students in childcare work collaboratively and effectively in groups and support each other in their learning. Dental technology students work with great concentration and focus on individual projects. All students develop good

independent research skills. These improve their decision making and creative skills as they plan their own work schedules each day. Counselling students made effective use of scenarios to identify ways of bringing counselling sessions to a close. Students develop their confidence well in the use of ICT.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Caring for young children	1	No. of starts	*	15	19
		% retention	*	80	79
		% pass rate	*	83	67
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	*	15	30
		% retention	*	67	80
		% pass rate	*	10	71
NVQ care	2	No. of starts	206	231	163
		% retention	90	92	94
		% pass rate	97	86	93
Counselling skills intermediate	2	No. of starts	26	33	41
		% retention	46	61	71
		% pass rate	58	90	79
National diploma in health studies	3	No. of starts	30	14	19
		% retention	70	71	79
		% pass rate	43	90	87
Certificate in community mental health care	3	No. of starts	*	25	21
		% retention	*	64	67
		% pass rate	*	75	63
NVQ caring for children and young people	3	No. of starts	24	23	20
		% retention	71	96	95
		% pass rate	59	86	100

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

95. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons well to meet individual learning needs. They use a good variety of activities to engage students' interest. In health studies, a carefully structured series of case studies took students through the stages involved in planning good care arrangements that culminated in a role play. The students clearly improved their understanding of residents' needs and developed more sophisticated analyses. An early years diploma lesson integrated numeracy skills effectively. Key skills are also integrated effectively in health studies and other early years courses.

96. The accommodation and learning resources for task-based learning are very good in early years. Other accommodation is more variable, ranging from good to adequate. Learning materials are well designed. Staff are appropriately qualified and have good occupational experience. The college

supports teachers and assessors in obtaining teaching qualifications and staff have good professional development opportunities.

97. Full-time and part-time students are assessed at the beginning of the course. Full-time students receive regular reviews in which individual learning plans are amended, new targets are set and the process is recorded carefully. Students are encouraged to be active in devising the targets. Part-time students receive an individual review each term and their progress is monitored closely. For example, in an NVQ care lesson, students worked with flexible learning materials whilst the teacher checked the general progress of each individual.

98. NVQ assessment is satisfactory. There are standardisation meetings, regular assessment visits and comprehensive feedback on observations. Work is set regularly and returned with useful advice on how to improve. Tutors' guidelines include advice on how to mark the work of students with dyslexia.

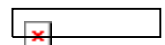
99. A wide range of additional qualifications for full-time students includes British Sign Language (BSL), the prevention and handling of violence and the certificate for resort representatives. The college was 'highly commended' for a Beacon Award for its work in developing NVQs with a range of public and private organisations. A wide range of part-time courses in care includes an imaginative approach to the certificate in mental health work. This is based in a community centre and allows students to work with both basic skills and vocational teachers. The college provides full-time courses in care at level 2 only. It is one of a small number of colleges that offers dental technician courses.

100. Additional learning support is good, and particularly good for part-time students. Following a basic skills assessment, learning support is provided in lessons, outside lessons and also in community venues. ESOL support is also provided. Individual learning plans for both full-time and part-time students are reviewed regularly and used to set new targets. Staff have a good knowledge of individual students' needs. Full-time students are well supported and value the time that teachers provide. There are good arrangements for referral to specialist agencies when appropriate. Welfare support for both full-time and part-time students is extensive. Level 2 early years students have timetabled lessons for basic and key skills development. Learning support assistants are used effectively, including one who is permanently attached to the foundation course.

Leadership and management

101. Leadership and management of the area are good. Major changes in curriculum content and structure have been well managed including the introduction of task-based learning. The team works effectively together and has a strong focus on improving teaching, learning and achievement. They are actively involved in producing the self-assessment report and are aware of progress against their targets for student attendance, retention and pass rates. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The observation of teaching is linked to appraisal, which leads to the clear identification of staff development needs and also to action plans for individual teachers. There is incomplete recording of internal verification.

English, languages and communications



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

Strengths

- very high pass rates on the certificate of proficiency in English

- very good teaching and learning in English

- good and effectively used resources

- good leadership and management

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some English courses

- insufficient use of target language in modern foreign languages lessons.

Scope of provision

102. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses in English as a foreign language and modern foreign languages with a range of levels to cater for local needs. There are 545 students, most of whom are adults and part time. GCSE English is offered to students on full-time courses in the college, and is also available as evening course. Modern foreign languages courses are offered as part-time evening courses in French, Spanish, and Italian at levels 1 and 2, with introductory courses also available. Some French and Greek language courses are taken by catering and leisure and tourism students. BSL is offered on a part-time basis at stages 1 and 2. Teaching is provided by one full-time and one part-time English teacher, and four full-time and five part-time English as a foreign language teachers. There are eight part-time modern foreign languages teachers.

Achievement and standards

103. Student achievement is satisfactory. On the certificate of proficiency in English pass rates are high and well above the national averages. However, pass rates on the certificate in advanced English are well below the national averages. This has been recognised by managers and the course has been modified to try and improve matters. In English as a foreign language lessons, students demonstrate their new language skills confidently. The standard of students' written work is good, although there is insufficient use and practise of the target language in modern foreign languages lessons and there is an over-reliance on textbooks. BSL students are making good progress and confidently using sign language.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, languages and communications, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE English 1 year	2	No. of starts	165	115	133
		% retention	60	50	59
		% pass rate	48	59	57
Certificates in English Language Skills ESOL 1 year	2	No. of starts	*	24	50
		% retention	*	75	68
		% pass rate	*	78	56
First certificate in English ESOL 1 year	2	No. of starts	99	63	49
		% retention	63	68	65
		% pass rate	39	60	78
Certificate of proficiency in English 1 year	3	No. of starts	48	33	23
		% retention	81	76	70
		% pass rate	41	80	81
Certificate in advanced English	3	No. of starts	62	42	34
		% retention	71	60	65
		% pass rate	55	68	82

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

104. There is good teaching on many of the English as a foreign language courses and on the access to HE course. Lessons are well planned and teachers pay good attention to individual needs. Students are often set challenging tasks and imaginative group work is evident in many lessons. For example, in one access to HE English literature lesson, students responded to critical views on a novel confidently and with high levels of analytical ability. Students are confident to both contest and support each other's views. There is a strong atmosphere of peer support which is encouraged by staff. In modern foreign languages lessons, students are not always set challenging targets or given enough opportunities to speak the target language.

105. There are good resources. Classrooms are well-furnished and the IT facilities and a language laboratory on the main college site are equipped to a high standard. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their subject areas. Students use good handouts, and resources for group work sessions are well prepared and used effectively. There is an innovative virtual learning website providing course information, assignments and discussion boards for staff and students on all programmes.

106. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Students on most courses make good use of individual learning plans, but some students on short taster courses are unhappy that they have to complete these. Work is marked well with comments which clearly indicate areas for improvement. An access to HE course has well-designed feedback sheets with space for students' reflective comments.

107. There is a good range of English as a foreign language courses. The large number of students enrolling on these courses and effective initial assessment enable teachers to group students with similar abilities together. Students are able to change course as appropriate or if they have changing personal circumstances. Staff are responsive to the needs of late enrollers on their programmes, for example, by offering additional individual tutorial support. GCSEs are offered at a variety of times

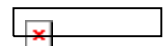
and on different days to enable access for college students on full-time programmes. Teachers are responsive to concerns over poor retention rates and courses have been changed to improve the retention of male students.

108. Students receive good guidance and support. English as a foreign language students have effective induction and tutorial support with good access to college systems. Detailed individual learning plans are used which are reviewed regularly. Student attendance is monitored well by English as a foreign language teachers. English as a foreign language students have a good range of social activities to encourage group identity and support students. For example, they have their own football team and benefit from a number of cultural visits organised by college staff. Students with personal problems are supported effectively by the college's counselling and central support services team. Course specific student handbooks are provided for all English as a foreign language and access to HE students. Access to HE students receive good tutorial support and are sensitively supported by subject teachers.

Leadership and management

109. Leadership and management are good. The head of school has a clear awareness of the key issues. All staff are involved in the course review process. They contribute to the self-assessment process whilst developing a keen awareness of the challenges facing the school. For example, the appointment of an international officer is under review, and there is now local administrative support for registering English as a foreign language students. Retention and pass rate data are analysed effectively by all staff to address areas of weakness. There is a good appraisal system with relevant follow-up action and good opportunities for staff development. The English as a foreign language staff benefit from a shared workroom which ensures good communications. Quality assurance systems are effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Class sizes are adequate and there is efficient use of resources. A community learning manager has recently been appointed with responsibility for modern foreign languages and has a clear commitment to working in partnership with other providers to increase provision and ensure there is efficient use of resources in this area. The recent appointment of a languages co-ordinator has helped improve communications for part-time staff and helps provide relevant staff development. Community learning organisers ensure good communication between students in out-centres and the college. There is a clear commitment by both English and modern foreign languages staff to continuous improvement in the quality of provision.

Foundation programmes



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes

- good teaching on literacy and numeracy programmes

- particularly effective use of ILT to support learning on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes

- excellent response to local community needs

- good curriculum leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance on literacy and numeracy programmes

- lack of challenging activities in some lessons for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- insufficient monitoring of the impact of additional learning support.

Scope of provision

110. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time ESOL programmes, literacy and numeracy part-time courses and full-time and part-time programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes are offered from pre-entry level to level 2. Most programmes take place during the day with a minority in the evening. Courses are run at the main college site and at 28 other locations including community venues, schools, training centres, day centres and places of work. In 2003/04, there were some 2,570 students enrolled on foundation programmes of which more than 1,000 were on discrete foundation programmes. Around 400 students are enrolled on ESOL courses and 10% of these study full time. A similar number are enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses and there are about 150 students on courses for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. A further 400 students receive basic skills support as part of their main programmes through in-class or one-to-one support.

Achievement and standards

111. Students on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes achieve well. Retention and pass rates on literacy and ESOL programmes have improved and are high. For example, on literacy entry programmes in 2003/04, the retention rate was 82% and the pass rate improved from 91% in 2002/03 to 100%. On ESOL level 1 programmes, the retention rate improved from 81% in 2002/03 to 93% in 2003/04, which is 20% above the national average. Pass rates are very high at 99% and 100% in the past two years. Students are focused on their work and have a good sense of direction. Their work is of a high standard and they gain confidence and improved self-esteem. They make good progress to improve their literacy, numeracy and language skills. However, attendance on literacy and numeracy programmes is poor. At the time of inspection, it was 56%.

Quality of education and training

112. Teaching on literacy and numeracy programmes is good. There is excellent teaching on family learning programmes. Support for students with dyslexia is good. Teaching in ESOL is satisfactory

overall. Learning is well planned. Teachers pay particularly good attention to the needs of individual students and they set clear learning objectives. Lessons include a wide range of activities to stimulate learning and group work is well managed. Lessons are relevant to the students' daily lives and successfully promote independent learning. There are good materials for teaching and learning which are well used. There is good use of ILT in literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes at the college's main site. Literacy and numeracy support is provided through IT courses and ILT in the open access area. This is integrated into students' main programmes. Workshops provide good support for independent learning. The college website includes useful learning materials and activities that are well used by students.

113. In some lessons, there is a lack of activities that stretch students, particularly for those students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Target setting for students is ineffective. In the weaker lessons, the planning of lessons does not provide sufficient activities to ensure participation by all students or that stimulates learning. Teachers do not manage the support from learning support assistants. There is an over-emphasis on the use of paper-based teaching and learning materials.

114. Resources are satisfactory overall. Teachers are suitably qualified. Resources to support learning are good and include skills for life materials. These are accessible to staff and students. Accommodation is satisfactory, although displays of students' work are insufficient. The open access area for additional learning support does not ensure confidentiality and privacy; this is not sufficiently reassuring for vulnerable students.

115. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Initial assessment is robust and is used effectively to define individuals' learning goals on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes. Individual learning plans are well developed and used effectively by both staff and students on literacy and numeracy courses. The reviewing of students' progress is thorough. They receive detailed feedback and are well aware of their learning goals. There is insufficient monitoring of the impact of additional learning support and there is inconsistent tracking of students' progress with literacy and numeracy skills in relation to their vocational course. The advice, guidance and support for students are satisfactory.

116. The area has responded to local needs very effectively. There is an excellent range of programmes that includes family learning, work-based learning, discrete courses for literacy, numeracy and ESOL, open access, programmes for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and dyslexia courses. The community programmes include courses for Asian elders and substance-abusers. Progression routes are well established, and there is effective referral for learning support. All courses are run in blocks of between 1 and 3 hours a week for between 10 and 30 weeks. Programmes are mapped to the national core curriculum and include the national test tool kit and diagnostic assessment. Students can access external accreditation as appropriate. There is a good range of enrichment opportunities including social and sport activities for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and ESOL students.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership and management of the area are good. A clear vision is well understood by staff. The management of programmes is good. Communication is effective through informal processes and frequent and purposeful meetings which are well recorded. There are good opportunities for the sharing of best practice with well-developed staff training for literacy, numeracy and ESOL staff. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Staff contribute to the self-assessment process through course reviews. The process for observing lessons is thorough, although the grades are over-generous. The self-assessment report accurately records most of the key weaknesses identified during inspection. Inspectors also identified some additional strengths.

Part D: College data

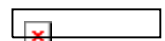


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	37	33
2	26	19
3	12	13
4/5	0	2
Other	25	33
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	326	632	4
Land-based provision	0	16	1
Construction	502	852	5
Engineering, technology and manufacture	798	757	6
Business administration, management and professional	171	2,030	9
Information and communication technology	422	2,931	14
Retailing, customer service and transportation	18	933	4
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	506	1,704	9
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	402	413	3
Health, social care and public services	421	4,343	19
Visual and performing arts and media	146	1,201	5
Humanities	13	227	1
English, languages and communication	227	1,281	6
Foundation programmes	578	2,763	14

Total	4,530	20,083	100
--------------	--------------	---------------	------------

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	430	596	863	665	881	1,990
	Retention rate %	76	74	78	60	63	81
	National average %	75	76	76	70	71	71
	Pass rate %	65	64	80	62	49	89
	National average %	67	69	73	68	70	77
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,237	998	782	2,138	1,843	1,435
	Retention rate %	62	64	74	61	69	74
	National average %	73	69	70	68	68	67
	Pass rate %	73	69	70	71	70	80
	National average %	68	70	73	67	71	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	693	474	371	1,821	1,264	1,103
	Retention rate %	58	65	66	66	71	70
	National average %	70	77	77	68	70	69
	Pass rate %	68	76	84	67	72	77
	National average %	75	77	80	68	71	74
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	182	178	208
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	75	81	55
	National average %	**	**	**	67	68	69
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	51	65	72
	National average %	**	**	**	54	54	58

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2001 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in

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

Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	63	37	0	43
Level 2 (intermediate)	67	20	13	60
Level 1 (foundation)	67	27	7	15
Other sessions	47	41	12	51
Totals	60	31	9	169

© Crown copyright 2005. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced verbatim without adaptation, and the source and date of publication are stated.
 Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

