



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Newham Sixth Form College

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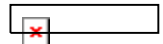
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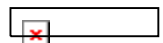
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Basic information about the college

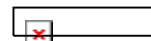


Name of college:	Newham Sixth Form College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Principal:	Sid Hughes
Address of college:	Prince Regent Lane London E13 8SG
Telephone number:	020 7473 4110
Fax number:	020 7511 9463
Chair of governors:	Carole Snee
Unique reference number:	130452
Name of reporting inspector:	Vincent Ashworth HMI
Dates of inspection:	22-26 November 2004

Part A: Summary



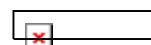
Information about the college



Newham Sixth Form College is a thriving sixth form college located on two sites in the London borough of Newham. There are extreme levels of economic, health and social deprivation among Newham's residents. Newham is ranked as the seventh most deprived local authority in England in the 2004 Indices of Deprivation. The college was established in 1992 to increase the participation rate in full-time education of young people over 16 years old in the borough, which in 1992, stood at only 46%. In 2003, the percentage of 16 year olds in Newham who remained in full-time education was 75%. Student numbers have increased dramatically over the last 12 years and the college is now one of the largest sixth form colleges in the country. The college prides itself on providing and encouraging an inclusive environment. The student body is ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse; over 90% of students aged 16 to 18 are from minority ethnic groups. The college recruits 98% of its students from disadvantaged areas.

The college is committed to providing a comprehensive curriculum and has broadened its range of provision to include students without basic skills, those who are not in education or employment and others who wish to develop their employment skills. Entry requirements for advanced level courses are lower than for most sixth form colleges and school sixth forms. In 2003, the college enrolled 1,596 students aged 16 to 18 on advanced level courses, the majority of whom were full time. The college also offers courses for adults. In 2003, 1,182 adults enrolled on part-time courses and the most popular courses are in business, information and communications technology (ICT) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The majority of adult courses take place at the Stratford centre. The college offers work-based learning in ICT and customer service for approximately 30 trainees. There is also a sizeable entry to employment (E2E) programme for approximately 40 trainees. The college offers 46 subjects at advanced subsidiary level (AS level) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level). There are eight subjects offered at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) level. Courses leading to advanced vocational certificates of education (AVCEs) or national diplomas are provided in 12 areas: art and design, business, childcare, health and social care, engineering, ICT, information technology (IT) practitioners, media, performing arts, science, sport, and travel and tourism. Vocational qualifications at level 2 are also provided in art and design, business, childcare, health and social care, engineering, ICT, media, performing arts, science, sport, and travel and tourism. There is one general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) course at foundation level in business, targeted at ESOL students. The college also offers programmes at entry level in ESOL and for students with learning difficulties. In 2003, the largest proportion of enrolments was in science and mathematics, business, humanities and English and modern foreign languages.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the quality of provision to be outstanding in visual and performing arts and media. In business, humanities, sociology, psychology and health and social care, and English and modern foreign languages, it is good. Overall provision in science and mathematics was judged to be satisfactory, with mathematics being attributed a contributory grade of good. In computing and ICT it is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning at the college is high. Leadership and management and support for students are outstanding. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- high standards of teaching and learning

- strong leadership and excellent strategic management
- good communications and teamwork
- staff commitment to students' progress and achievement
- high retention rates on most courses
- very good pastoral and academic support for students
- outstanding educational and social inclusion
- students' commitment to the college and their learning
- wide range of opportunities for students to enrich their learning and skills
- highly effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) in teaching and learning in most areas
- a harmonious and purposeful social and working environment for staff and students
- effective use of good quality learning resources
- effective partnerships with schools and employers.

What should be improved

- pass rates on some courses for students aged 16 to 18

- pass rates on courses for adults

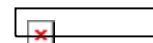
- some unsuitable accommodation

- support to meet the needs of less able students on level 2 courses

- some target setting in self-assessment.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

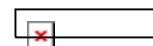


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Satisfactory. Contributory grade for mathematics is good . Pass rates on mathematics courses are high, but are low for most science courses. Retention rates are high on most courses, but low on GCSE mathematics. There is much good teaching and good use of ILT enhances students' learning. Insufficient action has been taken to improve student achievement on science courses.
Business	Good. Retention rates are high on most courses. Pass rates are high on GNVQ foundation, GCE A-level business and GCE A-level economics. Teachers have high expectations of their students who develop very good vocational and personal skills. Teachers work well together and give students very good support. Pass rates are unsatisfactory on some courses and self-assessment has not sufficiently addressed this weakness.
Computing and ICT	Satisfactory. Retention rates are high on most courses. Pass rates for most courses are low and, on GCE A-level courses, they are well below national averages. Much of the teaching is good, well planned and supported by a variety of well-structured learning resources.

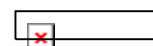
	Some accommodation for whole-class teaching is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient provision to meet the needs of all students.
Visual and performing arts and media	Outstanding. Retention and pass rates are high on most advanced level courses. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Students make excellent progress relative to their prior achievement and the standard of their work is outstanding. Specialist facilities and student support are very good and curriculum management is highly effective.
Humanities	Good. Pass and retention rates are generally high, although AS-level critical thinking has had low and declining results over 3 years. Teaching is good and a variety of strategies are used within the classroom to help students learn effectively. There is an extensive and varied curriculum enrichment programme. Students' work is marked thoroughly, but the quality of written feedback to students varies between subjects.
Psychology, sociology and health and social care	Good. Retention rates are high on all courses and students make very good progress on GCE A-level sociology courses. Much very good teaching and learning is supported by very effective assessment practices. Leadership and management are good. Pass rates are low on some courses and the use of ILT in lessons is underdeveloped.
English and modern foreign languages	Good. There is much good teaching, with imaginative and effective use of audio-visual and electronic resources. Pass and retention rates are high on most courses, but low on AS-level French and Spanish. Students are well supported by staff and curriculum management is good. Some students are not punctual for their lessons.

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal and senior managers communicate a clear set of values to staff and students. Governors understand and are committed to the mission of the college. Equality of opportunity is a driving force across all levels of management. The college's commitment to equal opportunities is reflected in its focus on students' individual needs and aspirations. A culture of high expectations of students is shared by all staff. The college provides its students with a harmonious, safe and purposeful working environment. There is a strong commitment to improvement; quality assurance processes are thorough and accurate. Action plans for improvement are rigorously monitored. There are some variations in benchmarks used to analyse achievement data. Curriculum management is mainly good. There is excellent communication between staff at all levels and much good teamwork and sharing of good practice. There are outstanding retention rates at levels 1 and 3, and students do better overall than would be predicted on the basis of their GCSE results. In a small minority of courses, effective strategies have not been put in place to address underperformance. Teaching and learning are good. Support for newly appointed staff is outstanding. Financial management is very good and the college provides good value for money.

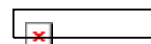
To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. A common set of values,

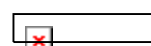
and diversity underpin every aspect of college activity. Students value the safe and harmonious environment of the college. Both staff and students recognise, respect and celebrate each others' different beliefs and cultural heritage. The college recruits 90% of its students aged 16 to 18 from minority ethnic groups and 98% of full-time students are from areas designated as disadvantaged. The college ensures that all students are given the opportunity and necessary support to achieve their true potential. The inclusive learning team has strong links with local schools and introductory courses are run for year 11 students with learning difficulties. In collaboration with the local education authority, the college takes a number of late admissions students, who are usually new arrivals in the borough. These students are able to study a specially-designed curriculum which quickly integrates them into mainstream provision. The college is making a very significant contribution to local targets for staying-on rates for young people in full-time education and training. The college fulfils its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. Plans are being developed to ensure it will be wholly compliant with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2001 (SENDA).

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are outstanding. Initial assessment of students' individual needs and induction processes are comprehensive. Additional learning support is timely and effective. Staff are trained in a wide range of specialist support needs. Both pastoral and academic support are very good. Students can access help through the Skills Centre, subject-specific workshops or special revision sessions. The quality of individual tutorials is excellent. Attendance rates are high in most areas and unauthorised absences are dealt with promptly. Guidance on progression to higher education (HE) or employment is very good. A large proportion of students progress to university. The college provides good support for students with dyslexia and other identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Communication between the services is good. In a few cases, student targets for improvement are insufficiently detailed.

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

- high-quality teaching

- friendly staff who support and value students

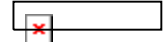
- accessibility of tutors and teachers

- good library and computer facilities
- being treated like adults
- good careers and HE advice
- the college's reputation for high achievement
- equal opportunities being put into practice
- sports and enrichment activities
- cleanliness and safety of college environment.

What they feel could be improved

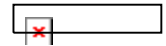
- overcrowding and congestion in some areas of the college
- lack of social area and lunchtime activities
- small canteen which closes early
- price of food
- availability of computers in the Skills Centre
- too few staff to administer education maintenance allowances (EMAs).

Other information

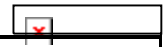


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The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

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

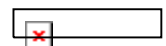


Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	77	22	1
19+ and WBL*	60	40	0
Learning 16-18	75	23	2
19+ and WBL*	40	60	0

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. The college offers a wide range of AS levels and GCE A levels, together with GCSEs and vocational qualifications at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. The majority of students are full time, aged 16 to 18 and study advanced level courses. The college recruits most of its students from areas of high social deprivation and inspectors took this into account when making judgements about students' achievements.

2. Between 2001 and 2003, the proportion of students who started courses and successfully completed them improved each year. This occurred at all levels for all students. With the exception of short courses for adults, pass rates at all levels for all students show an improving trend. College data for 2004 show that the overall pass rate for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 courses is well above the national average for sixth form colleges. On level 2 and level 3 courses, they are broadly in line with the national average for sixth form colleges in disadvantaged areas.

3. Retention rates on level 1 and level 3 courses for 16 to 18 year olds and adult students have improved significantly over the last three years and are well above national averages for sixth form colleges. Data supplied by the college for 2004 indicate that the overall retention rate on level 3 courses for 16 to 18 year olds is high at 95%. On level 2 courses, the overall retention rates for 16 to 18 year olds and adult students are in line with the national averages for sixth form colleges.

16 to 18 year olds

4. Significant numbers of students retake GCSE mathematics and English during their time at the college. In English, the proportions of A* to C grades and retention rates have been well above national averages in recent years. In mathematics, the proportions of A* to C grades are high, but retention rates are low.

5. The GCSE point scores for students who start AS-level and GCE A-level courses at the college are below the national average for all subjects offered by the college. In many cases, they are significantly below. In 2004, the overall pass rate for GCE A level was 93%, which compares favourably to the national average for all sixth form colleges.

6. For students taking GCE A-level courses, analysis of value added shows that, over the last three years, overall performance was above what would be predicted on the basis of prior attainments. In 2003, students' performance in eight subjects at GCE A level was significantly better than predicted by their GCSE scores. These subjects accounted for 23% of the total examination entries. In geography, art and design, dance and ICT, students performed significantly less well. A three-year rolling average analysis for each individual GCE A-level subject shows that out of 31 subjects, students in 10 subjects, biology, media, sociology, English literature, law, physics, French, German and Spanish, consistently achieved higher grades than predicted on the basis of their GCSE performance. In GCE A-level art and design, geography and ICT, students achieved below their expected grades. These subjects accounted for only 7% of the students completing in 2003.

7. The quality of students' work is high. Inspectors judged that the standard of students' work was good or better in 70% of lessons, satisfactory in a further 25% and unsatisfactory in 5%. Students are highly motivated and make good progress from the time they join the college. Teachers have high expectations of students and expect them to do their best in both their written and oral work. Students respond to these expectations by playing a full part in lessons and demonstrating a high level of maturity and commitment to their studies. Students are expected and encouraged to develop good independent research skills and study habits from the start of their course. Students receive much individual help and advice from teachers when they are not teaching. Students place a very high value on the amount of help they receive outside of lessons.

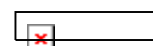
8. In modern foreign languages, students cope extremely well with fast-paced lessons in the foreign language and are able to understand and respond appropriately. In English, many students have developed the confidence and ability to participate constructively and cogently in classroom discussions dealing with complex topics. The standard of students' written and practical work in science and mathematics lessons is good. Business students develop very good communication and presentation skills. Students work with confidence in computing and ICT, using a variety of techniques and tools such as web development, networking and programming. In social sciences, students have good study skills which allow them to develop a sound theoretical knowledge and good research skills. On art courses, students produce very good sketchbooks which are thoroughly researched and demonstrate their experimentation with a wide range of media and styles. However, on level 2 courses in ICT and visual and performing arts and media, students who are less able, struggle to cope with the demands of the course. The progression rate of students from level 3 courses to HE is high. In 2003, 75% of students completing level 3 courses progressed to university.

9. Overall attendance rates have improved since the last inspection. In the lessons observed, attendance was 87%, slightly above the 85% average attendance for sixth form college inspections. The attendance rate was low in ICT, at 79%, while it was high in science and mathematics, business and visual and performing arts and media, at around 90%. The college has made good progress in improving students' punctuality, which was identified as a significant weakness at the last inspection. However, in some English lessons, students are persistently late and hamper the progress of other students.

Adult learners

10. Provision for adult students has grown considerably in recent years. A high proportion of adult students study on ESOL short courses. Many students who take these courses choose not to enter for examinations. As a result, the overall pass rate has declined and is low at 51%. The overall retention rate for short courses is high at 97%.

Quality of education and training



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 107 lessons. The majority of lessons were attended by students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses at advanced level. A small minority of lessons observed by inspectors was in the evening and attended predominantly by adults. Overall, inspectors judged that teaching was good or better in 77% of lessons, satisfactory in 22%, and less than satisfactory in 1%. This teaching profile is slightly above the average for sixth form college inspections. The proportion of lessons graded very good and outstanding was 33%. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is particularly impressive. There is no difference in the quality of teaching for courses at each level. The quality of teaching observed in visual and performing arts and media was excellent. Learning was good or better in 73% of lessons, satisfactory in 25% of lessons and less than satisfactory in 2% of lessons.

12. In good lessons, teaching and learning are well planned and learning objectives are explained clearly to students. Teachers use a combination of whole-class teaching, group work and individual activities effectively to maintain students' interest and motivation. In business, for example, they organise group work so that there is a balance of gender and ability within each group. In the best lessons, teachers show considerable enthusiasm and energy, and monitor students' progress closely, through questions, assignments and practical activities. Students are encouraged to participate actively in lessons and to evaluate their learning critically. In art lessons, for example, students evaluate their own work and that of their peers through group criticism and self-evaluations in sketchbooks. In many lessons, students work well in pairs and can clearly articulate their views; this often leads to dynamic group debate.

13. The creative and imaginative use of ILT to support learning was a significant strength in many of the highly effective lessons observed by inspectors. The materials used by teachers are of high quality and much use is made of learning resources that bring the subject to life. Many of them are available on the college intranet which students can access easily. Specialist equipment and facilities, such as those used in ICT and performing arts and media, are used effectively to develop students' practical skills.

14. In the less effective lessons, teachers often fail to provide tasks and activities that are suitable for all the students, even though these have been identified in lesson plans. In some lessons, for example, students who complete tasks early have to wait for the rest of the group to complete. A further feature of these lessons is the insufficient use of targeted questions, during and at the end of the lesson, to check that students have understood the work. In a minority of lessons, teaching fails to stimulate or extend students.

15. Teachers are appropriately qualified; most have a full teaching qualification. The college has

made suitable arrangements to train teachers who are not fully qualified. Most staff who teach on vocational courses have appropriate assessor qualifications. In most curriculum areas, teachers have a good occupational experience and many keep their knowledge and skills up to date on a regular basis. Technical support staff are well qualified and provide good support to students and teachers.

16. The main site at Plaistow was designed to accommodate 1,000 students. In spite of considerable capital expansion, the spaces available for teaching are sometimes not suitable for the size of groups or types of activities planned. The college is making a significant investment in new accommodation. An arts and leisure centre is being built at Plaistow to increase teaching space and to allow the learning resource centre and support services to be relocated. The Stratford centre is being expanded to provide space for local small and medium enterprises and new facilities for employment-related provision. The college is to lease a site in Stratford to provide performing arts studios and theatres of professional standards. Classrooms are clean, tidy and welcoming. Corridors and notice boards around the college are used effectively to display and celebrate students' successes.

17. The college is aware of its need to comply with the requirements of the SENDA and there is generally good access at the college. A detailed accessibility audit in 2003 has identified areas for development which are starting to be addressed. Plans have yet to be finalised to improve the access at the main entrances and reception areas for people with restricted mobility or hearing or visual impairments.

18. There has been significant investment in high-quality resources. These include specialist well-equipped multi-media studios and science laboratories. The college has continued to invest in new ICT resources for both students and teachers. All computers are upgraded at least every three years and operate on up-to-date standard software. Information learning resources have been strongly promoted and developed in the last two years and all classrooms, where possible, have electronic whiteboards installed. A number of successful projects have helped develop a range of good e-learning materials which are available to students and teachers on the intranet. Plans are in place to provide remote access to the college intranet for students and staff.

19. The Plaistow site has a well-equipped learning resource centre with a computer study area and a quiet study area which is open two evenings each week. Students also have access to computers in the main computer room which is used for groups and individual study. The current space is not sufficient and some areas become crowded at times. The learning resource centre staff link effectively with curriculum areas to ensure students and staff have access to good resources and materials. Some courses make better use of the facilities than others. The Skills Centre is well resourced to support students, including those with learning difficulties.

20. Assessment is very good overall. Most course handbooks contain details of the content of the course and schemes of work. The best also include help with study skills and advice on essay writing and research. However, a few contain little more than photocopied specifications. Assignment briefs are comprehensive and students understand what is required of them. Marking is fair and accurate, and the requirements of awarding bodies are met. Course handbooks usually specify the assessment requirements, but the schedule of assessment deadlines is not always clear. There is clear assessment guidance on the college intranet. This includes a useful marking policy.

21. Assessment is used successfully to support learning in all curriculum areas. For example, in sociology, assessments are an integral part of the course and all students know what they need to do to improve. In most cases, teachers provide their students with comprehensive feedback and encouragement on their written work. Teachers use detailed assessment records to monitor progress and set targets for improvement. The tracking of progress on vocational courses is good. Procedures for academic appeals are clear and included in the student diary.

22. Internal verification is carried out according to the requirements of awarding bodies. Assignments are often double marked and internally moderated. Outcomes of external verifier and moderator visits are recorded centrally. Appropriate actions and deadlines are discussed at course team meetings and monitored. Homework is set regularly in all subjects, and students usually return their

work on time. Marked work is returned promptly. Students who do not submit their homework are required to provide an explanation.

23. The college offers a wide range of qualifications and courses that are well matched to students' needs and aspirations. The college promotes its courses effectively through a variety of activities and a well-designed website. A newsletter which celebrates the college's diversity and promotes its successes is sent to year 11 pupils in all the local schools, as well as current students. There is a good range of advanced level courses, which are carefully timetabled to allow students to study the subjects of their choice. Full-time provision at level 1 for 16 to 18 year olds is available in business with ESOL. On level 2 courses in ICT and visual and performing arts and media, a minority of students are unable to cope with the demands of their course.

24. The key skills policy is clear and all full-time students who have a grade D or less in GCSE English and mathematics are expected to either resit their GCSE or study the appropriate key skill. In 2004, the college introduced the wider key skill of working with others as part of the tutorial programme. Dedicated key skills teachers work effectively with subject teachers to develop and integrate key skills into the curriculum. Key skills guidance and information on mapping assignments are available to staff on the intranet. Although pass rates for key skills in application of number and communication at levels 1 and 2 are low, they are still either at, or well above, the national averages. Pass rates in ICT key skills level 2 are high.

25. The college offers a very good range of additional enrichment activities to students. In 2003, over 160 students achieved a college diploma based on points awarded for voluntary work and other activities. Managers from local companies provide effective support for students who compete in a Young Enterprise programme. There is a good range of well-managed and organised sports and recreation activities; some students benefit from taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme. The college has a good reputation for the provision of cricket through its Cricket Academy and a successful cricket team. Students are also encouraged to access a range of additional qualifications in modern foreign languages. Many courses include visits to companies, law courts, theatres, places of special interest and events. Particularly good use is made of external speakers in business, humanities and visual and performing arts and media.

26. The college has established very good links with local schools to widen participation and increase the curriculum offer for 14 to 16 year olds. One local school has groups of students attending the college for a performing arts programme and a computer-aided design course. College staff teach vocational GCSEs at one school and provide good advice and support to several schools on delivering AS-level courses. A number of young people in Newham are unable to secure places in local schools when they move into the area. Two groups of students have been provided with a full-time programme at the college as part of a collaborative arrangement between the college and the LEA. Good links have been established with universities, particularly in business, humanities and performing arts and media. The college has successfully sourced bursaries to ensure students are not prevented from progressing to HE because of financial difficulties.

27. The college is highly successful in accessing alternative sources of funding to initiate projects aimed at widening participation and providing learning opportunities for adults and employers in the local community. This includes community-based courses in literacy, numeracy, ESOL and ICT, aimed at those who do not traditionally access opportunities provided by further education (FE). There are a number of employment-related programmes such as pre-employment training, employer-specific programmes and teacher training. Particularly good links have been developed with employers and industry specialists in media, digital media and performing arts so that students can work with local production companies; some students are taking part in a major film production.

28. The college's E2E programme is continuing to be developed. Some progress has been made to individualise the programme. However, the learning opportunities and length of programme do not meet the individual needs and aspirations of young people. The vocational strand does not provide young people with a full range of opportunities to develop different occupational skills. In 2004, at 34%, the rate of progression for E2E learners was slightly above the national average.

29. Support and guidance for students are outstanding. The management and monitoring of student

support are excellent. Team meetings are purposeful, but ascribed actions are not always followed up or documented. The development plan for student support is detailed with clear deadlines and responsibilities.

30. Prospective students and their parents are invited to a number of well-attended open events held at evenings and weekends. Short taster sessions are available for many courses, to help prospective students confirm their choice of subjects. Transitional support between schools and college is good and all GCSE students receive a 'good luck' postcard from the college just before examinations. All applicants are interviewed by the college's teachers, often at their schools. Detailed guidance and advice are available on a range of issues including housing, benefits, and financial support.

31. All students undergo an initial evaluation of their literacy and numeracy skills. Additional support needs are accurately identified. Those needing support agree individual learning plans. Most of these are detailed and helpful, but a few lack sufficient details. For example, the duration or expected outcomes of support are not always clear. Students may be referred for support by tutors or they can self-refer. Most support needs are identified before courses begin. Learning support is provided promptly and effectively either on an individual basis or as part of scheduled lessons. The college has a good range of assistive technology for those students with specialist support needs. It provides an effective counselling service. A small number of students are appropriately trained in listening skills and provide mentor support for other students. Details of how students can access support are well publicised. Students and parents benefit from an e-mail advice service.

32. The Skills Centre provides very effective support for students. It is well used and highly regarded by both students and their parents. Take-up of support is very good and very few students decline the support they are offered. In 2003, for example, 452 students received support. Students can access support at short notice or through an appointment system. Staff are trained in a wide range of specialist support needs. Students have good access to IT support and often work in small groups on homework. Many teachers are allocated time to give subject-specific or study skills support in the Skills Centre.

33. The college is very responsive to the academic support needs of its students. For example, additional sessions are provided for examination revision. In addition, drop-in subject workshops are available in science and mathematics. The progress of students who receive support is tracked effectively and communication between subject teachers and tutors is excellent. Teachers receive appropriate specialist support training as required. There are many opportunities for gifted and talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The college has a well-equipped careers room with a good selection of guidance leaflets and access to specialist careers software. Careers education staff offer detailed advice and are able to contribute to class tutorials.

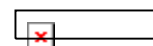
34. The tutorial system is very effective. For full-time students, group tutorials take place twice weekly. The first hour consists of a variety of activities such as Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applications or careers advice. A framework for these sessions is available on the college intranet, and various milestones and events throughout the year are specified. Subject teachers provide twice-yearly progress reports to tutors and students which are used as a basis for discussions at parents' evenings. These are usually very detailed and give clear indication to students on how to improve further, what aspects of their work need developing and their predicted grades. Occasionally, reports contain insufficient information or useful indicators so students are not clear about measures necessary to improve. The second weekly hour of tutorial is used for IT-based work, during which students evaluate how to improve their own learning and performance. A wide range of study materials is available on the college intranet for use during this session. Students can continue in their own time if they wish.

35. Tutors make good use of the college's online student tracking system to monitor students' progress. Attendance at lessons is monitored effectively. College staff contact students or their parents immediately in the event of unauthorised absences. Students giving cause for concern are identified and offered support to enable them to resume their studies successfully.

36. Students feel safe and confident in the college environment. The college has comprehensive

procedures for child protection. Guidelines are well publicised and staff have received appropriate training. There is a designated child protection officer, and good relations with social services and child protection agencies. The college ensures that police checks are undertaken for all staff. In addition, students who are likely to work with children are also checked, as are contract employees. Staff and students are able to use the college crèche in Stratford which has places for 37 children.

Leadership and management



37. Leadership and management are outstanding. Since its last inspection, the college has broadened its curriculum offer to meet the needs of a very diverse student body. An additional site has been opened which offers work-based learning, E2E and other employment-related programmes. The college has further developed strong partnerships with the community, local businesses, schools and universities. At the same time, it has continued to increase enrolments on full-time courses for 16 to 18 year olds. Pass rates at all levels have improved year on year and, in 2004, overall retention rates on provision at level 1 and level 3 were outstanding. Value added data show that in each of the last three years students have done better overall on advanced level courses than might have been predicted on the basis of their GCSE results.

38. The principal is a motivational figure across the college. Senior managers communicate a clear vision and set of values to staff and students. Staff share a commitment to diversity and widening participation. The principal leads year 11 assemblies in all the borough's secondary schools. He tells the students what the college has to offer them, but also makes clear the high expectations the college will have of them. These expectations are reinforced by staff when students first come to college. The college provides a harmonious, safe and purposeful working environment. Group tutorials encourage students to establish ground rules for behaviour based on mutual respect. Senior managers are visible around college. They know and are known by students.

39. Communications are very effective. The college management team is the main decision making body. It includes curriculum and administrative support service managers, so that there is coherent decision making. Teachers value the approachability of senior managers. Line management structures are clear and roles and responsibilities are well understood. Staff are enthusiastic and identify strongly with the college ethos and the teams in which they work.

40. There is a strong commitment to improving achievement. The comprehensive quality assurance process focuses on achievement at course level. It leads to a review and action plan. At three meetings during the year, the principal and vice principal meet the teaching team to assure themselves that significant weaknesses have been identified and are being addressed. The quality of teaching is evaluated effectively through the college's lesson observation system and its results are summarised in the programme area review. The grades awarded by the college to curriculum areas in its self-assessment report matched very closely the judgements and grades awarded by inspectors.

41. The college sets achievement targets based on college averages, but currently no target is set for AS-level courses. In analysing achievement, there is lack of consistency in the benchmarks used to measure performance. The college, however, has some difficulty in finding benchmarks which are relevant to the nature of its student intake. Students' views are sought and acted on. For example, student representatives are invited to staff team meetings, but cross-college questionnaires are not used to seek the views of either staff or students. There is no formal self-assessment process for most administrative support services.

42. Most curriculum areas are well managed with a strong team ethos and a commitment to improving standards. Collaborative planning and sharing of good practice promote improvement in teaching and learning. On a small minority of courses, students are underachieving and effective strategies have not yet been put in place to improve performance.

43. All staff have annual appraisals and individual and team targets are set. Staff development is well planned and effective. Requests for training are almost always supported where they are linked to either college or team priorities. The college allocates significant funding for staff to undertake curriculum development initiatives. There is an outstanding system for supporting newly qualified staff in their first year. A two-day induction takes place before the start of the academic year and sessions are organized throughout the year on relevant topics. Newly-qualified teachers are given remission of two hours a week from the normal teaching allocation. They also have a mentor, normally a teacher of the same subject, for an hour a week. Over half the teachers come from minority ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the student body.

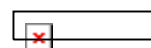
44. The college places great importance on the promotion of equal opportunities and widening participation. It makes a very significant contribution to the local targets for improving staying-on rates for young people in full-time education and training. With over 90% of students aged 16 to 18 from a minority ethnic background and more than 50% of students in receipt of EMAs, equal opportunities are at the heart of everything the college does. Cultural diversity is widely celebrated both within the curriculum and through college publicity materials and documents. Policies are supported by regular reviews and action plans. Training has been provided for staff, although non-teaching staff have not yet received training on the race relations policy. Student achievement and recruitment are analysed by gender and ethnicity at college level, but not yet at course level. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The college charter includes a complaints procedure and the few formal written complaints are handled appropriately.

45. Financial management is very good. The college has category A financial status. Taking into account the improving trends, high retention rates, good attendance and high average class sizes, the college provides good value for money. It provides its staff and students with excellent resources while continuing to fund new building work to meet increasing student demand.

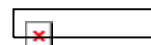
46. College information systems have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now accurate and reliable. The college has an in-house student tracking system which integrates a number of databases. Staff can access a wide range of information on their students, including detailed and up-to-date attendance data. The college intranet provides staff with extensive information about policies and procedures and links to the staff handbook. All staff have access to good IT resources. Developments in the use of IT are managed efficiently and imaginatively.

47. Governance is effective. The corporation supports the college's commitment to diversity and widening participation enthusiastically. It makes good use of the expertise of its members in areas such as business, finance and media and creative industries. Governors regularly receive an electronic bulletin updating them on developments in the college.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates in mathematics

- high retention rates on most courses

- much good teaching.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on most science courses

- low retention rates on GCSE mathematics courses

- insufficient action to improve student achievement on science courses.

Scope of provision

48. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry, further mathematics, mathematics, biology and physics and an AS-level course in science for public understanding. Vocational science courses are offered at levels 2 and 3. There is a GCSE course in human health and psychology and a GCSE mathematics course at both foundation and intermediate levels. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and attend full time. There are currently 430 science and 853 mathematics enrolments.

Achievement and standards

49. Pass rates on most mathematics courses are high. In particular, the pass rate on GCSE mathematics has increased each year and is now well above the national average of 42% for sixth form colleges. The pass rate for GCE A-level physics is also high and was at 100% in 2004. However, pass rates on most science courses are below national averages. The pass rates for AS levels in chemistry and physics are low and have shown no improvement in the last three years. The pass rate on GNVQ intermediate science is low. The proportion of AS-level and GCE A-level students who achieve A to B grades is mostly well below the national averages in all subjects except physics. Students on GCE A-level courses in biology and physics make good progress relative to their prior attainment at GCSE. Retention rates on most courses are high. However, the retention rate on GCSE mathematics is low and has declined each year since 2002. Punctuality is good and attendance in lessons observed is high at 91%.

50. Students are well motivated, work productively and demonstrate good subject knowledge and understanding. In science, students pursue experiments with care and enthusiasm. The quality of students' assignments and project work is high. Students develop a wide range of skills in their practical assignments through critical thinking and sound evaluation. Students make good use of a wide range of progression routes to HE.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	26	22	22
		% retention	81	86	100
		% pass rate	62	26	61
GCSE mathematics (A* to C)	2	No. of starts	138	235	266
		% retention	91	74	64
		% pass rate	34	46	57
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	42	36	31
		% retention	95	94	100
		% pass rate	73	68	63
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	92	71	85
		% retention	96	97	97
		% pass rate	56	49	55
AS-level biology	3	No. of starts	99	87	93
		% retention	96	97	99
		% pass rate	75	71	73
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	29	30	22
		% retention	72	97	82
		% pass rate	86	97	100
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	104	97	81
		% retention	70	95	89
		% pass rate	84	91	96
AVCE science (single award)	3	No. of starts	*	14	22
		% retention	*	100	91
		% pass rate	*	86	75

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

*course did not run

Quality of education and training

51. Much teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are clear and usually achieved. All teachers are knowledgeable about their subject. In most lessons, teachers give clear explanations and regularly check students' understanding through the use of open questioning. Good use is made of experimental work in science to reinforce theory.

52. In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of activities to stimulate learning. For example, in a biology lesson, after the teacher had introduced the topic of contagious diseases, students worked in groups to consider different published articles on disease. Each group then made a short presentation to the class using the over-head projector, outlining the main message of the article and explaining whether the disease was endemic, epidemic or pandemic. The lesson concluded with the students working as individuals to analyse data on the relationship between the habit of smoking and lung cancer. In a chemistry lesson, after a powerpoint presentation on the difference between ionic

and covalent bonding, students enthusiastically modelled balloons to illustrate how electronic configuration influences the shape of the molecule.

53. Teachers make effective use of ILT to help students learn. All rooms have data projectors and interactive whiteboards, and staff make excellent use of them. One chemistry teacher used animated graphics in which the difference between ionic and covalent bonding was illustrated by a cartoon in which two dogs either donate a bone to each other or share bones between them. In a GCSE mathematics lesson, the teacher was able to illustrate many features of a whole series of straight-line graphs on the interactive whiteboard and display data from which students were required to draw and analyse their own graphs. However, teachers make insufficient use of ILT in AS-level and GCE A-level mathematics lessons.

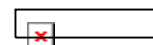
54. Teachers provide high-quality learning materials. For example, chemistry teachers have produced two booklets for AS-level students, which contain worksheets on the theory covered, homework and course assignments, as well as sample examination questions with model answers. Intranet sites are well developed and students make effective use of the Internet to improve the quality of their assignments.

55. Teachers are well qualified and all have relevant specialist teaching experience. Mathematics is taught in three base rooms that provide a good learning environment. The science laboratories are located in well-lit, spacious accommodation and are well furnished and appropriately equipped. Technicians provide excellent support in the laboratories. There are stimulating wall posters in all areas and good examples of students' work are displayed in most rooms. The library is appropriately stocked with up-to-date science books which are well used by students. Students speak highly of the effective individual support they receive from their teachers. There is effective monitoring of students' progress. Regular progress reports are discussed with the students and sent to parents. Students' work is marked carefully. Homework is set regularly. Well-planned and interesting assignments help students to learn. Most teachers make constructive comments and give helpful feedback. Workshop 'surgeries' provide students with additional help from subject teachers. Teachers take effective account of students' individual learning support needs.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication between managers and staff is good. Teachers work well in teams and share ideas and resources. All staff are committed to equality of opportunity and are sensitive to students' cultural heritage. The self-assessment report acknowledges key weaknesses, but is insufficiently analytical and action plans lack rigour. Insufficient action has been taken to address the consistently poor results on many science courses. Development plans do not contain targets that are sufficiently challenging to bring about continuous improvement. Curriculum managers are aware of the need to improve the achievements of science students, but it is too early to judge whether recent changes have had sufficient impact. Lesson observation grades awarded by the college are over generous compared to those awarded during inspection.

Business



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses

- high pass rates on GNVQ foundation and GCE A-levels in business and economics
- much good teaching
- very good development of students' skills
- good support for students
- broad range of provision.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates on some courses
- some inadequate accommodation
- insufficiently critical self-assessment.

Scope of provision

57. The college provides a good range of business-related courses. Of the college enrolments, 15% are on business and administration courses. There are 458 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 134 part-time adult students enrolled on business courses. The college offers GCSE applied business, GNVQ foundation, GNVQ intermediate, AVCE, AS levels and GCE A levels in business, accounting and economics, AS-level financial services, national certificate and diploma, national vocational qualification (NVQ) accounting levels 2 and 3, computerised accounting levels 1 and 2 and administration level 1.

Achievement and standards

58. Retention rates are high on most courses. Pass rates are high on GNVQ foundation, GCE A-level business and GCE A-level economics. In 2004, pass rates were below national averages for sixth form colleges on GNVQ intermediate business, NVQ levels 2 and 3 accounting, AS levels in business and economics and GCE A-level accounting. Students' achievements on advanced level courses are in line with predictions based on their prior attainment at GCSE.

59. Students are highly motivated and develop very good communication and presentation skills.

The majority of students on advanced level courses have the confidence to question, analyse theories and present their findings in front of their peers. Students work well in pairs or groups to share ideas. They evaluate their own work and that of the group effectively. On the GNVQ foundation course, students develop teamwork and oral communication skills alongside their vocational skills. Students' attainment in lessons is good. Attendance and punctuality in lessons are very good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	45	29	17
		% retention	91	83	88
		% pass rate	56	75	93
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	89	92	88
		% retention	88	90	89
		% pass rate	79	81	73
AVCE business double award	3	No. of starts	63	76	72
		% retention	71	76	98
		% pass rate	87	78	80
AS-level business	3	No. of starts	90	103	116
		% retention	98	89	96
		% pass rate	66	80	69
AS-level accounting	3	No. of starts	*	47	54
		% retention	*	96	96
		% pass rate	*	58	81
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	72	65	67
		% retention	82	98	99
		% pass rate	95	97	97

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

* data unavailable

Quality of education and training

60. Teaching was good or better in most lessons and none was unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned and managed with appropriately detailed schemes of work. Teachers have high expectations of their students. In the best lessons, imaginative and effective use is made of a variety of teaching methods including ILT, to stimulate learning and understanding. Both teachers and students use electronic whiteboards to summarise ideas which can then be saved and distributed to all students. For example, in one accounting lesson, students were encouraged to enter data which had been prepared for homework into a spreadsheet using the electronic whiteboard while other students observed and checked their own work. In another lesson, on the problems of conducting market research, moving images were used as prompts. Teachers carefully manage groups so that they include a balance of gender, race and ability. In this way, students can support and encourage each other. In the less successful lessons, there is little variety in teaching with an over-reliance on open questions and too few contributions by students.

61. Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic. They regularly take part in staff development and

training. Resources are good and all students have a textbook for each course. The library is well resourced and students have good access to computers. Some of the accommodation is cramped which inhibits group work and students' learning when there are large numbers in the class.

62. The assessment of students' work is good. Marking is fair and assignments meet the requirements of awarding bodies. Internal verification of assignments is effective and appropriate actions are taken in response to moderators' comments. Students are given detailed and effective feedback both in the classroom and on their written work. Challenging targets for improvement are set and the tracking of students' progress is good. Parents and students receive detailed reports twice a year. These include actions required for improvement.

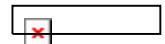
63. Business students benefit from a wide range of subject-specific and broader enrichment activities. These include sport, volunteer activities in local schools and work experience. Students are encouraged to take extra courses including GCSE English, AS-level accounts, AS-level ICT and computerised accounting. Students have taken part in visits to Canary Wharf to talk to business managers and have also completed a survey on the canteen in another local college for which they had a real budget. In addition, they have taken part in marketing projects for major companies.

64. Support for students is excellent. Teachers and tutors are very caring and supportive of their students. There are very good tracking systems for monitoring students' progress and communication between subject teachers, tutors and the learning support team is good. Additional learning support, either on a group or individual basis, is provided promptly. Specialist subject support is available both through the provision of additional sessions and on a one-to-one basis through the Skills Centre. Tutorial support is effective and targets for improvement are clear and detailed.

Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are good. Communications are effective and a strong team ethos exists. Good practice is shared and ideas for the further development of resources and teaching are discussed regularly. Quality assurance arrangements comply with the requirements of the examination boards. Management information is accurate and easily accessible, and managers make good use of the information available. Teachers and managers are committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and diversity. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored closely. Self-assessment is insufficiently critical of key weaknesses and insufficient action has been taken to improve pass rates on some courses.

Computing and information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses

- well-planned lessons

- high standards of students' work in the national diploma in IT

- good resources to support learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on most courses
- some unsatisfactory accommodation for whole-class work
- low student attendance in many lessons
- insufficient support for less able students on level 2 courses.

Scope of provision

66. The college provides computing and IT courses ranging from level 1 to level 3. Full-time courses for 428 students include AS levels and GCE A levels in computing and ICT, GNVQ intermediate, AVCE, national diploma IT practitioners, NVQ level 2 in using IT and ESOL using IT. Around 200 students are studying on GCE A-level courses. At the Stratford centre, 73 adults are studying part time on either IT applications or computer maintenance courses.

Achievement and standards

67. The retention rates for ICT and computing courses are high and are well above national averages. The pass rates for most courses in ICT and computing are low and many students make insufficient progress in relation to their prior achievement. For example, the pass rates on GCE A-level courses have been well below the national averages for the last three years and pass rates on AS-level computing have declined in that period to a low of 53%. The pass rates for the national diploma IT practitioners are broadly in line with the national average.

68. Many students are enthusiastic about their learning and the tasks set. The standard of students' work is high on the national diploma and AVCE courses and students develop good web development skills, write structured programs and design databases competently. The range of ability of students on the GNVQ intermediate course is very wide. A significant number of these students find it difficult to produce work independently to agreed deadlines. Students on the NVQ using IT course lack confidence in undertaking some basic IT tasks such as handling attachments to e-mails.

69. Punctuality is good, but attendance in a significant number of lessons observed was low. This was particularly evident at the Stratford centre, where half of the students were absent in two of the lessons observed.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate ICT	2	No. of starts	91	93	94
		% retention	92	83	88
		% pass rate	80	68	69
AS-level computing	3	No. of starts	36	37	37
		% retention	89	95	92
		% pass rate	59	54	53
AS-level ICT	3	No. of starts	88	89	92
		% retention	95	97	98
		% pass rate	60	43	58
AVCE ICT double award	3	No. of starts	111	87	91
		% retention	64	75	92
		% pass rate	89	88	85
National diploma for IT practitioners	3	No. of starts	22	23	21
		% retention	86	83	90
		% pass rate	89	100	89
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	65	21	18
		% retention	75	95	94
		% pass rate	63	85	76
GCE A-level ICT	3	No. of starts	66	72	61
		% retention	76	100	100
		% pass rate	74	81	70

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

Quality of education and training

70. Most teaching is satisfactory or good, none is outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate high levels of up-to-date commercial knowledge and are able to use this to help students learn. Students on vocational courses receive particularly effective individual support when undertaking practical work. Lessons are often well planned and supported by carefully developed notes. The better lessons feature a good variety of well-paced, demanding activities that involve students fully in their learning. For example, in a national diploma web design lesson, students working in pairs were able to reflect on the qualities that make a good site by critically evaluating a well-chosen selection of web pages, including archived sites. They then downloaded a number of different web browsers in order to compare how pages appear in different contexts. This was undertaken very competently.

71. In contrast, a few lessons are too easy for the more able students, but too difficult for the less able students. In some lessons, there is inadequate checking of students' understanding and the teachers' questions engage only a few of the more confident students. In one practical programming lesson, which focused on developing skills in iteration, the complex example chosen and very wordy exercise booklet used obscured the main learning objectives. This resulted in some students merely keying in programming instructions without any understanding.

72. Resources to support learning are good. These include: well-structured course notes and exercises, many of which are available electronically; a well-stocked, up-to-date library; interactive

whiteboards in most classrooms and a large number of computers available with appropriate software. Some open access accommodation is unsuitable for whole-class teaching and managing groups. In such areas, it is difficult to present concepts effectively and students are distracted by the activities in the adjacent spaces. Teachers have good technical knowledge and are generally well qualified. Most staff have benefited from recent staff development, including training in operating systems and programming languages, keeping up to date with developments in awarding bodies and coaching in teaching techniques.

73. Students' skills in numeracy and literacy are assessed effectively on entry and appropriate support is provided where necessary. Within vocational courses, a schedule of appropriate assignments with clear assessment criteria is provided for students. Assignments are marked accurately and appropriate feedback provided. The progress of students on these courses is well recorded. In contrast, students' progress on GCE A-level computing projects is monitored poorly. Some students have begun to implement their projects without first developing an appropriate design. Inadequate guidance has resulted in some of the more able students embarking on projects that provide them with limited scope for demonstrating the level of data processing required to secure a high grade.

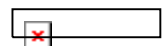
74. Students with appropriate prior achievement have a good range of advanced programmes from which to choose. Some less able students struggle to cope with the demands of the GNVQ intermediate course. Vocational courses include satisfactory opportunities for work experience and trips that enrich the curriculum including visits to see how IT is used to manage a theme park in France.

75. Students are well supported by very committed and approachable teachers, tutors and additional support assistants. Students value the good, informal support that they receive and the readily available effective guidance.

Leadership and management

76. Managers in the area have not yet been able to raise standards on the GCE A-level computing and ICT courses. They have, however, produced a detailed and realistic action plan to address key weaknesses they have identified through self-assessment. New teachers have been recruited. The management structure has been changed to improve lines of communication and clarify responsibilities within teams. The timetable now provides more time for revising theoretical concepts and preparing for examinations. Additional resources have been introduced, including up-to-date textbooks, interactive materials and a database of past exam questions. It is too early to judge the impact of these recent measures.

Visual and performing arts and media



Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most advanced level courses

- students' achievements in media and music in comparison with their prior attainment at GCSE

- excellent teaching

- very high standard of students' work

- very good specialist facilities

- very effective and comprehensive student support

- strong curriculum management and excellent teamwork.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on level 2 courses in media and art and design

- insufficient support for less able students on level 2 courses.

Scope of provision

77. There are 443 students enrolled on courses in visual and performing arts, media and music. Of these, 382 are full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 59 are full-time adult students. Around 45% of all students in this area of learning are on media courses, 25% on performing arts and 30% on visual art courses. An option in digital media is offered at foundation level for E2E learners. Full-time level 2 courses are available in media, art and design and performing arts. AS-level courses are available in art and design, film/video production, dance, music technology, drama and media studies. GCE A-level courses are offered in art and design, dance, drama, film, media, music and music technology. National diplomas are offered in fine art, media, and performing arts.

Achievement and standards

78. Retention rates are high at all levels in media and visual arts. On full-time courses in media and visual arts, retention rates have been above the national average for the last 3 years. Many students have few GCSEs on entry and a significant minority have none. Despite this, pass rates on all advanced courses are above the national average except in AS-level art studies/fine art. Pass rates on most advanced courses are at, or above, the national average. Pass rates on GNVQ intermediate courses in art and design and media are below the national average. In media and music, most students achieve significantly better outcomes than their GCSE results would suggest.

79. Students produce high-quality work with confidence. In art and design, their sketchbooks are

thoroughly researched. Students' work demonstrates that they have experimented with a range of media and styles. Learners on the E2E digital media option produced high-quality self portraits in a project on personal identity. Students on the national diploma in media have worked with professional partners to produce many broadcast-standard short films. For example, one excellent educational film is geared towards young people wishing to enter a career in the arts. Students have worked with commercial organisations including national radio stations and major film companies. They are very motivated, work well in groups and on their own and evaluate their progress effectively. Attendance is very good. A minority of students on level 2 courses struggle in their lessons and make little progress.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	23	23	21
		% retention	83	83	71
		% pass rate	74	100	80
AS-level art studies/fine art	3	No. of starts	32	32	56
		% retention	100	91	100
		% pass rate	75	86	80
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	91	77	74
		% retention	97	91	88
		% pass rate	89	97	94
GCE A-level media studies	3	No. of starts	78	63	57
		% retention	81	95	91
		% pass rate	98	100	100
National diploma in media	3	No. of starts	31	27	22
		% retention	84	93	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma in art and design	3	No. of starts	47	44	32
		% retention	79	75	100
		% pass rate	84	97	97

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

Quality of education and training

80. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Many lessons are inspiring and teachers motivate students to improve their skills and understanding. Lesson plans and schemes of work are detailed and underline the need to check students' learning. Teachers take care to extend the most able students and support those who are less able. For example, in one art and design lesson, the teacher required the more able students to produce two poster designs, while less confident students were given extra time and guidance to complete one design. A wide range of teaching styles is used. In one media lesson, students presented well-researched short talks on film genres using computerised presentations. When ILT is used, it is used very effectively. In the most successful lessons, interactive whiteboards are used to access resources on the college intranet and the Internet and to show photographs and film clips. Students enjoy lessons and participate fully. For example, first diploma performing arts students learned creatively through experimentation with fusion dance styles and GNVQ intermediate art and design students worked confidently with a range of media for their project work. In a few less successful lessons, opportunities to extend students are

missed and teachers do not regularly check learning.

81. Students benefit from very good specialist facilities. The digital media centre provides high-quality viewing and editing facilities and the music centre has full recording and editing facilities and a good range of instruments. Art rooms are spacious with ample resources. Students can use them when they are not in their lessons. Teachers are well qualified and many have recent industry experience. Technician support is very good and well used. In a level 2 art lesson, for example, the technician demonstrated how to use scalpels safely.

82. The assessment of students' work is rigorous. Internal verification is thorough and assessment grades are used to monitor students' progress. Students' work is marked carefully and most students are given advice on how it can be improved. The comments provided on students' essays and practical projects are very detailed. However, in music, students are not always given enough information for them to improve their work. Informal feedback to students in lessons is very encouraging and clear. Students are given clear targets from the outset of their course and these are reviewed regularly.

83. There is a good range of courses at levels 2 and 3. The very good enrichment opportunities include a full programme of visits from practising artists and trips to exhibitions and performances. These are well used during lessons to help students develop their own skills.

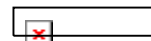
84. The college has recently been awarded funding to develop a centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) in digital and broadcast media. It is making very good progress in achieving its targets in the first year of its business plan and has started recruitment on to courses. Staff at the Stratford centre have developed a very good range of short vocational courses, in subjects ranging from DVX camera work to digital music video production. A short course in digital video production provides good opportunities for beginners to acquire new skills and to progress to more specialised intensive vocational courses. Development plans indicate that students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses at the college will be able to extend their technical understanding by taking additional courses taught by industry professionals. Equipment at both the Plaistow and Stratford Circus sites is of industry standard.

85. Students receive excellent guidance and support. A common induction project across all arts courses sets high standards for students. Initial assessments are carefully planned and individual learning needs are quickly diagnosed. Students with learning difficulties receive very good support. Specialist equipment has been purchased that allows students who have a disability to train for sound work in the media industry. Communication between teachers and tutors is very good. Student support is comprehensive. Students regularly approach teachers for extra support, and teachers give freely of their spare time to provide additional workshops and one-to-one guidance. Tutorial sessions are well organised and often include contributions from specialists.

Leadership and management

86. Leadership and management are outstanding. Communication and collaboration between teams is highly effective. Time is set aside for teams to plan and share good practice. Development plans are self-critical and identify key areas for improvement successfully. Meetings are purposeful, and actions are ascribed to individuals and monitored carefully. Experienced teachers act as mentors for new teachers. Teachers are encouraged to work towards higher degrees and undertake regular professional development. Internal observations of teaching result in feedback from managers which highlights both good practice and areas for improvement. Resources are deployed effectively and efficiently, and equipment is maintained to a high standard. Diversity is celebrated in the delivery of the curriculum and managers have involved all staff in their drive towards inclusiveness. Many projects encourage students to draw on their own cultural heritage.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- high retention rates on most courses

- very good use of ILT

- good support for students

- good range of curriculum enhancement opportunities.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level critical thinking

- cramped accommodation limiting group work

- insufficient detail in assessment and feedback for some subjects.

Scope of provision

87. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in history, geography, law, government and politics and philosophy as well as AS level in critical thinking, citizenship, classical civilisation, European studies, general studies and world development. There are currently 422 enrolments and the students are predominantly aged 16 to 18. Student numbers are high in law with 125 enrolments.

Achievement and standards

88. Pass rates are high in GCE A-level geography, law, general studies and history and in AS-level European studies and history. Pass rates on AS-level critical thinking are low and have declined each year since 2002. Relatively few students achieve high grade passes. However, a large proportion of students do consistently achieve grades higher than would be predicted by their prior

attainment at GCSE. Retention rates are very high and exceed national averages in most subjects. Attendance at lessons is in line with the average for humanities subjects in sixth form college inspections. Students are late in a minority of lessons.

89. Students produce high-quality written and practical work. They participate in and contribute well to discussions in all subjects. Students are often eager to make contributions that reflect their good understanding of the work. They demonstrate a willingness to think laterally and to apply prior knowledge in a constructive and thoughtful manner. For example, in one philosophy lesson, students were able to analyse the current situation in the Ukraine and draw conclusions and parallels with Plato's view of democracy in ancient Athens. Students develop high level skills of discernment and evaluation. They work diligently and produce very good answers for set tasks. They work well with their peers and the teacher to explore and investigate topics in depth.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level critical thinking	3	No. of starts	122	121	91
		% retention	96	92	96
		% pass rate	54	47	31
AS-level general studies	3	No. of starts	90	58	85
		% retention	94	90	95
		% pass rate	74	44	94
AS-level history	3	No. of starts	30	32	33
		% retention	97	94	91
		% pass rate	72	87	90
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	46	47	68
		% retention	98	91	96
		% pass rate	89	79	86
AS-level philosophy	3	No. of starts	20	16	29
		% retention	85	100	93
		% pass rate	82	88	70
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	17	15	22
		% retention	65	100	95
		% pass rate	91	93	90
GCE A-level law	3	No. of starts	41	40	34
		% retention	78	98	94
		% pass rate	97	97	100

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

Quality of education and training

90. Most teaching was good and none was unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned and preparation is thorough, ensuring that students are actively involved in learning. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods such as discussion, debate and argument to help students learn. Through group work they encourage students to develop their evaluative and analytical skills. For example, in one lesson, students used data from websites in an assessment of the costs of various aid projects

throughout the world. Students were given the chance to produce posters and present their findings to the rest of the group.

91. The use of ILT in teaching and learning is good. Teachers use interactive whiteboards imaginatively. For example, in one geography lesson, students investigated and analysed management strategies for coastal land projects within Holderness. Photographic material through the Internet was used effectively to illustrate the actions taken to bolster the sea defences. Students were required to analyse cause and effect and make reasoned judgements as to why certain policies became necessary at that time.

92. Opportunities for meaningful group work are limited as some classrooms are very cramped. Although schemes of work and lesson plans refer to differentiated activity, it is often not seen in lessons.

93. Teachers are very well qualified. They maintain their subject expertise through a good staff development programme. The curriculum area is very well resourced with interactive whiteboards in most rooms and an extensive stock of up-to-date books and periodicals within the learning resource centre. Materials and handouts used in lessons are detailed and help students learn. Students make good use of the materials and resources available on the college intranet.

94. Overall, marking and assessment are satisfactory. Most marking is thorough and students are clear about what they need to do to improve. In a minority of examples, however, feedback is cursory with little indication how a mark is derived or how the student could improve it. Teachers take care to indicate how less able students can improve their work, but do not always give more the able students enough guidance. Where they are used, feedback sheets are effective. Some teachers complete thorough analyses of assignments with resubmission guidance on review sheets, but others return work with limited comment and a grade. Internal moderation of assignments is good and the requirements of awarding bodies are met.

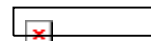
95. Humanities courses are enhanced by many opportunities for visits to places of interest such as Parliament, the British Museum, and the Crown Courts. Student participation in enrichment activities is high. Links with local universities are good. Students visit the Oxford Debating Society and often benefit from visiting speakers. For example, professional speakers from politics and the legal system regularly give talks to students. Key skills in communications are taught as part of the course within humanities subjects. Each course team produces a key skills target and this is monitored effectively. Almost 70% of students within each group are targeted to acquire a key skills qualification; students comment favourably on the opportunity to develop these skills.

96. Academic and pastoral support for students are very good. The initial diagnostic testing system, alongside subject-specific testing, ensures that those students who require support are identified early and provided with appropriate learning support. Students frequently access the comprehensive support provided by the college Skills Centre. During tutorials, students are set achievement targets and agree individual action plans so that they are clear on what they need to do to improve. Teachers provide their students with good academic support.

Leadership and management

97. Leadership and management are good. Teachers feel valued and are able to participate in the planning process through well-structured and regular curriculum meetings. Self-assessment is rigorous, thorough and self-critical. Peer observations of teaching are well established across the area and are used effectively to share good practice. Communications within humanities are good and working relationships between staff and managers at senior and middle management level are very good. Managers provide a clear strategic direction and readily support any staff development needs.

Psychology, sociology and health and social care



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on all courses

- very good progress by students in GCE A-level sociology

- much very good teaching and learning

- very effective assessment practices

- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on a minority of courses

- underdeveloped use of ILT in lessons.

Scope of provision

98. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in sociology and psychology, AVCE single and double awards in health and social care and first diploma in health and social care. There are currently 543 students on these courses, almost all are full-time students aged 16 to 18. In psychology, 150 students are studying AS-level courses and 80 GCE A-level courses. There are 65 students studying sociology at GCE A level and 92 at AS level. There are 83 students over the two years of the AVCE health and social care course and 41 on the first diploma.

Achievement and standards

99. Retention rates are high. In GNVQ intermediate health and social care, AVCE health and social care and AS-levels psychology and sociology, retention rates are significantly above national averages. Retention rates on GCE A-level courses are broadly in line with national averages. Pass rates are low on a few courses. In GNVQ intermediate health and social care, AS-level psychology and AS-level sociology pass rates are below national averages. Pass rates in GCE A-levels in sociology and psychology are high. Students on the GCE A-level sociology course make very good progress in relation to their prior achievement at GCSE. Pass rates on AVCE health and social care

double award have improved each year since 2002 and were high in 2004. Pass rates on the AVCE single award are broadly in line with national averages.

100. The quality of students' work is high. Students are encouraged to develop good understanding of the theoretical concepts that underpin their subjects. In an AS-level sociology lesson, students defined alienation and globalisation and related these to patriarchy and ideology, demonstrating outstanding sociological fluency. Students' oral work is better than their written work, where weaknesses in written English hamper their progress. Students on AVCE courses develop good research skills, based around good subject knowledge. Lessons start punctually and attendance is in line with the average for sixth form college inspections. Students are late in a minority of lessons.

A sample of retention and pass rates in psychology, sociology, health and social care, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	*	25	48
		% retention	*	96	98
		% pass rate	*	79	64
AVCE health and social care single award	3	No. of starts	11	34	45
		% retention	100	97	93
		% pass rate	87	82	79
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	72	106	136
		% retention	96	94	95
		% pass rate	67	70	65
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	69	74	97
		% retention	96	93	94
		% pass rate	80	84	67
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	46	56	75
		% retention	80	98	93
		% pass rate	89	98	91
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	54	47	58
		% retention	81	100	97
		% pass rate	98	100	98

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

101. There is much very good teaching and learning. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers use a variety of teaching methods to challenge and extend students' knowledge and understanding. Lessons follow well-planned schemes of work. The development of students' skills in critical analysis and evaluation are carefully matched to subject content in lessons. Students are encouraged from the start to use subject-specific skills and terminology. Teachers manage students' learning effectively through interesting and socially inclusive group activities, which are often extended into homework and out-of-class activities. For example, in one health and social care lesson, students had to role play being teachers of young children in preparation for their work experience the following week. Group work is collaborative and co-operative, and students engage in active and

mature debate. In an AS-level sociology lesson, students discussed ideology, false consciousness, social control and patriarchy, with fluency, accuracy and good illustrative examples.

102. In less successful lessons, learning objectives are not clearly stated at the beginning of the lesson and there is often no effective summary at the end, leaving students unclear about what they have achieved. In a minority of lessons, opportunities to check understanding by questioning students are lost. Enthusiastic students are sometimes allowed to dominate discussion, leaving quieter students less actively involved in learning.

103. Teachers are well qualified, experienced and enthusiastic about their subjects. Classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards connected to the college intranet and the Internet. However, the potential this offers to bring the outside world into the classroom is not fully utilised in many lessons. High-quality learning materials, which are shared between staff, are very effective in motivating students and extending those who are more able. The library is well resourced with a wide range of up-to-date reference materials.

104. Assessment is well designed and well planned. Teachers use a good range of assessment methods to assess students' learning. For example, formal oral presentations to teachers are used to assess progress in GCE A-level coursework and for revision purposes prior to examinations. Assessment is valued by students as an integral part of the learning process. Homework is set frequently and marked and returned promptly. Marking is of a high standard. Teachers provide detailed written comments and clear guidance on how students can improve their work.

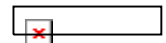
105. Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities. For example, some students attend Saturday sessions at local universities to develop the skills and confidence needed for HE. Work experience is well planned and integrated successfully into health and social care courses.

106. Support and guidance for students are very good. The individual learning needs of students are diagnosed promptly and comprehensive support is provided. Links between subject staff and those providing support are good. Particularly good arrangements are in place to support students who initially fail their examinations at AS level in sociology or psychology. These students are allowed to progress on to GCE A level and subsequently achieve good results.

Leadership and management

107. Leadership and management are good. Teachers work well in teams and are very supportive of each other. Teaching and learning benefit from the close working relationships amongst staff and the sharing of good practice. Self-assessment is reflective and evaluative. The self-assessment report accurately identifies areas for improvement. Staff development is good and team planning and development is well structured. A strong commitment to equality and diversity makes students feel safe and valued. The atmosphere in lessons is exceptionally harmonious and conducive to learning.

English and modern foreign languages



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

Strengths

- high pass and retention rates on most courses

- good teaching and learning
- effective and imaginative use of ILT
- good support for students
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in AS-level French
- low retention rates in AS-level French and AS-level Spanish
- poor punctuality in a few lessons disrupts learning.

Scope of provision

108. Most students are full time, aged 16 to 18. GCSE English constitutes the largest cohort with 246 students. There are 152 students studying advanced level courses in English literature and 105 studying advanced level courses in English language. The college offers a wide range of courses in modern foreign languages which include: French, German, Spanish, Mandarin, Urdu, Bengali and Arabic.

Achievement and standards

109. There are high pass rates on most courses. The percentage of students achieving grades A or B on AS-level Spanish and GCE A-level English language courses is significantly higher than national averages. Students on GCE A-level courses in English literature and modern foreign languages consistently achieve higher grades than would be expected from their GCSE results. A large proportion of students on the GCSE English courses achieve higher grade passes. Pass rates in AS-level French are low and reflect poor achievement by some part-time evening students. Retention rates are high on English courses. On AS-level French and Spanish courses retention rates are unsatisfactory.

110. Many students have developed the confidence and ability to participate very constructively in class discussion. In lessons on *Othello*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* students show great sensitivity to characters and enthusiasm for talking about the situations portrayed. Students in GCSE English lessons discuss the implications of texts in their anthology with interest

and humour. English language students show good abilities in analysing linguistic effects. Students of French and Spanish have learned to cope well with the languages being spoken at native speed. They are able to understand and respond appropriately to questions and they find the experience stimulating and enjoyable. Students' written work in English is generally of a high standard, with appropriate content, but there are sometimes shortcomings in expression or development of ideas.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE English (A* to C)	2	No. of starts	176	227	264
		% retention	89	86	81
		% pass rate	34	66	62
AS-level English language	3	No. of starts	67	83	64
		% retention	93	94	94
		% pass rate	65	83	95
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	53	71	96
		% retention	98	94	93
		% pass rate	94	94	85
AS-level French	3	No. of starts	23	31	31
		% retention	78	81	68
		% pass rate	78	76	67
AS-level Spanish	3	No. of starts	*	24	20
		% retention	*	67	60
		% pass rate	*	56	100
GCE A-level English language	3	No. of starts	54	48	54
		% retention	70	96	94
		% pass rate	95	100	100
GCE A-level English literature	3	No. of starts	69	45	57
		% retention	80	98	95
		% pass rate	96	98	98

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

111. Teaching and learning are good. The best lessons are inspirational, imaginative and extend students fully. A happy class of students thoroughly enjoyed an evening lesson in GCSE Mandarin. The teacher used the interactive whiteboard exceptionally well, moving smartly from one activity to another, culminating in a game of 'who wants to be a Millionaire?' in Mandarin. The success of the teaching was evident in the students' ability to say, write and recognise basic Mandarin after only a few lessons. Other lessons in modern foreign languages are highly effective. Although the students have to work hard to sustain concentration to keep up with the foreign language being spoken at native speed, they relish this experience. The creative use of ILT is a feature of many lessons in which students respond well to grammatical exercises on computers. The best discussion lessons are those where teachers single out students by name, pushing for answers and checking their

understanding. Teaching in English literature lessons is enlivened by the teachers' obvious love of the texts. Students learn best when they are feeding off each other as well as the teacher, not just in ideas, but also in enthusiasm and motivation. In a French lesson, two less able students had made good progress because of the stimulus of the stronger students around them. In all lessons observed, the friendly rapport between staff and students was important; teachers frequently used humour to good effect.

112. In a minority of English lessons, teachers fail to draw all the students into discussions, leaving some silent. This means that their learning is not properly monitored. Lesson plans do not always address the needs of individual students sufficiently. A few English lessons lack excitement. Activities continue for too long and there is insufficient variety to sustain students' interest. The success of a small number of lessons is jeopardised by poor punctuality which disrupts the learning of other students. Teachers react to this with varying degrees of rigour.

113. Teachers are well qualified, all are teacher trained and many have higher degrees. A good range of relevant staff development has been undertaken and shared through staff development days. There are excellent facilities for ILT in lessons, especially in modern foreign language classrooms. Students on the GCSE English course have access to very good resources on the college intranet to support their learning. Classrooms are bright and welcoming with attractive, relevant displays on the walls.

114. On English courses, students' marked work is accompanied by thorough feedback, with checklists of how students can improve. Teachers mark assignments in accordance with exam board requirements; moderators' reports are complimentary about the rigour and consistency of assessment. Regular progress reviews with students result in action plans which aim to help students achieve in line with, and even above, their target grades. The targets arising from some individual action plans are insufficiently specific or measurable.

115. There is a wide range of opportunities for enrichment, ranging from the chance to learn Mandarin and Arabic in evening classes, to visits from writers and theatre trips.

116. Students are very well supported. Their good relationships with teachers mean that they feel there is somebody they can turn to. Teachers and tutors are very approachable and give readily of their time outside of lessons when students need them.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership and management are good. Course teams meet regularly and teachers take responsibility for driving developments forward. Teachers are motivated by their responsibility for courses and devolved budgets. The team has responded well to educational and social inclusion. Many students are given the opportunity to start AS-level courses with relatively low levels of prior attainment. Teachers choose texts and other topics which celebrate the diversity of students' cultural heritage. Self-assessment is good. Course reviews are detailed and robust and development plans contain explicit targets for improvement. Internal lesson observation grades are realistic and feedback to teachers is supportive and constructive.

Part D: College data

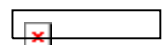
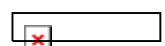


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	3	37
2	23	27
3	73	14
4/5	0	6
Other	1	16
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	796	29	16
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	113	1	2
Business administration, management and professional	597	171	15
Information and communication technology	509	43	11
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	6	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	112	83	4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public services	191	64	5
Visual and performing arts and media	468	27	10
Humanities	846	4	16
English, languages and communication	620	89	14
Foundation programmes	143	222	7
Total	4,395	739	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 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	37	143	73	4	15	58
	Retention rate %	86	76	88	75	87	100
	National average %	86	84	85	74	68	63
	Pass rate %	69	47	78	33	31	59
	National average %	70	63	81	51	46	64
2	Starters excluding transfers	994	754	947	69	140	158
	Retention rate %	89	90	85	74	69	80
	National average %	81	84	83	63	65	67
	Pass rate %	64	71	73	39	56	56
	National average %	79	83	85	68	61	70
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,757	3,154	3,177	19	134	111
	Retention rate %	84	84	90	63	51	86
	National average %	75	86	88	64	76	75
	Pass rate %	72	76	79	42	25	55
	National average %	81	82	81	66	63	70

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: *Benchmarking Data 2001 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England*, Learning and Skills Council, September 2004.

2. College rates for 2000/01 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)	77	22	1	83
Level 2 (intermediate)	75	25	0	20
Level 1 (foundation)	75	25	0	4
Totals	77	22	1	107

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