



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Bromley College of Further and Higher Education

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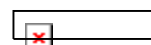
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Basic information about the college

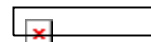


| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of college: | Bromley College of Further and Higher Education |
| Type of college: | General Further Education |
| Principal: | Peter Jones |
| Address of college: | Rookery Lane Bromley BR2 8HE |
| Telephone number: | 020 8295 7000 |
| Fax number: | 020 8295 7099 |
| Chair of governors: | John Charles |
| Unique reference number: | 130430 |
| Name of reporting inspector: | Martyn Rhowbotham HMI |
| Dates of inspection: | 6-10 December 2004 |

Part A: Summary

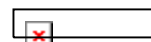


Information about the college



Bromley College is one of two general further education (FE) colleges in the London Borough of Bromley in outer south-east London. The London Borough of Bromley is a relatively prosperous sub-region with unemployment being low at 3%. However, there are pockets of social deprivation in the area and Bromley has the second lowest paid workforce in London. Some 32% of the population are only qualified to national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 1. The college recruits from a wide area with 50% of its students coming from outside the borough. Some 50% of its 16 to 18 year olds are recruited from widening participation postcodes, mostly from inner London boroughs. There are 16 Local Education Authority (LEA) maintained schools and 5 independent schools in the borough that also offer education for 16 to 18 year olds. Some 39% of students enrolled at the college are from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to 14% of the population of Bromley. The college provides courses in most areas of learning from entry and pre-entry levels to higher education (HE). Bromley College also provides work-based learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy, motor vehicle, business and accounting. There are four other work-based learning providers based in the borough. The college is a partner in a management and related professional studies Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) and plans to bid for a joint CoVE in electrical installation with Carshalton College in 2005. In 2003/04, some 65% of the college's enrolments were on courses at level 2 or below. The college has established partnerships for delivering training to local businesses and also provides work-related learning for pupils aged 14 to 16 in partnership with local schools. The Connexions year 11 destination survey for 2003 showed 82% of Bromley's young people entered post-16 education against the London South average of 81%. The percentage of young people leaving school with 5 or more A* to C grades at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) was just below 60% in 2003, which is above the national average. The college's main site is situated south of Bromley town centre and there is additional accommodation in the Old Town Hall in the town centre. There are two community centres in Beckenham and Penge. Approved plans are in place for a major redevelopment of the main site with work due to begin in 2005. The college's mission, redefined since the last inspection is: 'To deliver skills and qualifications for working life, enabling learners and employers to build a better future'.

How effective is the college?



The inspection graded the quality of provision in 11 curriculum areas. Inspectors judged the provision to be good in two areas, satisfactory in seven, unsatisfactory in one and very poor in one. Work-based learning was satisfactory in the area inspected. The college's main strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- above average overall pass rates on level 1 courses
- above average pass rates for adults on level 2 courses

- good teaching on engineering courses
- good support for students
- a clear strategic vision for the college
- a wide range of vocational courses
- good initial assessment of students' additional learning needs
- effective additional learning support
- productive partnerships with other agencies
- knowledgeable and committed corporation
- good access to information and communications technology (ICT) and other learning resources
- successful approach to inclusion
- good support for students with dyslexia.

What should be improved

- attendance

- punctuality

- the proportion of good or better teaching

- provision in media and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

- retention rates of adult students on level 1 courses

- quality assurance at course team level in some subjects

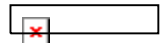
- development of key skills across the curriculum

- consistency of tutorials

- some accommodation.

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



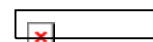
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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 | Good. Retention and pass rates are high on most advanced subsidiary-level (AS level) and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses. High grade pass rates are |

| | |
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| | above the national average in all AS-level subjects. Retention rates are low on the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in applied science. There is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) by students in lessons. |
| Construction | Satisfactory. There is good teaching on electrical installation and wood occupations courses, but poor punctuality and attendance on brickwork and technician courses are disruptive to students' learning. Pass rates are high on electrical installation courses. Resources in brickwork workshops are poorly managed. Support for students is good. |
| Engineering | Good. Teaching on engineering courses is good and there are high retention and pass rates on most courses. Initial assessment and the support arrangements that follow are particularly robust. There are clear management roles and staff are well informed and fully involved in improvement initiatives. Attendance and punctuality are poor. |
| Business and professional studies | Satisfactory. There are high retention and pass rates on personnel, legal secretaries and most administration courses. There is a wide range of provision and part-time students are supported well. There is insufficient attention given to students' individual learning needs. Attendance and punctuality by full-time students aged 16 to 18 are poor. |
| Information and communications technology | Satisfactory. There are high retention and pass rates on computer literacy, European computer driving licence (ECDL) and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate courses. Students are supported well in practical lessons and in the learning centres. There are low pass rates on the BTEC first diploma in computing course and on the advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) double award. |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Retention rates on level 1 hairdressing courses and pass rates on key skills for work-based learners are high. Support for students is good and there are good links with employers. Retention and pass rates on level 2 hairdressing courses are low. There is some poor planning of work-based assessment. |
| Health and social care | Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on NVQ courses are high. Support for students with additional learning needs is good and there is good teaching on courses for adult students. Retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course are low. The implementation of key skills in the curriculum is ineffective and attendance and punctuality by full-time students are poor. |
| Media | Very weak. There is a large proportion of unsatisfactory teaching on media courses. Retention and pass rates are low on many courses and students' attendance and punctuality are poor. Much accommodation is inappropriate and quality assurance is ineffective. There is a high standard of students' work in video and audio production. |
| English for speakers of other languages | Unsatisfactory. ESOL students develop good personal skills and confidence. They have good access to ICT facilities and a wide range of courses to meet their needs and interests. There is a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and target setting is ineffective. Students are given insufficient direction on how to improve their language and study skills. |
| Literacy and numeracy | Satisfactory. Initial assessment of learning needs is good and resources are used well to support teaching and learning. Support for students with dyslexia is very good. There is insufficient opportunity |

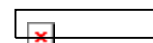
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| | for students to apply the skills they have learned on discrete literacy and numeracy courses. Individual learning plans are not used effectively to record students' progress. |
| Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities | Satisfactory. Students' achievements are very good in art, theatre and catering. Accommodation and learning resources are very good and there is good use of local facilities to teach skills for independence. There is insufficient focus on individual learning needs and students' overall progress and achievements are not recorded effectively. |

How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the college has revised the mission which is now clear, understood by staff and more appropriate in meeting the needs of the community and employers. The college's strategic objectives are linked closely to the mission. A range of appropriate actions has been taken covering the organisation structure, curriculum provision, quality assurance and support for students to underpin the revised mission. Most college targets for student enrolments, performance and finances for 2003/04 have been met. Data are now reliable, timely and easily accessible by staff. Pass rates generally have improved from significantly below national averages at the last inspection to slightly above national averages. There has been an overall improvement in retention rates to around the national average, but there are variations between the curriculum areas, and the retention rate for adults at level 1 is still below the national average. Quality assurance procedures have been revised substantially and now provide a satisfactory framework. However, self-assessment is not sufficiently evaluative in some curriculum areas. The lesson observation scheme has been revised and now all teachers are observed at least once during the year. There is less unsatisfactory teaching compared with the last inspection, but the amount of good or better teaching has yet to improve. Curriculum management is now satisfactory in most curriculum areas, but policies and procedures are not always applied consistently and the poor punctuality and attendance identified at the last inspection remain. Communication across the college is good. Equality and diversity initiatives are good and support all students well. Partnerships supporting the strategy of widening participation are effective, and the curriculum has been developed well to support this. The business of the corporation and its committees is conducted well and governors are committed and knowledgeable and have a good range of expertise. Financial management is good and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



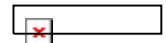
The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. An extensive review of the college's mission and its curriculum focused on meeting the needs of the local community more effectively. As a result, the college has developed more provision at entry level and levels 1 and 2, and increased participation from groups with low levels of prior attainment. Initial assessment is used effectively to assess and meet additional support needs. Good financial support enables students to participate fully and complete their studies. In many curriculum areas, there are clear progression routes from entry level and level 1 to level 3 and level 4 programmes.

The college has an appropriate race equality policy in addition to an equal opportunities policy and disability statement. It fulfils its obligations under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. Good progress has been made in the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act

2001 (SENDA). Most college facilities are accessible to students with restricted mobility. An assessment of the physical environment has resulted in adaptations in buildings and a costed plan of works to make necessary adjustments to comply with requirements by September 2005. During 2004, over 200 staff have participated in equality and diversity training activities.

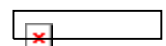
Some 39% of college students come from minority ethnic groups, compared with 7% of the population of the local borough. Around half the students travel to the college from outside the borough. Approximately 15% of staff are from minority ethnic groups and each school has specific targets for recruitment of students and staff from diverse backgrounds. Recruitment and performance of diverse groups of students are monitored closely and an analysis of data demonstrates a significant improvement in the performance of minority ethnic students. The college recognises a gender imbalance in recruitment in several curriculum areas and is taking appropriate action to improve this.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are good. The college provides the majority of potential students with impartial and comprehensive initial advice and guidance. The college induction programme is well planned and helps students settle quickly into their course. There is an appropriate tutorial programme for all students providing both academic and pastoral support. Students benefit from regular individual tutorials where their progress is monitored and targets are reviewed. In some cases, students do not receive effective tutorials, the time allocated being spent on coursework. Students' progress, punctuality and attendance are monitored closely and parents and employers are kept well informed. However, these arrangements have not improved attendance and punctuality in several curriculum areas. Careers advice and guidance are good. Two local specialist personal advisors from the local Connexions partnership are well integrated into the college's own advice and guidance service. Personal support is good. All students have access to the college's counselling service and to external support services where appropriate. Financial and welfare services are available to all students regardless of where they study. Students are well informed about these services and know how to get help. An annual HE event enables students to consider HE options, both within the college and at other institutions. Initial and diagnostic assessment are effective in identifying additional support needs. Support for students with dyslexia is very effective. Take-up rates of additional support, both in class and on an individual basis are good. The college has effective systems to measure the impact of additional learning support. Analysis shows those receiving additional support achieve better retention and pass rates than the college averages. The college has a child protection policy in place.

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

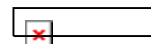
- approachable and helpful staff

- good access to computers
- good facilities on the main site
- wide variety of courses
- its location
- being treated with respect
- relaxed atmosphere
- good discipline.

What they feel could be improved

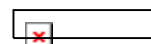
- car parking
- rooms that are too small
- canteen
- poor decoration of some rooms
- key skills.

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



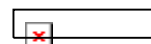
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

| 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 | 48 | 42 | 10 |
| 19+ and WBL* | 56 | 40 | 4 |
| Learning 16-18 | 47 | 42 | 11 |
| 19+ and WBL* | 55 | 39 | 6 |

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

*work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. Summary data for students' achievements in 2003/04 indicate that pass rates for most students are above the most recent national averages for colleges of a similar type. Over the three-year period to 2003/04, pass rates at level 1 have risen significantly. At level 2, there has been some improvement for adult students, but pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 have not improved and they have remained around the national average. At level 3, there have been significant improvements in pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 and they are now above the national average. Pass rates for adults on level 3 courses have improved slightly and they are now in line with the national average. The retention rate of younger students at level 1 has improved over the

rates are well below the national average. Retention rates at level 2 have fallen slightly for students aged 16 to 18 and they remain below the national average. Retention rates of adult students at this level have improved and now exceed the national average. Retention rates at level 3 have not improved significantly over the three years to 2003/04, although the retention rate of adult students recovered in 2003/04 following a sharp fall in the previous year. Students' attendance is unsatisfactory. Overall attendance in the lessons observed was 70%, a figure which is below the national average. However, this is an improvement on the figure of 63% recorded at the last inspection in December 2002. Attendance was highest in the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, at 84%, followed by science and mathematics, at 76%. By comparison, in construction the attendance rate was 65%, and in media it was low at 54%. Attendance by adults is slightly better than by students aged 16 to 18. Punctuality is poor in several areas of learning, for example, students' learning was disrupted in lessons in business administration, management and professional, health and social care, engineering, construction and ESOL.

2. With the exception of the GCE provision, which is relatively small, the college does not make much use of measures which compare data about students' prior attainments with their results, either for target setting or course planning. The college is currently undertaking a pilot project with two other colleges in south London to measure the value added on level 3 vocational courses.

3. Students' attainment was good or better in 45% of the lessons observed, a figure which is below the national average for general FE and tertiary colleges. Attainment was less than satisfactory in 9% of lessons, which is above the average.

4. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C provide more detail about students' achievements and standards reached on particular courses.

16 to 18 year olds

5. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 improved in 2003/04. They are above the national average at levels 1 and 3. The improvement at level 3 has been significant, with pass rates increasing to above the national average from a point well below. There has been an overall improvement in the retention rates of students on long courses at levels 1 and 3 and short courses in the three-year period to 2003/04, but it is only at level 1 and on short courses that they exceed the national average for similar colleges. There has been a significant improvement in the retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 taking AS-level and GCE A-level subjects, although the number of students starting these courses has reduced. At GNVQ levels 1, 2 and 3, pass rates have risen over the last three years, although they exceed the national average only at level 1.

6. Students produce work of a high standard in a few areas. For example, in science and mathematics, students develop good analytical skills and they achieve better examination results than are predicted on the basis of their previous educational performance. In the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, students of all ages produce some outstanding artwork. However, in media, where a high standard of work is produced by some students, the overall retention and pass rates are low.

Adult learners

7. Over the last two years, pass rates have risen markedly at level 1 and they are now above the national average. There has been a slight improvement in pass rates at levels 2 and 3 and, at level 2, the rates have remained above the national average for the last three years. At level 3, pass rates are now in line with the national average. There was a significant increase in short course enrolments in 2003/04. Pass rates have risen steadily each year and now exceed the national average.

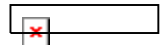
8. Retention rates improved in 2003/04, but it is only at level 2 and on short courses that there has been any real improvement since the last inspection. At levels 1 and 3, retention rates fell significantly in 2002/03. Their recovery in 2003/04 was not sufficient to reach the national average at level 1.

9. There have been no real improvements in retention and pass rates on NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 over the last three years, although, more adult students are enrolled on courses leading to other qualifications. Pass rates on these courses have risen, and they are now above, or in line with, national averages. However, only about half of the students on level 1 courses are retained.

10. In several curriculum areas, students are achieving high standards in the work they produce. For example, in health and social care, NVQ portfolios contain a high standard of work. However, in ESOL lessons, students have little opportunity to improve their fluency in speaking and the presentation of their written work is often poor.

11. There are 113 young people and adults undertaking work-based learning in motor vehicle engineering, business administration, management and professional, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Since the last inspection, the rate of completion of apprenticeship frameworks has improved and arrangements for apprentices to gain their key skills are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training



12. Teaching, learning and students' attainment were graded by inspectors in 178 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 51% of these lessons which is below the national average of 65%. The amount of satisfactory teaching was 42% which is 11% above the national average. Of the lessons that were judged to be good or better, 13% of these were either very good or outstanding. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching, at 8%, has reduced since the last inspection when it was 12%. The largest proportion of good or better teaching was in engineering and science and mathematics. In engineering, the percentage of good or better teaching was 17% above the national average. Teaching on media courses was weak with only 23% good or better and 39% unsatisfactory. Also, 20% of teaching on ESOL courses was unsatisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or in science and mathematics, construction and engineering. The largest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was on level 3 courses. The grades awarded by inspectors for learning were similar to those for teaching with the grades awarded for students' attainment being 6% lower. Overall teaching in lessons attended predominantly by adults is of a higher quality than in lessons attended predominantly by students aged 16 to 18. Overall, teaching, learning and attainment on level 1 courses are significantly better than on level 2 and level 3 courses. Students' progress and attainment on level 1 courses are also better than on level 2 and level 3 courses.

13. Students' punctuality is generally poor and their late arrival to lessons often disrupts effective learning on construction, engineering, business, health and social care and media courses. Where teaching is least effective, insufficient attention is given to the individual learning needs of students. Students learning is not developed sufficiently and there is ineffective use of target setting. Progress is not monitored effectively by teachers during the lesson and there is a lack of variety of appropriate teaching methods. There is often insufficient attention given to the development of key skills.

14. The most effective lessons are planned well and students benefit from a range of challenging learning activities that are matched closely to the aims and objectives of the lesson.

15. Much teaching on electrical installation, wood occupations, catering courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and health and social care courses for adults is good. In science and mathematics courses, practical work is linked well to theoretical aspects of the syllabus. There is good attention given to students' individual learning needs in engineering and students are supported well in their learning in the ICT learning centres. Teachers on business and management courses use their industrial experience effectively to help explain points being made and to bring up-to-date business methods to students' attention.

16. Teachers are appropriately qualified for the subjects they teach. Most have, or are working

towards, relevant teaching qualifications. Some 79% of full-time and fractional teachers and 57% of part-time teachers have a recognised teaching qualification. In many areas, teachers have relevant industrial or commercial experience. The college has been successful in recruiting staff in shortage areas such as construction. Technician support is good in engineering, media and science and mathematics. The college has recently recruited more staff to support students with identified additional learning support needs. Staff appraisal takes account of the result of lesson observations and identifies development needs effectively. Staff development activities take place throughout the academic year and there is a high level of participation.

17. The college has refurbished much of its accommodation since the last inspection. It is now good in business, science and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. ESOL accommodation at the Hawthorn centre is good. A detailed five-year property strategy has been developed to create new teaching and learning facilities for other curriculum areas. Currently, there is still some poor accommodation, with cramped workshops in engineering and brickwork and inappropriate classrooms for teaching media studies. In many areas, there is little display of students' work or other relevant material. Most areas of the college are accessible to students with restricted mobility and the college has a costed action plan to meet the requirements of the SENDA. Health and safety issues are promoted through workshop practice, but in some areas, risk assessments are not fully developed.

18. Some equipment in engineering and in photographic darkrooms is outdated and maintained poorly. Learning resources are generally good, with good provision for ILT. In literacy and numeracy and motor vehicle lessons, ILT is used well to support learning. In ICT lessons, students and teachers make very good use of learning materials through the virtual learning environment being piloted in this area. Students in science make insufficient use of ILT in lessons. Library resources are generally sufficient to support the needs of students. An insufficient number of clients for hairdressing limits learning and assessment opportunities for students. The college provides equipment to support students with additional learning needs, but students with laptops are unable to use these on the college network.

19. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Forms of assessment and recording are suitable for the courses and programmes being followed. The college has recently established two cross-college groups, one for internal verification and one for moderation, to ensure the sharing of good practice and to plan for improvement. However, it is too early to evaluate fully their impact. The college's assessment policy is appropriate, with clear guidelines and clear roles and responsibilities for assessors, internal verifiers and moderators.

20. Assessment is used satisfactorily to monitor students' progress. Most teachers provide regular, constructive verbal and written feedback on classroom assessment, homework and assignments. Prompt and useful feedback is valued highly by students. It provides them with a clear indication of how well they are progressing and what they could do to improve. Feedback on written assignments in beauty therapy is good and offers advice on further development. However, in science and mathematics, not all teachers give grades to marked work to show the level that students have reached. Written feedback on the work of building crafts students is too brief to help them improve. There is much unmarked work in students' files on courses in ESOL.

21. Good use is made of the results of initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills in planning teaching and support for identified additional learning needs. This information is used to set targets in students' individual learning plans. Target setting is good on AS-level and national diploma courses in science. However, there is insufficient target setting on business administration courses. Targets for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for ESOL students, are insufficiently precise to be helpful either for planning or review. The tracking and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. They are good on ICT courses. For students on discrete literacy and numeracy courses, the recording of progress in a significant minority of individual learning plans is poor.

22. Students benefit from regular progress reviews which enable them to know how well they are doing and what they could do to improve. Formal reviews of students' progress are held four times each year and more regularly where required. The reviews are thorough and result in a clear and

informative report that is sent to parents/carers or employers. However, for work-based learners in hairdressing and beauty therapy, targets set at these reviews are too imprecise to be helpful for either the planning of assessment or the review of progress.

23. A good range of vocational courses is offered in most curriculum areas. Since the last inspection, the college has undertaken an extensive review of its provision, in consultation with key partners and stakeholders. The curriculum provision is now aligned closely to community and employers' needs, and complements other provision in the area. The college has reduced its GCE A-level provision in favour of level 3 vocational courses and a stronger focus on entry, level 1 and level 2 vocational programmes, which now account for 65% of enrolments.

24. Courses are offered in most areas of learning with good internal progression routes, from levels 1 to 3, and in some cases, level 4. Currently, there is no provision for level 1 in science and mathematics and no level 3 craft courses in construction. Progression rates for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into mainstream courses or employment are low.

25. The college has been effective in implementing widening participation strategies. The provision of vocationally related ESOL courses has enabled students to progress to level 2 vocational programmes in some areas. Female students are under-represented in ICT, construction and engineering, and the college has strategies in place to address this.

26. The college has very good partnership arrangements for collaborative provision for 14 to 19 year olds and adult students. The Bromley 14 to 19 Collaborative Partnership has planned effectively for a wide range of provision for 14 to 16 year olds, with good post-16 progression opportunities. The college offers vocational programmes for 250 students aged 14 to 16 in several curriculum areas, with an extended range of opportunities being developed through partnership with local schools and colleges for September 2005.

27. The college is a key partner in the Bromley Adult Learning Partnership, whose aim is to develop a coherent provision for adult students in the area. The Business and Partnership unit in the college works with a wide range of local employers and has successfully secured external funding to deliver training through the Success for Business project. Close links with the local Business Focus group enable the college to identify and meet business development needs, through flexible delivery of existing qualifications and bespoke training. Apprenticeships are offered in motor vehicle, business administration, accountancy, hairdressing and beauty therapy.

28. Guidance and support for students are good. Support arrangements are planned and managed coherently. Pre-entry advice and guidance are impartial and comprehensive. Potential students benefit from a very clear prospectus which is available in a variety of formats. Staff from the college attend open evenings in local schools as well as providing college open evenings, which are valued highly by students and their parents or guardians.

29. Initial and diagnostic assessment of, and support for, literacy, numeracy and dyslexia are good. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. There is a good take-up rate of additional support. There has been a significant increase in the amount of support provided by the college and currently there are 355 more students receiving support than did so during the previous academic year. However, in science, mathematics and ICT there is insufficient individual support in a minority of lessons. The college has effective systems to measure the impact of additional learning support on retention and pass rates. Students receiving support achieve better retention and pass rates than the college average.

30. The induction programme is well planned and helps students settle quickly into their courses. However, a minority of students find their induction boring, although they acknowledge its usefulness. There is a satisfactory tutorial programme for full-time and substantial part-time students, providing both academic and pastoral support. Students benefit from regular individual tutorials where their progress is monitored and targets are reviewed. The best tutorials are interesting and informative for students and clearly focused on individual needs. In a small number of cases, students do not receive effective tutorials. Students' progress, punctuality and attendance

are monitored and parents and employers are kept well informed. However, these arrangements have not improved attendance and punctuality in many subject areas.

31. The student liaison team run a lively student common room offering regular and varied activities that are well attended and valued by students. Each month there is a different major event, such as Black History Week, which was attended by 550 students. Students spoke with enthusiasm about this event and the cultural understanding it promoted. Mentoring and motivational coaching are very effective for those students involved. There is an active students' union and a student representative council that provide very good opportunities for students to express their views. The college has responded positively to suggestions and taken appropriate action.

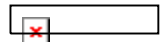
32. Careers advice and guidance are good. Two local specialist personal advisors from the local Connexions service are well integrated into the college's own advice and guidance service. There is a well-stocked careers section in the college library. Students also benefit from a job vacancies board in the college and support and guidance on developing their curriculum vitae. An annual HE event enables students to consider HE options, both within the college and at other institutions. The tutorial programme includes effective advice and guidance on applying for HE and students can access individual support to help them prepare their applications.

33. Personal support is good. All students have access to culturally sensitive college counselling services and to external support services where appropriate. Financial and welfare services are available to all students regardless of where they study. Students are well informed about these services and know how to get help. Part-time as well as full-time students make good use of these services and benefit from the support they receive. Students with responsibilities for childcare benefit from the college nursery or from financial support for other childcare provision. Arrangements for financial support are appropriately linked to attendance requirements.

34. Students participate regularly in cross-college enrichment events. Many of the activities reflect students' diverse backgrounds. In several curriculum areas, there are limited opportunities for vocationally relevant educational visits to enhance students' understanding of their career choices.

35. The college has recently revised its strategy for the implementation of key skills, moving towards a model in which key skills are learnt within the curriculum area. The implementation of this is not yet consistent across the college. In engineering, key skills are well integrated into vocational assignments, but this is not effective in hairdressing, media and health and social care. In other areas, key skills form part of the schemes of work, but they are not always taught effectively in a vocational context.

Leadership and management



36. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the governors and senior managers have consulted key stakeholders and staff in revising the college's mission. The mission is now more appropriate in meeting community and employers' needs and complements other provision in the area. The college's strategic objectives are linked closely to the mission. A range of actions has been taken covering the organisational structure, curriculum provision, quality systems and support for students to underpin the revised mission. Most college targets for students' enrolments, achievements and finances for 2003/04 have been met.

37. Senior managers use the vision and mission statements and the post-inspection action plan effectively to guide developments at all levels across the college and to inform strategic and operational planning and targets. There is regular monitoring of progress.

38. The management structure introduced in August 2003 is now well established. Schools of study

play a major role in managing and developing curriculum teams. School development plans contain measurable, achievable targets and timescales. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities well. Cross-college systems such as those dealing with quality assurance, resources and finance and student support are well integrated with the school structure. The senior management team provides clear operational direction. Staff are kept well informed of developments and issues through regular team meetings and newsletters.

39. There has been an improvement in the overall management of the college since the last inspection. Two curriculum areas judged previously to be unsatisfactory are now judged to be good and one other area has improved to satisfactory. Pass rates generally have improved from significantly below national averages at the last inspection to slightly above the national averages. There has been an overall improvement in retention rates to national averages, but there are variations between the curriculum areas and retention rates for adults on level 1 courses are still below the national average. The effectiveness of curriculum management, particularly at course team level, remains uneven. There is good management of science and mathematics and engineering, and curriculum management is satisfactory overall. Meetings across the college have fixed agenda items to facilitate monitoring of progress against actions and targets, but the review and recording of progress varies from good to perfunctory. In most curriculum areas, there are identified weaknesses that have not been addressed effectively and the implementation of some procedures such as the quality of individual learning plans has been inconsistent. Inspectors also found that college policies concerning, for example, punctuality and attendance, are not applied consistently. Although there have been some improvements in punctuality and attendance since the last inspection these weaknesses remain.

40. The college provides reliable data that are easily accessible to staff. A range of management information reports is available on enrolment, retention rates, student achievement, attendance and equality and diversity that reflect accurately the position at that time. The use of data by staff is variable with some using the data enthusiastically and well, while others do not evaluate the data sufficiently rigorously.

41. There are effective partnerships supporting the strategy of widening participation and the curriculum has developed to support this. Students attend the college from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and inclusion policies are effective. There have been improvements since the last inspection in strategies to support the diverse range of students enrolled.

42. Equality and diversity are addressed well by the college. There are clear policies on equality of opportunity and race equality, discrimination and harassment, and training has been provided for staff and students as appropriate. Since the last inspection, good monitoring of a range of students' achievements and other factors such as ethnicity, gender and disciplinary records has been introduced and effective action taken where particular issues have been identified.

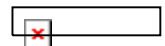
43. There is a comprehensive staff appraisal scheme with annual reviews which lead to an individual development plan. This review considers targets and training needs and links with information from the lesson observation scheme. The planning of the training and development programme for the college takes account of college strategic priorities, the outcomes of appraisal and the analysis of the lesson observation programme. Internal staff development events are well attended. The programme has given priority to issues related to the planning and delivery of teaching and learning. There is also a programme of initial teacher training for those staff without appropriate qualifications. A management development programme is supported well by staff. Managers and governors have also recently undertaken risk assessment training. Aspects of the training are evaluated for impact. For example, teaching observations are used to identify the impact of the range of teaching improvement strategies used.

44. A 'Quality Handbook for Schools and Course Teams' provides a satisfactory framework for guiding the implementation of quality assurance. Quality systems were revised substantially in 2003/04. The course evaluation and review process leads to a self-assessment report. In the curriculum areas that have made most progress since the last inspection, the self-assessment and review process has been rigorous and self-critical with evaluative judgements and effective monitoring of progress against identified actions. In other curriculum areas, self-assessment and

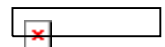
evaluation have not always been sufficiently rigorous with, in some instances, norms identified as strengths and progress monitoring has not been sufficiently objective. Overall, the quality of school self-assessment reports is at least satisfactory. There is a substantially revised lesson observation scheme that ensures that all teachers are observed at least once during the year. There is some correlation between the strengths and weaknesses identified through the college observation system and those of the curriculum inspectors, but the college's overall judgements on quality are higher than inspectors. There is less poor teaching compared with the last inspection, but the amount of good or better teaching has yet to improve.

45. The business of the corporation and its committees is well conducted. Governors are committed and knowledgeable and have a good range of expertise. Strategic targets including students' achievements and finance are set and monitored closely through the quality and standards and finance committees, and for general and personnel matters, through a third committee. The corporation completes a self-assessment of its performance annually. The college has good financial management practices and procedures. Financial information is readily available to cost-centre managers and the corporation. The college has maintained the category A financial status awarded by the LSC. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on AS-level, GCE A-level, BTEC national certificate and national diploma courses

- high grade pass rates well above national average for AS-level subjects

- good teaching to link theoretical and practical aspects of science

- good target setting on AS-level and BTEC national diploma courses

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on BTEC national diploma in applied science
- limited progression routes onto GCSE mathematics courses
- insufficient challenge for the more able students in a minority of lessons
- insufficient use of ILT by students in science lessons.

Scope of provision

46. The college offers a broad range of level 3 science provision. The courses offered include BTEC national certificate and national diploma courses in applied science and national certificate courses in pharmaceutical services. At level 2, the BTEC first diploma in applied science is offered. Over 120 students are enrolled on these vocational courses. The college offers AS-level and GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. GCSE mathematics is also offered. There are currently a total of 284 students studying science and mathematics. Of these, 171 are aged 16 to 19 and 113 are aged over 19. There are 219 full-time and 65 part-time students. There has been a significant decline from the previous year in the number of students taking science and mathematics courses.

Achievement and standards

47. Pass rates are above the national average on all AS-level mathematics and science courses, most GCE A-level courses and on the BTEC national certificate and national diploma courses. Retention rates on all AS-level and GCE A-level courses are above the national average, but they are below the national average on the BTEC first diploma and national diploma in applied science. Students' work is mainly presented well and is of a high standard. Students have good practical and analytical skills and they apply these well to solve problems and further their learning. Students on most courses for 16 to 18 year olds achieve results better than might be expected from their prior performance. Attendance at lessons during the inspection was low at 78%, but above the college average. Punctuality was good in the lessons observed.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| GCSE mathematics | 2 | No. of starts | 124 | 143 | 22 |
| | | % retention | 69 | 62 | 68 |
| | | % pass rate | 28 | 22 | 50 |
| AS-level chemistry | 3 | No. of starts | 21 | 28 | 20 |
| | | % retention | 81 | 86 | 95 |
| | | % pass rate | 53 | 83 | 84 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------|----|----|-----|
| AS-level physics | 3 | No. of starts | 16 | 23 | 18 |
| | | % retention | 94 | 87 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | 47 | 40 | 75 |
| AS-level biology | 3 | No. of starts | 23 | 31 | * |
| | | % retention | 83 | 77 | * |
| | | % pass rate | 53 | 79 | * |
| National diploma in applied science | 3 | No. of starts | 28 | 17 | 20 |
| | | % retention | 50 | 65 | 55 |
| | | % pass rate | 79 | 64 | 100 |

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

48. Most teaching in the area is good and none is unsatisfactory. Students' interest and motivation are maintained by the use of a range of appropriate and varied activities. For instance, in one well planned GCE A-level biology lesson, students observed computer projected diagrams to gain detailed knowledge of synapses. The knowledge gained was then reinforced by accessing a website to take part in an activity called 'The Lost Synapse Game'. Students found this activity challenging and informative and effective learning took place. Students are very positive about teaching, and teachers often draw on their own experiences and those of their students to help explain key points. Teachers provide good personal support in lessons. In the most effective lessons, resources are used well to provide variety and challenge, and schemes of work and lesson plans are comprehensive. ILT is not used sufficiently by students during lessons as an aid to learning. There is limited use of capturing experimental data for computer analysis. For example, the department does not yet use recently acquired data loggers. Clear planning helps students to learn effectively and gain good scientific and mathematical skills. In one mathematics lesson, students working in groups were required to match together a series of cards with trigonometrical equations on them with graphs of trigonometrical functions. Students gained a good understanding of the theory involved with this exercise. Students show a high level of interest and motivation and develop good practical skills. They support each other and work well in groups. Learning is less effective in the minority of lessons that lack pace and give the more able students few opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

49. Staff are well qualified and there is very good technical support for science. There is sufficient specialist laboratory accommodation of appropriate size to meet the needs of the curriculum and the centralised nature of the science accommodation assists the efficient management of the science area. The accommodation for mathematics is more fragmented. Health and safety procedures in laboratories are good, as are the procedures for the storage of hazardous substances.

50. Initial assessment is used effectively to place students on appropriate courses. Students are on courses that are suited to their needs and aspirations. Progression on to GCSE mathematics from lower level courses is difficult with the lack of level 1 provision. The courses provided give good progression routes to HE including the college's own HE courses. Students receive effective guidance on progression to HE from both tutors and the careers service. AS-level and GCE A-level students take regular tests and are informed of their progress. Students on BTEC national diploma and certificate courses have their performance on their assignment work reviewed frequently. All full-time students have individual learning plans to help them monitor and evaluate their progress. In the science and mathematics areas, the take up of additional learning support is low.

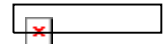
51. The BTEC national certificate in pharmaceutical services attracts students from hospitals across the south-east of England. Specialist external lecturers from local hospitals bring highly relevant and

up-to-date experience and materials to this course. Teachers offer good support to students both in and out of the classroom.

Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum development since the last inspection has been very effective. The curriculum is now managed well. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and internal communication is good. Frequent meetings focus on teaching and learning and student matters. There is a strong commitment to sharing good practice in science teaching. Staff development opportunities are good and all teachers have been appraised. The lesson observation scheme is well embedded. Targets set for course performance are demanding, but realistic.

Construction



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on electrical installation part one courses

- good teaching on electrical installation and wood occupations courses

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on building craft courses

- unsatisfactory practical resources for brickwork

- poor punctuality and attendance disrupting students' learning in brickwork and technician courses.

Scope of provision

53. The college offers entry, foundation and intermediate level programmes for construction and building services students. Current programmes include trowel occupations, wood occupations and

electrical installation. Technician courses offered include BTEC national certificates and diplomas and GNVQs. There are also courses for school pupils aged 14 to 16.

54. There are currently 344 students enrolled on construction courses; 240 are part time and 104 are full time. There are 145 students aged 16 to 18 and 199 adults. In addition, there are 55 students aged 14 to 16 following construction courses.

Achievement and standards

55. Pass rates are high on City and Guilds electrical installation courses. For example, the pass rate on part one courses was 19% above the national average in 2003 and in 2004 all of the students passed. Pass rates on City and Guilds electrical installation part two courses were significantly above national averages in 2002 and 2003. However, there are low pass rates on building craft courses at both levels 1 and level 2. Pass rates for the foundation construction award (FCA) were 14% and 12% below national averages in 2003 and 2004 respectively. Pass rates for the intermediate construction award (ICA) have improved from 33% in 2003 to 44% in 2004. However, this is still 16% below the national average. Retention rates are satisfactory or better on most courses. In 2004, retention rates on the wood occupations and brickwork level 1 courses were 9% above national averages. Retention rates on level 2 courses were 34% above national averages. There are improving retention rates and high pass rates on the skills for working life entry level course. Retention rates have been declining on the City and Guilds electrical installation part one course for the last three years, but remain above the national average. The development of practical skills in most areas is satisfactory. For example, students in wood occupations demonstrated satisfactory tool selection and use in producing external mitres and scribe joints on moulded skirting and mitred architraves.

56. Punctuality and attendance are unsatisfactory in technician studies and poor in brickwork. Technician students are not punctual for their first morning lessons and after breaks. Lateness is not dealt with effectively and often disrupts students' learning. Overall attendance in lessons observed was low, at 65%. Registers confirm that this is a continuing problem that has not been addressed effectively.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| GNVQ foundation - construction and the built environment | 1 | No. of starts | 37 | 41 | 34 |
| | | % retention | 76 | 71 | 79 |
| | | % pass rate | 36 | 41 | 59 |
| City and Guilds 2360/01 - electrical installation part 1 | 1 | No. of starts | 31 | 64 | 38 |
| | | % retention | 71 | 64 | 52 |
| | | % pass rate | 55 | 78 | 100 |
| Foundation construction award | 1 | No. of starts | * | 51 | 48 |
| | | % retention | * | 61 | 85 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 52 | 54 |
| City and Guilds 2360/02 - electrical installation part 2 | 2 | No. of starts | 77 | 54 | 41 |
| | | % retention | 87 | 54 | 90 |
| | | % pass rate | 49 | 69 | 38 |

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

57. There is much good teaching on wood occupations and electrical installation courses and teaching in all lessons is satisfactory or better. In the better theory lessons, teachers use a good range of teaching techniques that engage students and theoretical aspects are closely related to their practical applications. For example, in one lesson, students calculated the length of common rafters through calculation and then transferred these calculations directly to marking out the timber in the classroom. In practical lessons, tutors give clear demonstrations and check students' understanding effectively. The electrical workshop is managed well and the use of materials requisition orders enhances students' understanding of their work.

58. Resources are unsatisfactory in brickwork and satisfactory in other areas. The supply of consumable materials available to students is satisfactory or better in all workshops except brickwork where the quality of many bricks is poor. Most workshops are sufficiently large. However, the brickwork shop is too small for the current number of students. For example, one student was working on a reduced-size model due to space restrictions, but was still obstructed by a large stack of adjacent bricks. Students have access to a satisfactory range of learning materials, but there are few information technology (IT) based learning materials on the college intranet. Some lessons have networked computers and data projectors, but these were not seen in use during the inspection. Health and safety precautions are enforced rigorously and always observed correctly by students. Workshops have a good range of appropriate signage; however, risk assessments are not fully developed. Teachers are adequately qualified in their subjects and three-quarters of them hold, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. Many are also qualified as vocational assessors.

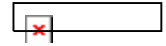
59. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Worksheets are provided in which assignments and assessment criteria are outlined for every project. Students are aware of assessment requirements and understand the industrial standards associated with their practical tasks. Assignments are of an appropriate standard and vocationally relevant. However, assessments are not clearly linked to qualification outcomes and many students are not sufficiently clear on their progress. Written feedback on assignments is satisfactory for technician students, but insufficient for building craft students. The range of provision is satisfactory. New courses have been developed to provide progression for students at lower levels and the duration of the FCA course has been reduced to improve retention rates. Progression of students from entry level through to level 2 qualifications is good. Technician courses have been changed to include practical elements that are valued by students. However, there are no level 3 qualifications or NVQs available in building crafts. Full-time students do not benefit from a satisfactory enrichment programme or work placements that would enable them to gain a better understanding of the construction industry.

60. Support for students is good. All full-time students undertake diagnostic assessment during their induction and receive written feedback on their results. There is provision for any additional learning support needs that have been identified. Effective support is currently provided for 88 students both in lessons and in discrete sessions. In-class support is particularly effective and enables students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to participate and succeed on courses at all levels. The induction programme and tutorials are satisfactory although target setting is not sufficiently detailed to improve students' performance.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department has been reorganised in the last year and now has a coherent management structure. All staff have been involved in the development of the detailed and evaluative self-assessment report. Course team leaders are beginning to use data effectively to set and manage targets. Teams meet regularly, but quality assurance procedures are inconsistently implemented across the school. For example, the routine recording and action planning from team meetings are yet to take place for some building craft and technician courses. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory and the inclusion of a range of students including those with disabilities is good. The head of school is working with the local Education Business Partnership to promote construction to a broader range of students in the community; however, there is currently only one female student enrolled.

Engineering



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses
- extensive use of differentiation in lessons
- very good initial assessment and student support arrangements
- very good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and punctuality
- low-quality workshop resources.

Scope of provision

62. There are currently 326 students enrolled on engineering courses. The college offers motor vehicle repair, basic engineering competencies and electronic engineering at NVQ level 1 through to level 3. BTEC national certificates, apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are also available. There are 202 full-time and 124 part-time students with 24 trainees on work-based learning programmes. Five students are female. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18. There are 77 students aged 14 to 16 from local schools also studying engineering courses as part of Key Stage four of the national curriculum.

Achievement and standards

63. Retention and pass rates are high. Retention rates on most courses have improved and remain at, or significantly above, national averages. For example, the retention rate on the performing engineering operations level 1 course has been 10% above the national average since its introduction. The retention rate was low on the BTEC national diploma engineering courses from 2001 to 2003. The college separated the two disciplines of mechanical engineering and electronic engineering in 2003/04 and retention rates for electronic engineering have shown significant improvement and are now 16% above the national average. However, in mechanical engineering

they remain significantly below the national average. Pass rates on most courses have shown steady improvement and remain above national averages. For example, on the City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair and maintenance course, all of the students passed in 2004. The standard of students' written and practical work is satisfactory. Students use an appropriate range of engineering techniques and perform general engineering activities to a satisfactory level. Examples of work include the production of engineers' clamps and dies, measurement of motor vehicle exhaust emissions and electronic circuit fault diagnosis. Some 25 students on motor vehicle courses recently completed a health and safety course and 64% achieved a distinction grade.

64. Work-based learners in motor vehicle are now progressing well through the framework requirements including the key skills units. Recent changes to the arrangements for key skills have led to improved pass rates. Most work-based learners are experiencing a broad range of engineering disciplines and employers are positive about their performance.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair and maintenance skills | 1 | No. of starts | 39 | 43 | 31 |
| | | % retention | 77 | 58 | 81 |
| | | % pass rate | 87 | 88 | 100 |
| First diploma in electronic engineering | 2 | No. of starts | * | 16 | 17 |
| | | % retention | * | 56 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 56 | 80 |
| City and Guilds 4100 motor vehicle | 2 | No. of starts | * | 21 | 26 |
| | | % retention | * | 76 | 92 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 100 | 88 |
| National diploma in mechanical engineering | 3 | No. of starts | 22 | 24 | 20 |
| | | % retention | 23 | 46 | 40 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 64 | 100 |
| National diploma in electronic engineering | 3 | No. of starts | 22 | 24 | ** |
| | | % retention | 23 | 46 | ** |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 64 | ** |

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

* course did not run

** fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

65. Good attention is given by teachers to students' individual learning needs in lessons. Practical demonstrations linked to theory are effective in supporting learning and developing understanding. For example, learning in a theory lesson on motor vehicle gearbox assemblies was underpinned by well planned practical workshop activities relating to the concepts being taught. In motor vehicle lessons, ILT is used well to support learning. A range of interactive software is available to staff and students and it is used frequently and effectively. The use of animation during the lessons is also highly effective in explaining the operation of a number of highly complex vehicle components and systems. Group discussion, lectures and project work are used well and ensure all students have the opportunity to challenge theories and demonstrate their understanding of subject matter.

66. Some poor workshop practices were observed during lessons. Students did not always wear

appropriate safety glasses. Protective coveralls were not always worn during workshop activities and teachers did not correct these poor practices in a timely manner. There are some low quality resources in the workshops. The range of motor vehicles is limited and many are in poor condition. Equipment in the mechanical workshop is sufficient, but dated. Workshop facilities are poorly maintained. The classroom area in the motor vehicle workshop has no window blinds creating difficulties in reading the overhead projections used in lessons. The motor vehicle workshops have recently been equipped with a wide range of expensive and up-to-date vehicle diagnostic test equipment, engine running rigs and vehicle system simulators. The college has well developed plans for new buildings and the redevelopment of the engineering facility is included within the second phase of improvements. Teachers and technicians are well qualified and very experienced in their occupational area. Staff regularly attend local manufacturers' courses for skills and knowledge updates.

67. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are good. Practical and written work are assessed regularly and frequently. Progress tracking sheets identify activities completed by students. Frequent and planned assessment in the workshops allows individuals to progress at a pace most suited to their individual needs. Results of marked assignments and tests are used during tutorial sessions to identify opportunities for improvement.

68. The college offers a wide range of courses in engineering and promotes engineering enthusiastically in schools. There are links with six local schools with courses including GCSE manufacturing and awards in motor vehicle maintenance and repair. Over 50% of students on these programmes achieved results higher than their predicted GCSE grades. Open evenings and parents' evenings are used to promote engineering courses to school leavers. The college has identified a requirement for motorcycle repair qualifications through its effective review of local industry needs. Staff are developing appropriate materials and schemes of work to meet this need.

69. Minority ethnic groups are well represented amongst both staff and students. Positive role models attract under-represented groups into engineering. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well.

70. The results of initial assessment are used effectively to place students on the most appropriate course and to identify any additional learning needs. Records for students with additional support needs are detailed and all staff are well informed of their progress. Students' attendance at additional lessons in numeracy and literacy is good.

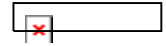
71. Key skills and basic skills are integrated well into lessons. Assignments and activities are occupationally relevant and use appropriate occupational terminology. One-to-one and group support are provided by basic skills tutors and this is appreciated by students.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management of the area are good. There are highly effective quality assurance arrangements now in place. Frequent observation of teaching takes place which identifies staff development needs. Staff make good use of accessible data to identify areas for improvement. Students' performance and attendance data are reviewed frequently and results are analysed to identify opportunities for improvement. This process has been highly effective in improving retention and pass rates. There is a wide range of in-house staff development opportunities scheduled throughout the year. Staff are encouraged to attend these sessions and a financial incentive is offered.

73. The self-assessment reports produced for each programme area are evaluative and detailed. All staff are involved in producing the report and action plan. They agree targets for improving attendance and pass rates. Progress towards achieving objectives is monitored frequently at management meetings.

Business and professional studies



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on personnel, legal secretaries and most administration courses

- good support for part-time students

- wide range of provision with good progression routes

- good use of teachers' current business experience on management and professional courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQs in accounting, certificate in administration and marketing courses

- insufficient differentiation to meet individual students' needs within lessons

- ineffective individual learning plans for business administration students

- poor attendance and punctuality by full-time students aged 16 to 18 adversely affecting teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

74. The college offers a broad range of courses from entry level to higher levels with options in business studies, administration, law, personnel, accounting, management, and marketing. These courses provide good career progression routes. Courses which attract mainly 16 to 18 year olds are offered at the main college site. They include the introductory, first and national diplomas in business

and finance, and a certificate, a diploma and an NVQ in business administration. A further group of courses, offered mainly on a part-time basis for adult students, are held at the college's town centre site. These courses include accounting, legal secretaries and legal executives, management, marketing and personnel programmes. There are 22 work-based learners. There are currently 219 students aged 16 to 18 and 873 students aged 19 and over. Work experience forms a part of all full-time courses and students are able to put the skills learned at college into practice in the workplace.

Achievement and standards

75. Retention and pass rates on many courses are at, or close to, the national averages. Retention and pass rates on the certificate in personnel practice, the higher diploma in administrative procedures and the legal secretaries certificate are consistently above national averages. The pass rate on the certificate in personnel practice has been at 90% or higher since 2002. Pass rates are low in NVQ accounting at all levels and on marketing courses. The pass rate on the certificate in administration course, at 8%, was very low in 2003/04.

76. Students' work is generally of a high standard. With tutor support, many students gain in confidence and self-esteem. They are then able to analyse, criticise and present logical arguments with increasing intellectual maturity. Assignments and portfolios are usually well presented, but there is insufficient use of ICT to assist research. There is poor attendance and punctuality by full-time students aged 16 to 18. Attendance during the inspection was 70%. A significant proportion of students misses lessons regularly or arrives late, sometimes in excess of half an hour. Lessons do not start on time and there are frequent disruptions to learning as students arrive late at the lesson.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| GNVQ foundation business (one year) | 1 | No. of starts | 45 | 29 | 31 |
| | | % retention | 78 | 79 | 68 |
| | | % pass rate | 57 | 74 | 81 |
| GNVQ intermediate/first diploma business | 2 | No. of starts | 21 | 43 | 34 |
| | | % retention | 28 | 70 | 79 |
| | | % pass rate | 13 | 70 | 74 |
| Certificate in administration | 2 | No. of starts | * | 31 | 27 |
| | | % retention | * | 71 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 9 | 8 |
| Certificate in personnel practice | 3 | No. of starts | 44 | 53 | 28 |
| | | % retention | 93 | 91 | 93 |
| | | % pass rate | 90 | 94 | 92 |
| NVQ accounting | 3 | No. of starts | 57 | 52 | 38 |
| | | % retention | 93 | 73 | 79 |
| | | % pass rate | 43 | 61 | 33 |
| NVQ management | 4 | No. of starts | 67 | 37 | 31 |
| | | % retention | 93 | 92 | 100 |
| | | % pass rate | 61 | 50 | 66 |
| Higher diploma in | 4 | No. of starts | 16 | 19 | 21 |

| | | | | | |
|------------|--|-------------|----|----|----|
| procedures | | % pass rate | 90 | 94 | 84 |
|------------|--|-------------|----|----|----|

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

77. Most teaching and learning are satisfactory, but too few of the lessons are good or better. There is some variation in the quality of lesson plans and the effectiveness with which teachers use learning materials, but they are mostly of a high standard. Most lessons have a clear sense of purpose and students are well motivated. Many lessons lack variety and there is too much reliance on exposition by the teacher accompanied by students taking notes. In the more successful lessons, an appropriate variety of teaching methods is used, including discussion, role play and case studies. In the better lessons, teachers draw upon students' experiences to illustrate key points skilfully and to compare theory with practice. At the end of the lesson, teachers summarise the topic and check that students have made the progress expected of them. In these lessons, extension tasks are provided in order to consolidate and develop students' understanding. In one lesson for classroom assistants, the teacher made good use of children's games. Students had lively discussions whilst evaluating which skills the games would help children to develop. In part-time management and marketing lessons, good use is made of students' own work experience during discussion of topical events. However, less use is made of real business examples when teaching full-time students.

78. Initial assessment to identify students' literacy and numeracy needs is undertaken during course induction. Preferred learning styles are also identified, although during lessons, teachers make insufficient use of the information collected. In the poorer lessons, teachers take little or no account of students' different levels of ability, previous experience and knowledge or preferred learning styles. Many lessons are insufficiently focused on students' learning. They depend too much on direction from teachers. Some teaching also lacks clarity in the explanation and illustration of concepts.

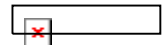
79. Staff are generally well qualified, and many teachers on management and professional courses have extensive and current industrial experience which is utilised effectively in lessons. There is a comprehensive range of development opportunities open to all staff and taken up by many. The diploma in administration course has had several changes of tutor since September and students have encountered some problems from this lack of continuity. The resource centres have computer access and are well stocked and accessible, providing a range of up-to-date materials, including magazines, videos and study guides. The intranet and other interactive learning opportunities are developing and are used increasingly by students. Although equipment is available, there is insufficient use of ILT in teaching. Most accommodation is appropriate, but rooms do not have wall displays of students' work to enhance the learning environment.

80. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Most students have a clear understanding of the assessment process. Homework is set regularly. Teachers return marked work promptly with constructive feedback that identifies clearly how students can improve. Teachers make little effective use of data available on prior achievements of students. Challenging targets for students to achieve are rarely set. On administration courses, individual learning plans for students aged 16 to 18 are ineffective, with action points that are insufficiently specific and lacking clear dates for completion. Tutorial reviews that identify problem areas such as poor attendance do not result in clear actions and, in some instances, are accompanied by a course progress review sheet that classifies attendance as satisfactory or good. Some review sheets do not note attendance issues, even though registers clearly indicate problems. Students receive effective support in lessons, but are not prepared adequately for independent study and this sometimes impedes their progress. In some situations, inappropriate guidance is given at admission and the college is aware that some students may struggle on the basis of their entry qualifications. Part-time adult students have good access to flexible tutorials to discuss their progress as an integral part of the lesson.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategies are in place to improve the quality of provision, with an increasing emphasis on the quality of students' experiences and the monitoring of performance. Managers analyse the reasons for low pass rates on some accounting, management and marketing courses and they have developed strategies for improvement including guiding students more effectively to appropriate courses and recognising partial achievement on the way to the full qualification. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Staff at the two sites work largely independently of each other. A large number of staff changes has disrupted the operation of some course teams. There is insufficient access to information relating to course management. Although target setting occurs in course team meetings, targets are not always reviewed or incorporated into plans. Course reviews are updated termly, informing a self-assessment process that is sometimes perfunctory with few specific actions being identified. The significant number of part-time staff are integrated effectively, and they provide a rich source of up-to-date business experience. Equality and diversity issues are managed well. The college offers appropriate support to students from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), ECDL and GNVQ intermediate courses

- high pass rates on AVCE single award

- good support in practical lessons and learning centres

- effective use of e-learning.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on certificate and diploma IT users and BTEC national diploma courses

- low pass rates on BTEC first diploma and AVCE conversion award

- insufficient attention to individual learning needs in some theory lessons

- o insufficient opportunity for commercial computing experience for many students.

Scope of provision

82. The college offers a range of vocational ICT courses with progression opportunities from foundation to higher national diploma. Full-time provision includes introductory diploma to IT at work, GNVQ intermediate in IT, BTEC first diploma for IT practitioners, AVCE in ICT and national diploma for IT practitioners. Adults may study introductory courses in CLAIT and ECDL in college. In local learning centres, adults study certificate and diploma for IT users programmes. At the time of inspection there were 1,676 adult students and 135 students aged 16 to 18. Enrolments onto short courses take place throughout the year.

Achievement and standards

83. Retention and pass rates are high on CLAIT, ECDL and GNVQ intermediate IT courses. Pass rates are also high on the AVCE single award and last year on the NVQ level 1 course. Retention rates at the time of inspection were 100% in the learning centres and very high in all other provision. The retention rate on the certificate for IT users course in 2004 was low at 28%. It was also low on the BTEC national diploma for IT practitioners at 47%. Pass rates were 8% below national average on the BTEC first diploma for IT practitioners and AVCE double award. There was poor punctuality in several lessons. Attendance during the inspection was 78% which is close to the national average. In 2003/04, 20% of full-time students progressed to HE and 53% progressed into work.

84. The overall standard of students' attainment is satisfactory. Adults gain confidence and all students develop skills quickly in the use of industry-standard software. Full-time students develop good communication skills. Students' skills of critical analysis were demonstrated well in a very good lesson in which students were given an ICT-related case study linked to bullying at work. The groups discussed and analysed the issues well, presented and justified their judgements to the class and developed their understanding of equal opportunities.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| CLAIT short | 1 | No. of starts | 69 | 38 | 36 |
| | | % retention | 86 | 79 | 94 |
| | | % pass rate | 76 | 73 | 68 |
| Certificate in IT Users | 1 | No. of starts | * | 632 | 850 |
| | | % retention | * | 34 | 28 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 53 | 72 |
| ECDL | 2 | No. of starts | 53 | 56 | 76 |
| | | % retention | 85 | 91 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | 96 | 84 | 76 |
| GNVQ intermediate IT | 2 | No. of starts | 37 | 34 | 29 |
| | | % retention | 84 | 76 | 90 |
| | | % pass rate | 65 | 88 | 81 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------|----|----|----|
| First diploma IT practitioners (previously IT) | 2 | No. of starts | 20 | 22 | 20 |
| | | % retention | 65 | 73 | 80 |
| | | % pass rate | 77 | 56 | 69 |
| National diploma IT practitioners (computing, IT) | 3 | No. of starts | 24 | 25 | 30 |
| | | % retention | 50 | 56 | 47 |
| | | % pass rate | 92 | 93 | 79 |
| AVCE 1 year 6 units | 3 | No. of starts | 31 | 26 | 18 |
| | | % retention | 84 | 77 | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | 73 | 85 | 87 |

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

85. Approximately 66% of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better and 9% were unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of learning activities and students enjoy their learning, which is challenged effectively. Activities and work are set at an appropriate level and individual needs are met. One very well planned lesson started with well constructed directed questions relating to the previous lesson on virtual memory. The answers demonstrated that the students not only remembered well, but were motivated to keep themselves up to date independently. Students checked the allocation of memory within the college machines and researched the topics of `thrashing' and `paging' and produced very good reports. In another lesson, students were motivated by a carefully considered programming activity to develop conditional programming skills. The lights, buzzers and doors flashed and opened on an image of a car when students programmed statements correctly in visual basic. In the weaker lessons on full-time courses, teachers were not aware of students' existing knowledge and students' learning was not challenged sufficiently. There is much good proactive coaching in learning centres. Students are motivated and many develop a good understanding of file management, word processing techniques and other computer and job-related skills.

86. The school is piloting the virtual learning environment and many effective e-learning resources are available to students in class, at home and some by mobile phone. Staff can access materials from home. At the start of one lesson, students completed an online exercise to check their learning of the previous lesson, their results being available immediately. In another lesson, students used the hyperlinks from the lesson plan to check the learning outcomes and to use the glossary. The learning centres are welcoming and well designed. In the college, some rooms are uncomfortably hot and computers are so close together that there is little room for students' papers.

87. Assessment is satisfactory and meets the requirements of awarding bodies. Teachers provide regular, constructive verbal and written feedback on class work, homework and assignments. Key skills are now embedded within computing and IT programmes, but the success of this is yet to be measured. In most lessons, teachers assess and track students' progress well. There is good, on line initial assessment for full-time students. The results of initial assessment inform individual learning plans and targets which are reviewed at the termly student progression review. On some part-time courses, initial assessment takes place before enrolment. In the learning centres, all new students complete a three-hour induction and skills test. Those students identified as needing further support complete a taught six-hour taster session prior to enrolment on the flexible learning programme.

88. Students have little opportunity to gain commercial experience. There are insufficient arrangements for external speakers, visits or work experience. A few students have good work experience, but overall opportunities are insufficient. There are no part-time evening classes for adults covering technical aspects of computing. However, the learning centres offer application

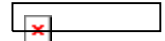
qualifications at certificate and diploma levels. One centre is open six days a week and in the evenings. The two learning centres have successfully recruited adults who are improving skills for future and present employment.

89. Guidance and support are satisfactory. In one learning centre, students receive regular reviews and feedback on their progress. Tutorials provide satisfactory one-to-one support for full-time students. Students' progress is tracked well and action plans are developed with achievable and measurable targets for improvement. Group tutorials cover a wide range of topics. In one good tutorial session students explored a range of career options, including university entrance and pathways into employment in the IT industry. There is sufficient in-class additional support for level 1 students and for those identified as having additional needs. There is a range of adaptive technology available for those who require it.

Leadership and management

90. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory and all staff are aware of, and monitor, targets. Adult learning centres are organised and managed well. Since September 2004, the provision of courses in these centres has been changed and improved to meet students' individual needs and the retention rates have improved dramatically from 30% to 100%. Course team meetings are minuted and actions from these, and the school development plan, are monitored and progressed. Students' views are collected and used for course reviews across all courses. Course reviews are prepared at three stages throughout the year and contribute to the accurate self-assessment report. Internal lesson observation grades are used in appraisal. However, these grades are higher than those awarded during inspection. There has been considerable staff development through initiatives organised within the school and by attendance at college-wide events. However, there is insufficient updating of staff knowledge of current industry practice. There is under-representation of female students on most full-time courses. Recruitment strategies to address this have not yet been successful.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

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

Strengths

- high retention rates on NVQ level 1 hairdressing courses

- high pass rates in key skills by work-based learners

- particularly effective student support

- good industry links for full-time students and work-based learners.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing courses

- insufficient range and number of clients in hairdressing

- poor planning of work-based assessment

- poor attendance.

Scope of provision

91. The college offers NVQs in hairdressing and beauty therapy at levels 1, 2 and 3. Other courses include body massage, Indian head massage and artificial nail techniques. Courses are offered during the day and in the evening. There are 109 students aged 16 to 18 and 32 students aged 19 or over on full-time courses. There are 28 students aged 16 to 18 and 117 students aged 19 or over on part-time courses. There are 63 apprentices in hairdressing. There are also 60 students aged 14 to 16 on level 1 programmes.

Achievement and standards

92. There are high pass rates on NVQ beauty therapy level 2 courses. They were above the national average in 2002/03 and they improved in 2003/04. However, pass rates at NVQ levels 1 and 2 in hairdressing and on the body massage certificate course are below the national average and they have declined since 2001/02.

93. Retention rates on hairdressing courses at level 1 and on salon hygiene courses have been above the national average for the last three years. However, retention rates on hairdressing level 2 and body massage courses are below the national average. Attendance is unsatisfactory. During the inspection it was 65%, well below the national average.

94. The quality of students' assignments is satisfactory. There are a few examples of students making good use of ICT and demonstrating independent research skills. Some of the beauty therapy assignments are particularly good. One level 2 student showed independence of thought and made imaginative use of pictures to illustrate skin disorders. Students are enthusiastic, well motivated and responsive to learning in most lessons. This is particularly evident in beauty therapy. Students exhibit a professional approach when demonstrating their practical skills, which are satisfactorily developed at this stage of the course. They demonstrate satisfactory attainment in practical skills in both hairdressing and beauty therapy. There were some examples of good attainment. In one level 3 hairdressing lesson, students demonstrated high standards in long hair techniques in a commercially acceptable time. On another occasion, students demonstrated good depth of knowledge of anatomy and physiology when questioned.

95. The overall retention rate and achievement in work-based learning are satisfactory. Apprenticeships are offered at levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing. One half of the learners completed their full framework in 2000/01. This rose to 56% in 2001/02. Over three-quarters of the learners who

started in 2003/04 have already completed their key skills and are progressing to a higher level. However, the rate of unit completion is slow. Some work-based learners have been on the programme for almost a year, but they have not yet completed any units.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| NVQ hairdressing (one year) | 1 | No. of starts | 59 | 21 | 30 |
| | | % retention | 88 | 81 | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | 88 | 59 | 84 |
| NVQ hairdressing (two years) | 2 | No. of starts | 63 | 41 | 48 |
| | | % retention | 56 | 22 | 41 |
| | | % pass rate | 60 | 33 | 85 |
| NVQ beauty therapy (two years) | 2 | No. of starts | * | 28 | 48 |
| | | % retention | * | 68 | 54 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 84 | 88 |
| Salon hygiene (hairdressing) certificate (one year) | 2 | No. of starts | 25 | 21 | * |
| | | % retention | 100 | 100 | * |
| | | % pass rate | 60 | 57 | * |
| Body massage (short course) | 3 | No. of starts | * | 28 | 17 |
| | | % retention | * | 79 | 94 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 77 | 81 |

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

96. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in beauty therapy and hairdressing lessons. Lessons are planned well. The identification of individual students' learning needs is good. In lessons, teachers demonstrate satisfactory levels of up-to-date vocational knowledge. Appropriate references are made frequently to health and safety issues and commercial working times. This helps students to prepare for working in industry. There are good links with local employers. All full-time hairdressing and beauty therapy students work in a salon for one day a week. There are good links with assessment centres in work-based learning. The programme is arranged flexibly to suit employers' needs. College staff manage key skills, learner reviews and internal verification and they teach with the salon staff.

97. The planning of assessment for work-based learners is poor. Assessment opportunities are not sufficiently identified during progress reviews. Targets are set, but they do not specify whether assessments are on-the-job or off-the-job, and they are sometimes vague. Most of the assessment of work-based learning is carried out at the college rather than in the salon. Some learners, who have been on the programme for almost a year, have not yet had any assessment in the workplace. There are insufficient assessment visits by college assessors.

98. There are insufficient clients of the range required for practice and assessment in hairdressing. Too many students are working on blocks in commercial lessons. Resources are satisfactory in hairdressing and beauty therapy. There is sufficient equipment to form a realistic working environment, but the reception area is small. The ventilation in the beauty salons is, at times, inadequate, for example, during the demonstration of acrylic nail techniques. Staff hold appropriate

qualifications and often attend training courses to update their skills. Some staff also maintain their industrial skills by working in salons whilst on leave. Students have good access to ICT and the library contains a satisfactory stock of books. Most of the theory rooms have an overhead projector with Internet connection. However, these resources are not always used to their full potential. Salon accommodation for work-based learners is generally good. Salons are modern and well equipped, and staff act as positive role models. Students benefit from additional and external training provided by the salon.

99. Students' written assignments are marked and returned promptly. Teachers provide good feedback and advice for further development, particularly on beauty therapy and work-based learning programmes. The assignments are scheduled sensibly to allow students sufficient time to complete them. Good, supportive verbal feedback is given during practical assessments enabling students to understand how they can improve.

100. Good progression routes are available from level 1 to level 3 in NVQ hairdressing and beauty therapy. A variety of part-time courses is available in the evening. Part-time hairdressing lessons are scheduled to suit the needs of parents with young children. The college offers a range of enrichment activities, such as visits to exhibitions and talks by external speakers.

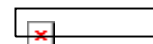
101. Student support is particularly effective. There are regular reviews where students' progress is discussed and documented in detail. Realistic targets are negotiated and agreed. This enables students to focus on short-term targets needed to achieve their main goals. Parents and guardians of students aged 16 to 18 and employers are kept informed of students' progress by means of termly reports.

Leadership and management

102. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, retention and pass rates on many courses have improved. Staff are involved fully in target setting and in writing the self-assessment report. Course leaders are responsible for carrying out regular, rigorous course reviews which keeps them well informed of attendance and retention issues, enabling them to react quickly. Arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory. Appropriate attention is paid to the verification of practical skills.

103. There are inconsistencies in the quality of progress reviews. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between the college provision and work-based learning. Insufficient attention is given to ensuring that there is an appropriate range and number of hairdressing clients for assessment purposes in the college. Planning of work-based learning is poor; most of the assessments take place off the job. This is impeding learners' progress.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses

- high retention and pass rates on NVQs in care and caring for children and young people

- good teaching and learning on courses for adults
- good support for students with additional learning needs.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate course
- poor punctuality and attendance disrupting learning in lessons for full-time students
- unsatisfactory implementation of key skills across the curriculum
- poor use of targets for quality improvement.

Scope of provision

104. The college offers a range of full-time courses in childcare and health and social care at levels 1 to 4. Currently, there are 281 full-time students, of whom most are aged 16 to 18. There are 520 part-time students on access to HE courses in nursing and social work and NVQs levels 2 and 3 in care, early years and caring for children and young people. Students can attend access courses on a full-time or part-time basis. A part-time specialist course for mental health care staff is also offered. Full-time childcare courses are well established. Short courses in childminding and pre-school practice are offered and there are opportunities for distance learning short courses in health and hygiene.

Achievement and standards

105. Pass rates on many courses are high. Childcare and education courses in the college are well established and retention and pass rates are high overall. The pass rate on the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma in childcare and education was 90% in 2004. Access courses to HE are consistent in achieving high pass rates. Retention and pass rates on NVQ courses are high and pass rates have been 100% consistently. The level 3 course in caring for young people and children also has very high retention and pass rates. Retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate in health and social care are low and well below the national averages. Retention and pass rates are satisfactory on the GNVQ foundation in health and social care. Students' attainment is satisfactory. The majority of adult students develop good personal skills and work co-operatively with each other. They are able to summarise and explain the results of their research, for example, explaining how children benefit from a range of activities. NVQ portfolios are of a high standard and all students set out their notes clearly and provide adequate diagrams. Attendance during the inspection was low, at 69%, which is slightly below the college average.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| GNVQ intermediate health and social care | 2 | No. of starts | 16 | 21 | 21 |
| | | % retention | 88 | 57 | 67 |
| | | % pass rate | 64 | 83 | 50 |
| NVQ care | 2 | No. of starts | 23 | 20 | 18 |
| | | % retention | 96 | 90 | 94 |
| | | % pass rate | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Access to nursing | 3 | No. of starts | 143 | 62 | 91 |
| | | % retention | 78 | 73 | 86 |
| | | % pass rate | 63 | 64 | 73 |
| NVQ caring for children and young people | 3 | No. of starts | 16 | * | 20 |
| | | % retention | 88 | * | 90 |
| | | % pass rate | 69 | * | 100 |

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

**fewer than 15 students enrolled*

Quality of education and training

106. Teaching and learning on courses for adult students are good. Lessons are challenging and teachers explain clearly the meaning of new vocabulary and concepts. Activities such as small group work and class discussion are carefully planned and managed and learning is checked regularly. Resources including well designed handouts are used effectively to promote learning. Quieter and less-confident students are encouraged to make appropriate comments when discussing their workplaces. Teachers plan consistently well in the most effective lessons with all age groups. Main teaching points and students' contributions are recorded and ICT supports learning. Additional relevant activities are used to extend the learning of students who finish tasks promptly. Teaching for developing students' understanding of diversity is particularly effective on childcare courses. Resources reflect families from a range of backgrounds. For example, students understand how to adapt environments to include all children and how to provide food that caters for children with differing cultural and dietary needs. In the less effective lessons, the management of students' disruptive behaviour is poor. Students arriving after lessons have started to distract others and some students spend time off-task without challenge from the teacher. In social care, teaching does not extend the learning of those who are more able and too many students are not working at an appropriate level. Students understand their rights and most have a good knowledge of issues relating to diversity. Many teachers ensure students work with others from a variety of backgrounds and use different experiences positively to extend learning and understanding.

107. Support for students with additional learning needs is very good. Initial assessment is thorough and teaching staff have a good awareness of students' prior achievements and needs. Suitable arrangements are put in place quickly and these include individual support, learning support assistants working in class and extra lessons for students whose first language is not English. Support in the classroom is effective in enabling most students to maintain a higher level of concentration and achieve their learning outcomes. Students who have a visual impairment have access to specialist equipment. Other aspects of student guidance and support are satisfactory. Many students take part in a regular tutorial programme of group and individual meetings with tutors. Some of these sessions are too short to be effective.

108. Resources are satisfactory. Classroom teachers have relevant vocational experience in pre-

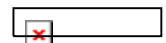
school, nursing and social work, but only just over half of them have a teaching qualification. A wide range of recent texts and journals for social work students is available in the town centre site and there is a good range of childcare resources at the main site. The stock of textbooks for health and social care students is insufficient and there are too few computers. A quiet working atmosphere is maintained in the learning resources areas and single study rooms. Classroom accommodation on all sites is satisfactory with access by lifts to upper floors. However, some lessons take place in temporary classrooms where it is difficult to maintain a comfortable temperature and essential resources are not always available.

109. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory overall. The work of full-time students is assessed accurately against criteria and most work is returned promptly. Feedback from teachers to inform students how to improve the quality of their work is satisfactory. Verifiers monitor the submission of work and the accuracy of assessment grades. NVQ candidates plan thoroughly for assessment and assessors use a range of appropriate methods to check skills and knowledge with a good emphasis on observation in the workplace. Assessors review their candidates' progress regularly and set achievable targets. The policy to integrate key skills into the vocational areas is not working effectively. Key skills are not sufficiently integrated into coursework and not all students work at an appropriate level.

Leadership and management

110. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication within the college is good with frequent sharing of information between teaching staff and senior managers. Schemes of work are on the college's intranet and students who do not attend lessons are able to access these. New staff are inducted into the college and mentors continue to support them in their work. Managers appraise all staff regularly and identify training needs. There has been a high number of staff changes over the past year. Nevertheless, the three staff teams work well together. The process of lesson observations by managers and peers supports teachers in sharing good practice and resources. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively and attempts have been made to improve the gender imbalance of the student population and staff team. Targets for improving quality are used ineffectively. Course reviews are detailed, but they do not identify how issues such as poor attendance and punctuality, and unacceptable behaviour will be addressed to bring about improvement. The operating plan resulting from the self-assessment report does not have sufficient measurable outcomes.

Media



Overall provision in this area is **very weak (grade 5)**

Strengths

- high standard of work in video and audio production

- good industry-standard video and sound recording equipment

- good technician support.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates

- low retention rates

- poor and falling attendance and punctuality

- inappropriate accommodation for media teaching

- large proportion of unsatisfactory teaching

- ineffective quality assurance.

Scope of provision

111. The college offers BTEC first diploma, BTEC national certificate and national diploma courses in media studies. Since 2002, the college has discontinued courses in GCSE, AS-level media, GCE A-level media and contemporary and popular music; it has replaced GNVQ media with a BTEC first diploma and AVCE with the BTEC national diploma. The number of students in this curriculum area has fallen significantly, from 150 at the time of the last inspection to 46 at this inspection, the majority of whom are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

112. Pass and retention rates are low. The retention rates on the BTEC first diploma and the BTEC national certificate and diploma are all below the national averages. The number of students progressing to the second year of two-year courses is very low. Pass rates on all courses in 2003/04 were significantly below national averages, with only 19% of BTEC national certificate students achieving a pass. Pass rates on the first and national diploma courses were low at 46% and 50% respectively.

113. Attendance and punctuality are poor. Attendance has been falling since the start of the year. The average attendance of students in lessons is very poor at 54% which is well below both the college average and the national average. There has been very little improvement since the last inspection. There are no strategies in place to enable late or absent students to understand the requirements for new units, make progress on assignments or catch up on work they have missed.

114. The overall standard of students' work is satisfactory and some good video work is produced. For example, a second year student on the BTEC national certificate produced a very good piece of video work in which a simple combination of image and sound was used very effectively to capture a sense of oppression and torture in a visually striking manner.

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

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| BTEC first diploma in media | 2 | No. of starts | * | * | 18 |
| | | % retention | * | * | 72 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 46 |
| BTEC national certificate in media | 3 | No. of starts | * | * | 29 |
| | | % retention | * | * | 55 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 19 |
| BTEC national diploma in media | 3 | No. of starts | * | * | 12 |
| | | % retention | * | * | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 90 |
| GNVQ intermediate media | 2 | No. of starts | 32 | * | * |
| | | % retention | 66 | * | * |
| | | % pass rate | 19 | * | * |
| AVCE media | 3 | No. of starts | 37 | 28 | * |
| | | % retention | 49 | 54 | * |
| | | % pass rate | 33 | 33 | * |

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

115. Teaching was unsatisfactory in over one-third of the lessons observed during the inspection. In a number of unsatisfactory lessons, poor classroom management prevented students from making progress and many students failed to complete tasks or obtain guidance on their work. Many lessons lack challenge and do not employ an appropriate range of teaching strategies or resources. Too much reliance is placed by teachers on the use of the whiteboard and handouts. They often talk for long periods and students become bored. There is little use made of multimedia technology or of media-based resources.

116. While most students make satisfactory progress in lessons, learning was unsatisfactory in nearly one-third of lessons observed and students' attainment was unsatisfactory in one-fifth of lessons. Small numbers on some courses inhibit teaching and learning by providing too few opportunities for discussion or group work. This is further compounded by very poor attendance and punctuality.

117. Teachers are adequately qualified to teach their subjects and have relevant vocational experience. Teaching is carried out in a variety of locations, but the classrooms are visually unexciting, have poor displays and lack equipment to support the teaching of media. Teaching rooms are located on several floors and are often inappropriate for the teaching of the subject. In one room, the projection screen is fixed to the side of the whiteboard making projection and viewing of videos difficult. The media base room has a poor display of film posters which lack visual impact and have little vocational focus or identity. There is some good industry-standard video and audio recording equipment, but the darkroom facilities are basic and equipment is poorly maintained and out of date. Technician support is good and there are online materials to support students in using specialist software.

118. Students understand the structure of assignments and the marking criteria being used to assess their progress. First year students comment on the useful and prompt feedback that they receive on their assignments. Regular recording of students' progress takes place. Student feedback sheets accompany all completed assignments. These are not always sufficiently evaluative to inform improvement. Progress is checked and action plans agreed with students causing concern. However, there is no observable impact of this on either students' attendance or performance. Reviews take place twice a term to provide support for students and allow for actions to take place where students are, for example, falling behind with assignments. These are not effective in improving students' attendance, performance or completion of work. Second year student records indicate that many units have not been completed or assessed. Poor rates of unit completion have contributed to low pass rates in the last two years. While good individual learning plans are developed with first year students, these have not yet demonstrated any impact on students' performance.

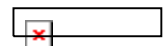
119. Course handbooks and leaflets on media courses are detailed, but much of the information is derived directly from examination body unit specifications and gives little specific information about the college course. Subject specialists do not interview students for media courses. Students have limited knowledge of the demands of the course prior to starting. The relationship between key skills and vocational assignments is not understood by students and there is no evidence of integration of key skills into assignments. Little use is made of educational visits and links with employers and practitioners. There are no opportunities for students to experience relevant vocational activity to support their coursework.

Leadership and management

120. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The new deputy head of school has restructured the curriculum and introduced new internal verification procedures and schemes of work. However, it is too early to assess their impact upon students and the overall quality of provision and there are no formal processes in place for the approval of assignments before issue. Weekly team meetings are held, but there is as yet little evidence of the impact of actions agreed by staff, or of actions being monitored effectively. All staff contributed to the writing of the self-assessment report, but there was very little objective evidence used to support judgements. Too many of the strengths cited in the report are no more than standard practice and the report is insufficiently self-critical in identifying weaknesses.

121. Clear procedures are now in place for managing the curriculum and recording students' progress, but students' attendance, retention and pass rates continue to be very low. Staff are committed to supporting students, but strategies put in place to monitor and improve attendance, punctuality, retention and pass rates are not yet effective.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- good development of students' personal skills and confidence

- well-supported access to IT

- broad range of courses to meet students' needs and interests.

Weaknesses

- significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective setting of targets for development of language skills
- insufficient direction given to students on how to improve their language and study skills
- ineffective quality assurance procedures.

Scope of provision

122. The college has ESOL provision at its main site, the Hawthorn Centre at Penge and there is a very small amount of community provision. There are currently 252 students enrolled on ESOL programmes, just over 60% of them are based at the main site. Enrolment takes place flexibly throughout the year. The majority of students are on full-time courses, but there is also part-time evening provision at both centres and ESOL summer schools, running throughout July and August at both its centres. In 2004, there were 180 students on this programme. Around 60% of the students are female. They originate from all parts of the world, with the majority now settled in the area. In 2003/04, there were 90 asylum seekers enrolled on ESOL courses.

Achievement and standards

123. There was an improvement in the retention rate in 2003/04 and this is now satisfactory at 74%. Pass rates are satisfactory, with 72% achieving a National Open College Network (NOCN) qualification in ESOL. Some 44 students gained an additional qualification in literacy, 23 in numeracy and 88 in IT. Progression is satisfactory with 42% of students progressing to higher levels of the ESOL programme, 16% to a higher level non-ESOL course and 5% to new or changed employment. The development of students' personal skills and confidence is good. Most lessons are mixed in age, gender and nationality and the students interact well with each other in whole-class or small group work. In many lessons, however, students' attainment is unsatisfactory. They have insufficient opportunity to improve their accuracy and fluency in speaking and their presentation of written work is often poor. Personal files are untidy and they have not been taught how to organise them effectively for self-study and to monitor their own progress. Worksheets are often uncompleted. There are few examples of their own writing. There is little evidence of feedback given by teachers to help them improve. This is the case even in otherwise good lessons.

Quality of education and training

124. There is a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. The most effective lesson planning is thorough and includes a variety of activities with clear aims and objectives. However, in many

lessons, students' learning is not challenged sufficiently and there is an over-reliance on worksheets or the whiteboard. There is insufficient flexibility and adaptation in the use of materials and few extension activities for the more able students. In many lessons, there is too narrow a focus on vocabulary or a point of grammar and too few opportunities to practise extended writing in class. Strategies to develop students' speaking skills are often ineffective, with both fluency and accuracy being addressed inadequately. When practising points of grammar, such as questions, students often read from something they have written first, so that their language is stilted. Errors in grammar and pronunciation are not always corrected. In a more successful lesson, the teacher called on individuals to ask another student a question that they had to formulate themselves. Inaccuracies were corrected, but the teacher also allowed the conversation to be extended, enabling practice to take place in a more realistic context.

125. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified. There are 19 teachers in the ESOL team, including the managers, 11 teachers are full time and the remainder are on fractional contracts. Nearly all staff have attended ESOL core curriculum training.

126. The Hawthorn Centre provides attractive, well-resourced accommodation with plenty of computers in teaching rooms. Accommodation at the main site is satisfactory, though a few rooms are too small for the number of students in some lessons. Accommodation for staff is cramped.

127. There is very good supported access to computers for students in a dedicated language workshop where all full-time students are timetabled at least once a week to work on assignments from their lesson. The workshop also has a good selection of commercial language software.

128. All students have an individual learning plan that is reviewed every eight weeks. This is not available in the classroom for students to check their progress. Individual target setting is ineffective. The majority of individual learning plans do not identify clear learning targets for development of language skills. They are frequently expressed in very general terms and sometimes not as a target, but as a comment. Initial assessment processes are satisfactory, but diagnostic assessment does not inform the individual learning plans effectively.

129. There is a broad range of courses to meet the needs and interests of students, including two that link ESOL with vocational studies very effectively in hairdressing and business administration. Hairdressing students speak very enthusiastically of their course and of their intention to progress to NVQ level 2, where they will receive further additional language support.

130. Support for students is satisfactory. All full-time students have a tutorial and meet their tutor regularly. There is a good induction handbook for students, written in clear and simple language. An enrichment programme includes visits to places of interest in London and is also used for language development. There is a growing programme of language support provided for students in vocational areas. Take up is still quite low.

Leadership and management

131. Curriculum management is unsatisfactory. Quality assurance procedures are ineffective. Individual learning plans are monitored regularly, but weaknesses in them have not been acted upon. Regular appraisal is linked to teaching observation and staff are also observed formally, though not necessarily by an ESOL specialist. However, some weaknesses in teaching have not been identified. Staff value the peer observation scheme as an effective way of sharing good practice. The self-assessment report for the area is insufficiently rigorous, with some strengths identified that are characteristic only of satisfactory provision. Increasing use is made of management data reports and managers and staff have detailed information about the performance of individual courses.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good use of resources to support teaching and learning

- effective initial and diagnostic assessment

- very good support for students with dyslexia.

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to individual learning needs in a significant minority of lessons

- insufficient opportunities to apply skills in context on discrete courses

- poor planning and recording of students' progress in about 50% of individual learning plans.

Scope of provision

132. Literacy and numeracy are taught in three discrete courses, one full time, one part time and one short intensive (six weeks), and as learning support. Some 34 students are enrolled on discrete courses. Literacy and numeracy tutors support 37 students on a one-to-one basis. A further 275 students benefit from a support tutor, working alongside the course tutor, in selected sessions of 13 level 1 vocational courses. Specialist dyslexia support is available in class for 26 students and a further 57 in individual support sessions. The college uses three and six hour programmes for initial assessment and as tasters for new students. There is a pre-access course for adults aiming for a career in nursing and care, which has a large proportion of literacy and numeracy tuition.

Achievement and standards

133. Retention and pass rates for the discrete programme are satisfactory. Retention rates are 64% for full-time and 71% for part-time discrete courses. Changes in the qualifications used mean there is no spread of equivalent data over a number of years to assess trends. The college started using national tests for literacy and numeracy in 2002/03 and now offers them online. In 2003/04, 63% of students passed. There were 193 passes at entry level in literacy or numeracy in 2003/04, for students across the college, many of them as additional qualifications in pre-access and ESOL courses. Retention and pass rates in vocational programmes, where the strategy for embedding literacy and numeracy and key skills was piloted in 2003/04, are rising. Attainment of relevant skills in lessons is mostly good.

Quality of education and training

134. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory or better, but there is insufficient attention to individual learning needs in a significant minority of lessons. Schemes of work, though detailed and coherent, do not allow enough scope for work towards individual goals. In the most effective lessons, literacy and numeracy are embedded well into the topic covered. For example, in one vocational course, the support tutor and course tutor worked in complementary and effective ways to motivate and support students in an integrated assignment. However, lessons on the full-time literacy and numeracy course are almost entirely group focused with insufficient attention to individual learning needs. In one lesson, the tutor provided activity sheets at three different levels, but all students completed them regardless of ability. Students' different skill levels are often accommodated by the use of support staff, rather than by individualising the activity. Activities do not always challenge students' learning sufficiently. In two lessons, where literacy and numeracy were integrated into a vocational course, teachers did not check prior knowledge of a topic. Students in one of these lessons were expected to copy text from a whiteboard while sitting at computers with their backs to the board.

135. In the discrete course for literacy and numeracy, some activities are not linked sufficiently to a real life context. Skills learned are not always applied. For instance, a student whose individual learning plan targeted improvements in free writing continued to practise punctuation through worksheets.

136. Good use is made of resources. ILT is used particularly well as an aid for teaching, students' research and flexible assessment. The designated room for the discrete course is bright, attractive and well equipped. Teachers use the data projector effectively for interactive demonstrations. Most handouts and stimulus materials are of high quality. One support tutor produced a particularly useful course glossary of effective terms for vocabulary extension and spelling. Teachers use the student intranet to store course handouts so students need not rely on notes. In a pre-access course, a numeracy module assessment was available electronically, enabling students to complete it in their own time. There is an over-reliance on worksheets in lessons and in learning support; insufficient use is made of learning aids, particularly to promote understanding and particularly in numeracy. Areas where learning support takes place are not always sufficiently quiet for study and software to support dyslexia is only available on selected computers in the library.

137. Staff are suitably qualified to teach literacy and numeracy. Teaching qualifications in literacy and numeracy are available at levels 2 and 3 in-house.

138. Initial and diagnostic assessment are used effectively. All full-time students take an assessment in literacy and numeracy. Those targeted for support in class or individually complete a further diagnostic assessment. There is consistent recording of assessment results on a common format for individual learning plans, whatever the category of support. Tutors supplement the computerised assessment with an informative analysis of free writing.

139. Some 50% of individual learning plans have insufficiently precise targets to ensure effective planning of learning and reviews of progress. The goals often relate just to accreditation and are not set in a relevant context. Some individual learning plans are used and reviewed effectively, but targets range from vague to particularly precise. An audit of individual learning plans was completed recently, but done informally with no summative analysis of effectiveness or exemplars of good practice.

140. The range of provision is satisfactory overall as part of the Bromley Adult Learning Partnership. The college has concentrated successfully its effort on expanding its learning support and strategy for embedding literacy and numeracy in level 1 vocational courses.

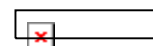
141. Students with dyslexia receive very good support. A total of 83 students are currently receiving help. A core team of specialist staff diagnose and support students on a one-to-one basis, using effective problem solving strategies and multi-sensory approaches. In addition, more than 20 carefully selected support assistants help students in class. Staff awareness of appropriate

strategies is good. One vocational trainer provided handouts in sans serif script and on coloured paper for all students in a group where one student with dyslexia needed them, so as not to identify the individual. There is a central referral point for learning support of all kinds. The take up of support for literacy and numeracy is good.

Leadership and management

142. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory. There are clear line management arrangements and a satisfactory range of staff development opportunities. The college is actively implementing its essential skills policy and procedures at all levels of management. The impact of the strategy for embedding literacy and numeracy support is already being reported in the curriculum areas affected. Communication between the different teams providing learning support is adequate. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory and staff were involved in self-assessment during a training day. There are targets for extending equality of opportunity relating to staffing and student recruitment. The discrete course for literacy and numeracy has a participation rate of 82% for black and minority ethnic groups, which is well above the college average.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- outstanding students' achievements in art and theatrical performance
- excellent teaching and students' achievement in catering
- very good accommodation and learning resources
- good use of local facilities and residential provision to teach skills for independence.

Weaknesses

- incomplete recording of students' overall progress and achievements
- insufficient focus on individual learning needs
- low progression rates on to mainstream courses

- inappropriate recording on paper by students unable to read and write.

Scope of provision

143. The college runs a range of courses for 110 students with a wide range of learning difficulties; 17 students are part time. The living skills and social independence courses equip students with skills for more independent adult lives. The work preparation and vocational preparation courses focus on preparing students for open or supported employment, voluntary work or progression to a higher level course or work-related training. The recently introduced New Horizons course gives mature adults the opportunity to return to education for two days each week. The Greengoose theatre project enables students with a range of learning difficulties to create and perform drama, dance and music whilst improving their confidence and communication skills. Student numbers are divided evenly between age groups, with 53 aged 16 to 18 and 57 aged 19 or over. Other than on the New Horizons course, students of all ages are taught together.

Achievement and standards

144. Students' achievements and the standard of their work demonstrated in most lessons are satisfactory. They gain skills for more independent living or develop skills that may help them become more employable. In two creative areas achievements are outstanding. In art, students have created fresh and exciting self-portraits by manipulating photographs, projecting them on to large boards, tracing the areas outlined and colouring them in their chosen complementary shades. Students on the 'Greengoose' expressive arts course create and perform sophisticated productions, sometimes in prestigious venues such as the Sadler's Wells theatre. During rehearsals for the production of the *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, students with severe and complex learning difficulties remembered their cues, delivered the lines they had created earlier and gave each other constructive feedback as part of the development of the production. Systems for recording students' overall progress and achievements are not in place, although the need for them is recognised in the college's self-assessment report. Many achievements are therefore not recorded. Too few students progress to mainstream courses. In 2004, only 3 out of 35 leavers from vocational and work preparation courses went on to mainstream courses in FE.

Quality of education and training

145. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory, although the assessment and monitoring of students' learning are not sufficiently rigorous. In many lessons, students all work on the same activity, with the same planned learning goals, regardless of any differing skills and abilities. Although no lessons observed were judged to be less than satisfactory, the percentage judged to be good or better is lower than the national figure. Teachers make detailed preparations for their lessons. However, these preparations are insufficiently related to students' overall learning goals and their individual learning plans. Many aims and targets in the plans are too vague or general to allow them to be used to plan teaching or measure progress.

146. In better lessons, teachers plan more effectively for individuals and keep records of their achievements. In the best lessons, students learn useful skills in real settings. The teaching of catering skills to students preparing for work is excellent. The teacher takes the role of chef and teaches the students, as trainee chefs, to prepare food to high standards and to an exacting schedule, for sale in the college's food outlets and for consumption in the nursery. In a very good lesson to teach research skills, students worked in pairs, using the Internet, newspapers and research around the college to identify issues relating to the locality and the college that they wished to explore further. In a good food preparation lesson, students with severe learning difficulties made sandwiches with their own choice of bread and fillings with minimal prompts from staff. At the local residential centre, students took great pride in preparing supper, using both purchased and home-made items, and consumed the results enthusiastically around a carefully laid table. Teachers make

good use of the local area to teach skills for independence.

147. Although students observed were taking part in practical activities in their lessons, time was wasted when students who had very weak literacy skills were required to complete paper-based activities. In half of the lessons observed, students had to undertake a paper-based exercise that did not enhance their learning. Teaching takes too much account of producing evidence for portfolios rather than being based on individual learning plans with clear targets. In a few lessons, planned outcomes are based more on the completion of an activity rather than on learning expected. In a few lessons students were over prompted, rather than being left to find a solution themselves or learn to ask for help.

148. The accommodation is very good. Students benefit from the use of a catering kitchen of commercial standard, a domestic kitchen, a large poly tunnel for horticulture, a designated ICT room with new computers and specialist software, pleasant classrooms and a well-equipped art room and craft workshop. They also have access to a local residential centre where they are successfully taught self-care and domestic skills. Staffing levels and staff qualifications are appropriate. Students are well known to staff and are supported well, both in and out of class.

Leadership and management

149. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are well motivated, work well in teams and lines of communication are clear. There is not always sufficient clarity of direction about improving quality and raising standards across the whole provision. Vocational and work preparation courses are not yet sufficiently focused on what students need to progress further. Management of courses is too discrete. Good practice is not always shared. Paperwork on different courses is unnecessarily different and time and energy goes into creating similar things separately for each course. Courses are too fragmented into subjects so that it is difficult to judge the overall progress that students make. Resources are well managed, developed and maintained.

Part D: College data

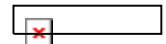
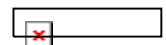


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

| Level | 16-18 % | 19+ % |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | 44 | 37 |
| 2 | 31 | 21 |
| 3 | 19 | 13 |
| 4/5 | 0 | 5 |
| Other | 6 | 24 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |



Source: provided by the college in autumn 2004

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

| Curriculum area | 16-18 | 19+ | Total |
|--|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| | No. | No. | Enrolments (%) |
| Science and mathematics | 264 | 210 | 3 |
| Land-based provision | 8 | 9 | 0 |
| Construction | 153 | 118 | 2 |
| Engineering, technology and manufacture | 391 | 368 | 5 |
| Business administration, management and professional | 221 | 1,158 | 10 |
| Information and communication technology | 627 | 3,892 | 31 |
| Retailing, customer service and transportation | 7 | 29 | 0 |
| Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel | 317 | 732 | 7 |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | 162 | 265 | 3 |
| Health, social care and public services | 168 | 1,591 | 12 |
| Visual and performing arts and media | 95 | 18 | 1 |
| Humanities | 89 | 141 | 2 |
| English, languages and communication | 119 | 266 | 3 |
| Foundation programmes | 1,261 | 1,779 | 21 |
| Total | 3,882 | 10,576 | 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+ | | |
| | | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
| 1 | Starters excluding transfers | 461 | 501 | 679 | 1,158 | 1,678 | 1,777 |
| | Retention rate % | 73 | 69 | 83 | 54 | 43 | 52 |
| | National average % | 74 | 75 | ** | 74 | 71 | ** |
| | Pass rate % | 70 | 68 | 83 | 67 | 66 | 83 |
| | National average % | 65 | 73 | ** | 68 | 76 | ** |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| 2 | Starters excluding transfers | 798 | 876 | 521 | 731 | 898 | 700 |
| | Retention rate % | 69 | 61 | 67 | 68 | 70 | 73 |
| | National average % | 70 | 70 | ** | 69 | 68 | ** |
| | Pass rate % | 70 | 70 | 71 | 71 | 74 | 78 |
| | National average % | 68 | 73 | ** | 69 | 73 | ** |
| 3 | Starters excluding transfers | 847 | 873 | 498 | 1,049 | 1,016 | 727 |
| | Retention rate % | 69 | 70 | 72 | 74 | 58 | 73 |
| | National average % | 75 | 75 | ** | 69 | 67 | ** |
| | Pass rate % | 61 | 60 | 82 | 64 | 63 | 72 |
| | National average % | 73 | 76 | ** | 69 | 73 | ** |
| 4/5 | Starters excluding transfers | * | * | * | 425 | 505 | 403 |
| | Retention rate % | * | * | * | 88 | 77 | 72 |
| | National average % | ** | ** | ** | 67 | 70 | ** |
| | Pass rate % | * | * | * | 46 | 49 | 40 |
| | National average % | ** | ** | ** | 48 | 56 | ** |

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

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

** data unavailable.

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

| Courses | Teaching judged to be: | | | No of sessions observed |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Good or better % | Satisfactory % | Less than satisfactory % | |
| Level 3 (advanced) | 57 | 30 | 13 | 60 |
| Level 2 (intermediate) | 43 | 55 | 2 | 47 |
| Level 1 (foundation) | 64 | 27 | 9 | 33 |
| Other sessions | 40 | 55 | 5 | 38 |

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Totals | 51 | 41 | 8 | 178 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|

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