



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



East Berkshire College

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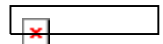
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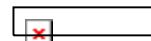
Basic information about the college



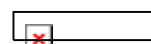
Name of college:	East Berkshire College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Jean Robertson
Address of college:	Station Road Langley Berkshire SL3 8BY
Telephone number:	01753 793000
Fax number:	01753 793358
Chair of governors:	Martin Pritchett

Unique reference number: 130604
Name of reporting inspector: Phil Romain
Dates of inspection: 10-14 January 2005

Part A: Summary



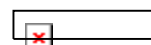
Information about the college



East Berkshire College is a large general further education (FE) college situated in the towns of Slough (Langley), Maidenhead and Windsor. There are also two community centres in Slough and Maidenhead town centres, forming part of a network of over 104 outreach centres in the wider vicinity. In 2003/04, 15,159 students were enrolled, of whom 2,914 were full time and 12,245 (81%) part time. There were slightly more full-time students aged 16 to 18 than full-time students aged 19 and over, but significantly more part-time students aged 19 and over. For the same period, there were around 23,500 enrolments for all qualifications. Almost 19,000 of these were for students aged 19 and over. The college has a significant number of work-based learners, with around 500 modern apprentices, mostly in motor vehicle and construction. Overall, the largest proportion of enrolments is for level 1 courses. The college has a small number of higher education (HE) students. The college operates in a competitive educational environment, with 2 nearby FE colleges, a university offering FE courses and 12 local schools with sixth forms.

The local economy is very buoyant. The Berkshire local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area has very low unemployment at 1.5% in late 2004, although there are significant areas of social deprivation in Slough. The Berkshire population is predominantly white, 11.3% are of minority ethnic origin, but in Slough 36% of the population are of minority ethnic origin.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged provision to be outstanding in one curriculum area, good in five, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in one. Leadership and management are good. Work-based learning is unsatisfactory in construction, engineering and hairdressing and beauty therapy. The college's main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- strong leadership

- responding to the needs of the local community

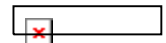
- the college's approach to social and educational inclusion
- teaching in some curriculum areas
- staff training and development
- provision in English for speakers of other languages.

What should be improved

- provision for work-based learners
- the management of learning support staff in lessons
- target setting and individual learning plans
- the standard of 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



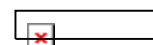
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	Satisfactory. Pass rates in general certificate of education advanced-

	level (GCE A-level) biology, physics and mathematics are high, but in advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) sciences they are low. The standard of students' work is satisfactory and sometimes good and much teaching is lively. Targets for improvement in students' performance are imprecise. Course reviews and self-assessment are good and action plans for improvement are implemented effectively.
Construction	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . Retention and pass rates are high on brickwork and electrical installation courses, but pass rates are low in wood occupations. Teaching in practical lessons is generally good, but theory teaching is poorly planned. There is good access to entry level construction craft programmes. There is low completion of apprenticeship frameworks in work-based learning.
Engineering	Unsatisfactory. Pass rates are high on motor vehicle short courses. Teaching and learning in practical lessons in motor vehicle are good, but some theory teaching is unsatisfactory. Retention rates for advanced apprentices in motor vehicle are low and completion of engineering apprenticeship frameworks is poor. The college has been slow in implementing strategies to improve work-based learning.
Business, management and professional studies	Satisfactory. Pass rates on full-time business courses are high, but pass rates on national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 3 accounting are very low. Retention rates are high on foundation and intermediate business programmes. Teaching and learning in many lessons are good. Progression for full-time and part-time students is good. Ineffective use is made of individual learning plans.
Information and communication technology	Good. Leadership and management of information and communications technology (ICT) are good and staff development is effective. Most teaching is good or better and new technology is used well. Pass rates on many courses are high and tutorial support for students is good. The layout in some rooms is poor and inhibits learning.
Sports, leisure and travel	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good in practical lessons in sport. Indoor sports facilities are very good and there is a wide range of additional learning opportunities for students. Some aspects of key skills training are unsatisfactory and additional learning support for franchise students is inadequate.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Satisfactory. Pass rates for hairdressing and short beauty therapy courses and retention rates for full-time beauty therapy courses are high. There is a good range of additional programmes for full-time beauty therapy students. Students receive good numeracy and literacy support. The accommodation and facilities in hairdressing and beauty salons are unsatisfactory and some students are inappropriately recruited to level 1 hairdressing programmes. Provision for work-based learners is unsatisfactory.
Health and social care	Good. Pass rates on many courses are outstanding. Most of the teaching is good or better. Work placements with local employers provide a good introduction to the workplace. Leadership and management are good and place a high priority on recognising diversity and equality and developing students' personal skills.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Pass rates are good on performing arts, media and the diploma in foundation studies courses. Students' attainments on textiles, fashion and media courses are good. Art and design has stimulating teaching, and there is an innovative range of music provision responsive to the local community. Retention rates on some

	art and design, and media courses are very low. Attendance is low and students are late to lessons in performing arts.
Humanities	Good. Retention and pass rates are high on most courses. Teaching and learning are good and information and learning technology (ILT) is used effectively in lessons. Leadership and management are good. Targets set are imprecise and make few demands upon students.
English, languages and communication	Good. Pass rates are high in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), AS-level and GCE A-level examinations. Courses and lessons are well planned, and there is much good teaching, although the use of ICT is underdeveloped. A broad range of courses is offered, and leadership and management are good. There is low attendance and lack of punctuality in some lessons.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates on most courses are high and teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is effective and innovative, with a particularly good course for students with Asperger's syndrome. Specialist resources are inadequate for the numbers of students, and students' progress is not always recognised. Some aspects of quality assurance are poor.
English for speakers of other languages	Outstanding. Pass and retention rates are very high. Much of the teaching and learning is outstanding and well matched to the needs and goals of students. The analysis of students' learning needs is highly effective and students gain high levels of transferable skills. Leadership and management are very good and quality assurance procedures are effective.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Teaching and learning are good and there are high retention and pass rates on literacy and numeracy courses. Assessment of individual needs is thorough and students receive good support. A wide range of courses is offered. There are some poor resources and some ineffective use of learning support staff in vocational lessons. Leadership and management are good. Quality assurance arrangements are effective and there is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity.

How well is the college led and managed?



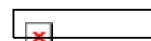
Leadership and management are good. The principal provides strong and purposeful leadership and, together with the senior management team, has established a clear strategy for raising standards. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion. Quality assurance processes have improved and now include effective lesson observation procedures. Course reviews and self-assessment are rigorous in their analysis of data. A substantial programme of staff development has supported improvements in standards. Retention and pass rates have improved since 2002 and are generally above national averages. The quality of teaching and learning has also improved and is slightly higher than the average for general FE colleges. Curriculum management is good in over half the areas inspected, but the management of work-based learning is poor. Governors monitor the performance of the college carefully. Financial management is good and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



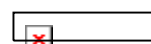
The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well above that of the local population. Strategies to increase participation from under-represented groups are being implemented effectively. A wide range of programmes is provided in community venues. The support needs of students are carefully assessed and the college responds to needs effectively. The college has a suitable race equality policy and monitors the performance of students from different minority ethnic groups carefully. Targets for improvement are included in the college's equality and diversity plan and the college is fulfilling its duties under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. The college has amended its equality and diversity policy to take account of Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and is committed to promoting equality. Access to facilities for students with restricted mobility is poor, but is being addressed as part of the college's overall accommodation strategy.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support arrangements for students are good overall. Students receive good advice and guidance prior to enrolment at the college and guidance materials are accessible and well prepared. Assessment of students' learning support needs is thorough and particular attention is paid to the needs of vulnerable students. The take up of the support offered to students is good. Induction programmes for students are well planned and well managed. The needs of adults returning to learning are well catered for. Most full-time students receive appropriate support through personal tutorial arrangements, but tutorial arrangements for part-time students are not as comprehensive. Individual learning plans are prepared for all full-time students, but are not yet effective in helping students to improve their performance. Arrangements for monitoring students' attendance are effective and vulnerable students or those at risk of not completing their programmes successfully are identified quickly and provided with additional support. Students receive good careers advice.

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

- helpful and friendly staff

- work placements

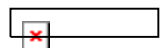
- the safe environment

- respect from staff
- good teaching
- good computing facilities
- good choice of courses
- the respect for ethnic diversity
- opportunities for progression and employment.

What they feel could be improved

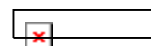
- car parking
- the condition of toilets
- the temperature in some rooms
- social areas for students
- the cost and quality of food in the refectory.

Other information



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

Part B: The college as a whole



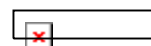
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	63	32	5
19+ and WBL*	71	25	4
Learning 16-18	61	34	5
19+ and WBL*	68	28	4

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. Inspectors used data on students' achievements, drawn from the individualised learner returns to the LSC for the academic years 2001/02 and 2002/03. They also used college data, produced using kite-marked software, on pass and retention rates for 2003/04. The college has recently submitted revised individualised learner returns to the LSC for 2001/02 and 2002/03 which have not yet been validated. Inspectors found these data to be generally reliable.

2. In 2002 and 2003, the overall retention rates on courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were at or slightly above the national averages for general FE and tertiary colleges. In 2004, the retention rates at levels 1 and 2 remained about the same, and were slightly higher at level 3. In 2002 and 2003, the overall pass rates for students of all ages were at or around the national average. The data for 2004 show that there is an improvement in the pass rates for students on courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. Overall, the pass rates are good for 2004.

3. The standard of students' written work in lessons is mostly satisfactory. Practical work is generally of a high standard. In many curriculum areas, students follow appropriate enrichment activities related to their main course of study. On full-time courses in some curriculum areas, there is good development and application of key skills such as information technology (IT), application of number and communications. Many students at all levels make good use of their IT skills to complete their coursework, but hairdressing and beauty therapy students make insufficient use of IT. In vocational subjects, most students' occupational skills are developed effectively. This prepares students well for employment and helps improve their employment prospects.

4. The college uses two value added systems to assess the progress of students on GCE A-level, AS-level and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses based on their previous achievements in school or college. Results indicate that many students make good progress and achieve higher grades than those predicted.

5. The overall attendance rate in lessons was around the national average, at 77%. It was high, at 87%, in health and social care. The lowest attendance was in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and literacy and numeracy, at 71%.

16 to 18 year olds

6. Approximately 55% of full-time students and 11% of part-time students are aged 16 to 18. Between 2001 and 2003, overall retention rates on courses at levels 1 and 2 rose from at or below the national averages to above the national averages. Retention rates at level 3 rose over the same period to just below the national average. In 2004, retention rates rose slightly at levels 1, 2 and 3.

7. Between 2001 and 2003, pass rates at level 1 rose from significantly below the national average to above the national average. At level 2, pass rates rose from significantly below to above the national average in 2002, but fell again in 2003. At level 3, pass rates rose to just below the national average over the same period. In 2004, pass rates rose at levels 1, 2 and 3 to at or above the national averages.

Adult learners

8. Approximately 45% of full-time students and 89% of part-time students are adults.

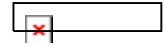
9. Between 2001 and 2003, retention rates on long courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 were at or above the national averages. In 2004, retention rates at levels 1 and 2 remained at or above the national average. At level 3, pass rates rose slightly.

10. Between 2001 and 2003, pass rates at level 1 rose from significantly below the national average to above the national average. Over the same period, pass rates at level 2 rose from significantly below the national average up to the national average, and at level 3 pass rates rose from significantly below to just below the national average. In 2004, pass rates remained the same at level 1, but rose at levels 2 and 3.

11. At the time of the inspection, there were just over 500 work-based learners, largely in construction, engineering and hairdressing and beauty therapy, nearly all of whom were foundation or advanced apprentices. A small number are enrolled on childcare, travel, horticulture and business programmes. They achieve high standards in their practical work. Most, however, make slow progress and too many continue beyond their expected end date. Retention and pass rates are generally low. Links between on-the-job and off-the-job training are poor.

12. The separate reports on areas of learning in Part C give more detail about students' achievement and standards of work on particular courses.

Quality of education and training



13. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded in 230 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 66% of these, satisfactory in 30% and less than satisfactory in 4%. The profile of grades awarded for learning is similar. The grade profile has improved since the last inspection, undertaken in 2003 when 10% of lessons were less than satisfactory and only 59% were good or better. Teaching and learning were better on courses for adults with teaching in 75% of lessons being good or better compared with 63% for young people. On advanced courses, 71% of teaching was good or better. The standard of teaching was significantly lower for lessons on intermediate level programmes where only 50% of lessons were graded good or better. Teaching and learning were most effective on GCE A-level subjects and least effective overall on NVQ programmes particularly at levels 2 and 3.

14. The best teaching is in ESOL; English, languages and communication; computing and ICT; humanities; literacy and numeracy and health and social care. The lowest proportion of good or better teaching is in construction and hairdressing and beauty therapy. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in science and mathematics; construction; engineering; business administration; hairdressing and beauty therapy; visual and performing arts; English and modern foreign languages and provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The co-ordination and teaching of key skills has improved since the last inspection. Students' key skill levels are assessed during induction and key skill teaching is integrated with students' main programmes of study.

15. In the best lessons, students are motivated and make good progress. These lessons are well planned and include a variety of activities that help to stimulate students' interest in their work. Teachers pay particular attention to ensuring the learning needs of all their students are met. In some of the better lessons, teachers make good use of ILT to add variety and interest. Teaching is most effective in practical lessons or where there is a balance of theory and practical activities. In these lessons, teachers link different activities and are clear about what they want their students to achieve by the end of the lesson. Checks are made on students' learning. Teachers make good use of their experience of industry and commerce to enliven lessons. In the more effective theory lessons, students discuss their ideas, present their views and develop their confidence and understanding of the topics under consideration. In the better lessons, teachers ask probing questions and check their students' understanding carefully.

16. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not take sufficient account of the ability range of their students. Instructions are not always clear and some students are confused. Students are sometimes distracted and teachers spend too little time checking their understanding and reinforcing key points. Teachers talk too much and do not allow students sufficient time to develop ideas and problem solving skills. In some lessons, poor use is made of learning support assistants. Poor planning leaves little time for assistants to work with individual students.

17. Teachers are generally well qualified and experienced and the college has good arrangements for staff development. A programme of training is helping teachers to make effective use of interactive whiteboards. Since 2002, the proportion of teachers with an appropriate teaching qualification has risen from 52% to 74% for full-time teachers and from 11% to 35% for part-time teachers. However, turnover of staff is high, especially in construction, where teacher shortages have affected the quality of teaching and learning.

18. The college has a clear accommodation strategy for refurbishing the Langley site and for replacing buildings at Windsor and Maidenhead. Building work has been planned carefully to minimise disruption to students and their learning. Many areas in existing buildings are drab and showing signs of age. There are insufficient displays of students' work, especially in corridors and public spaces. Facilities in the new accommodation for sport and travel are good. However, in some areas, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, the accommodation is poor. In some community venues, for example, at Slough Community College, accommodation is cramped and unsuitable.

Most of the accommodation is not readily accessible to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there is little specialist or adapted equipment to meet their needs.

19. With the exception of hairdressing and beauty therapy, students have adequate access to IT equipment, either in the classroom or in specialised centres.

20. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory overall. All students undergo rigorous initial diagnostic assessment to identify learning support needs. Teachers receive timely information about the individual learning needs of their students. In most areas, the information is used to enrol students on programmes of an appropriate level. Students are actively encouraged to take up the learning support offered.

21. Assignments are well planned and scheduled to ensure students have sufficient time to complete set work. Integration of on-the-job and off-the-job activities for work-based learners is inadequate, and too much college time is spent on assessments. In most curriculum areas, teachers assess students' work carefully, but marked work often includes too few comments to indicate how students can improve. In most curriculum areas, the improvement targets set in individual learning plans are too general to have any significant impact on students' achievements. The oral feedback provided to students by teachers is comprehensive and students are aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve.

22. There is a college-wide internal verification and moderation system that is adapted to meet the specific requirements of different regulatory bodies. The system has not identified the slow progress made by most work-based learners and its effectiveness is not monitored.

23. The college provides a wide range of full-time and part-time vocational and academic courses. In most curriculum areas, there are clear progression pathways from entry to advanced levels and in some areas to HE. Students progress from ESOL or basic skills programmes to vocational courses. Taster programmes are offered to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The range of provision at entry and foundation level makes a significant contribution to the promotion of inclusion and to meeting local education and training needs. There is a good range of community-based provision.

24. The college makes good use of labour market information to develop provision that meets employers' needs. Links with employers in a number of areas are well developed. The college works with some 500 employers to provide work-based NVQ and modern apprenticeship programmes in engineering, construction, care and hairdressing. There are effective partnership arrangements with voluntary groups, community and arts groups and with employers in key employment sectors. Partnership arrangements with schools include an Increased Flexibility (IF) programme for over 300 pupils aged 14 to 16 and collaborative work with sixth forms.

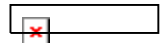
25. Guidance and support for students are good overall. Publicity and guidance materials are well designed and clearly written. Materials are provided in a range of formats and different languages. Visits to schools and taster days provide impartial advice and guidance for pupils and parents. The college works with schools and personal advisors to identify and support vulnerable students. All staff involved with support and guidance have received child protection training and two managers have undertaken specialist training. Communications between the staff in student services and teachers are good. Admissions procedures are efficient and effective.

26. Induction programmes for students are well planned and well managed. Students are provided with a well-designed student handbook that sets out their rights and responsibilities and supports the college's 'respect campaign', aimed at improving student behaviour. The needs of adults returning to learning are catered for effectively and sensitively. Students who start their studies after the start of the academic year are provided with guidance materials and have access to information on the college intranet. Assessments of students' additional learning needs are carried out quickly and thoroughly. Students are screened to identify those in need of additional learning support, and many choose to take advantage of the additional support offered. The effectiveness of the different forms of support provided is carefully monitored. Teachers and personal tutors receive prompt and clear

information about the learning needs of their students.

27. The range of support services for students includes counselling, financial services and welfare services. Financial support provided through education welfare grants has had a significant impact on students' attendance and retention rates. Arrangements for monitoring students' attendance are effective. Students receive good careers advice and appropriate support for progressing to HE. The progress of full-time students is formally reviewed every six weeks. Students, parents and employers receive progress reports. Tutorial arrangements for part-time students are not systematic or comprehensive.

Leadership and management



28. Leadership and management are good. Since taking up her post in May 2003, the principal has provided effective leadership and has set a clear direction for raising standards. Managers have placed considerable emphasis on improving the standards of teaching and learning and developing a curriculum that meets local needs. Communication within the college is effective. Middle managers share a sense of common purpose, morale is generally good and members of staff feel valued. There has been a steady rise over the last two years in retention and pass rates for long courses at all levels. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons has fallen to 4% and the proportion of good or better lessons is just above the national average. Of the four curriculum areas judged unsatisfactory at the last inspection, three are now satisfactory and one is good. The quality of provision in four other curriculum areas has also improved by one grade. However, one previously satisfactory area is now judged unsatisfactory. The management of work-based learning has not improved and is unsatisfactory.

29. The college has established a coherent framework for planning. A new strategic plan was prepared in July 2004 following extensive analysis and consultation. All staff had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the plan and have been briefed on its contents. The plan clearly sets out the key strategic aims of the organisation and is underpinned by operational plans for different curriculum and support areas. Quality assurance procedures are well integrated with planning processes and strategic plans are developed from the college's self-evaluation. The implementation of the college's post-inspection action plan has been carefully monitored and has given the direction for further development. Planning and decision making are supported by reliable management information. Managers are provided with monthly and termly reports.

30. Management of the curriculum is good in 8 of the 14 curriculum areas inspected and unsatisfactory in only 1. There is a clear and effective line management structure within each area, including an additional tier of senior lecturers. Managers have carried out careful analyses of the curriculum and have discontinued unsuccessful courses and introduced new qualifications to meet local needs. The management of work-based learning is poor. The success rate targets set by managers are too low and insufficient attention has been paid to the slow progress of trainees and the low rates of achievement for apprenticeship frameworks.

31. The college performance management system is well designed and is implemented effectively for managers, full-time and many part-time teachers. Clear and appropriate objectives are set for individuals, which link to the strategic and operational plans of the college. Individual objectives for teachers and managers focus on specific measurable outcomes relating to retention and pass rates and the quality of teaching and learning. Staff development plans take account of the outcomes of lesson observations. All full-time and substantive part-time teachers are given a 'teaching and learning toolkit' and receive training in its use. There is no systematic appraisal of the substantial number of part-time staff who teach fewer than eight hours a week.

32. The college's quality assurance procedures have improved. Lesson observations are used effectively to judge standards of teaching and learning. Graded lesson observations carried out by a

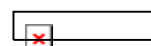
central team of trained observers and observations by senior lecturers and heads of school help to improve the standards of teaching and learning. Appropriate action is taken where teaching is unsatisfactory and teachers are provided with staff development. All new full-time teachers are mentored and required to undertake teacher training if appropriate. Course reviews are well structured and form the basis of curriculum area self-assessment reports. The self-assessment process is rigorous in its analysis of data and the curriculum offer. Some reports are descriptive and lack judgements about quality. Inspectors agreed with many of the grades awarded to curriculum areas by the college.

33. The student body has a higher proportion of students from minority ethnic groups than the immediate locality. A programme of equality and diversity training has been implemented for all staff. The induction for students aims to develop mutual respect. Appropriate policies which meet the legal requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and SENDA are in place. The college diversity action plan includes appropriate actions to promote equality and diversity and curriculum areas have been set targets for specific equality and diversity impact measures. Students' recruitment, retention and pass rate data are analysed by age, gender and ethnicity. These analyses have led to the identification of underperforming groups and actions to bring about improvements. For example, the pass rate for Asian males improved between 2003 and 2004. The proportion of teaching staff from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased and is similar to that for Berkshire area as a whole, although lower than that for Slough.

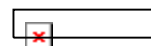
34. Governors bring a wide range of experience and expertise to their roles and are involved in setting the strategic direction of the college. They receive regular updates detailing key performance indicators, and monitor the performance of the college thoroughly. Governors and managers work well together. Training for new governors is well structured and includes meetings with senior managers. The principal's performance is formally reviewed by governors and the objectives agreed reflect the aims of the strategic plan.

35. The financial position of the college has improved and the college is generating operating surpluses. Planned student numbers are based on realistic growth assumptions. The monitoring of the deployment of teaching staff is effective and the college has succeeded in reducing the proportion of its income spent on staffing. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GCE A2 biology, physics and mathematics courses
- good technical support and laboratory management to support learning

- o effective course review and self-assessment.

Weaknesses

- o low pass rates on AS-level science courses
- o ineffective target setting for students
- o insufficient initial analysis of students' subject-specific learning needs.

Scope of provision

36. The college offers a wide range of programmes in science and mathematics. These include daytime AS-level and GCE A2 mathematics, biology, human biology, chemistry and physics. Evening courses at the same levels are also provided in human biology and chemistry. A national diploma in forensic science introduced in 2004 has been successful in attracting students to a vocational science course. GCSE in mathematics is provided during the day and evening and daytime courses in GCSE science and human biology. A GCSE mathematics bridging course is offered to students who have not achieved GCSE grade D.

Achievement and standards

37. Pass rates on GCE A2 biology, physics and mathematics courses are high and are well above the national averages for general FE colleges. GCE A2 mathematics pass rates were 100% for the three years prior to the inspection. At 53% in 2004, mathematics GCSE pass rates were well above the low national average of 33% and pass rates for GCSE and AS-level mathematics courses are satisfactory overall. Pass rates on AS-level science subjects are poor and consistently below the national averages. Pass rates in AS-level chemistry improved considerably in 2004, but pass rates in AS-level biology and physics declined. Retention rates have risen for most courses during the two years prior to the inspection and are satisfactory.

38. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory, and sometimes high. In practical activities, students work with confidence and manipulate apparatus competently when carrying out experiments. Their written work is well presented and most students respond to questions and take part in group activities. Progression to HE, from GCE courses is good.

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	240	176	152
		% retention	69	71	68
		% pass rate	45	38	51
GCSE biology and human biology	2	No. of starts	16	18	16
		% retention	62	50	69

		% pass rate	80	89	45
AS-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	18	29	33
		% retention	61	72	82
		% pass rate	36	33	63
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	15	17	15
		% retention	80	76	93
		% pass rate	75	69	43

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

Quality of education and training

39. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best lessons are well planned, lively and interesting; with a good mix of activities which capture students' attention and help them to learn. Teachers make good use of practical work and demonstrations to develop students' skills and knowledge. For example, in one chemistry lesson, the teacher used a series of demonstrations to illustrate aspects of reaction rates. Some teachers make very effective use of interactive whiteboards. In one AS-level mathematics lesson, a whiteboard and associated software was used particularly well in a question and answer session to develop students' ability to solve mathematical problems on the geometric properties of a circle. Innovative and interesting experiments are used well by teachers to stimulate students' interest in their work and improve their understanding. In one biology lesson, students made a simple cardiogram using a drawing pin, adhesive, and a drinking straw. Students are punctual, attentive and respond well to questions during lessons. They are provided with high-quality handouts, which they use well to prepare notes. Students are confident about asking for help when they need it. In less effective lessons, teachers do not always provide sufficient materials or support to meet the needs of individual students and do not check students' learning sufficiently. In some lessons, teachers talk too much and fail to gain students' interest.

40. Technical support for science lessons is good. Laboratories and classrooms are well equipped, and fit for purpose. Teachers make good use of support staff and resources to include effective practical work and demonstrations in their lessons. In a chemistry lesson, students tested the properties of different halo-alkanes quickly to determine their reactivity and reinforce their knowledge of these chemicals. Teachers and technicians work effectively together to develop or adapt experiments. For example, a teacher and a technician worked together to project spectral lines and images of the vernier scale on to an interactive whiteboard so that students could learn to carry out measurements more easily.

41. Many students have the minimum entry requirements for their programmes of study. Their literacy and numeracy levels are tested on entry to the college and additional support provided where necessary. There is, however, no initial assessment of students' subject-specific or study skills needs and individual learning plans fail to take account of subject specific needs.

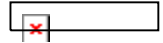
42. Students are set regular and appropriate assignments which are marked carefully and appropriately moderated. However, feedback on assignments does not always indicate clearly what students have done well, or what they need to do to improve. Students' progress is regularly monitored. Feedback does not give sufficient information on students' progress to help them improve their performance. Targets included in action plans are imprecise. Few action plans include guidance for students on improving their knowledge and understanding of topics they find difficult.

Leadership and management

43. The programme area is well managed. Course reviews and self-assessment are thorough and make good use of college and external data to assess provision and set targets for improvement. Qualitative and quantitative information are used well to measure performance. Self-assessment is accurate and based on the common inspection framework. Action planning is sound and managers

have a good understanding of the actions that need to be taken to improve teaching and learning. A planned programme of staff development has been effective in training teachers to make good use of interactive whiteboards. Staff meetings have a clear focus on improving teaching and learning.

Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on basic skills brickwork and electrical installation in 2003/04

- good teaching and learning in practical workshops

- inclusive access on to construction programmes.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates in wood occupations at level 2

- poor planning of theory teaching

- low completion of apprenticeship frameworks.

Scope of provision

44. At the time of the inspection, there were 276 full-time and 570 part-time students and 225 work-based learners on foundation and advanced apprenticeships. Some 36 school pupils, aged 14 to 16, are enrolled on basic construction craft courses. Courses are offered in carpentry and joinery, plumbing, brickwork, painting and decorating, decorative techniques, and electrical installation. Technician courses are available in building and construction, building engineering services, computer-aided design and health and safety. The programme area also has a gas training and assessment centre.

Achievement and standards

45. Pass rates on the bricklaying basic skills course have been high over the last three years. The pass rate on the electrical installation and testing course has increased significantly from 23% in 2003 to 85% in 2004. Retention and pass rates in carpentry and joinery, plumbing and on technician programmes are mostly satisfactory. However, on the carpentry and joinery NVQ level 2 course, the pass rate has dropped from 83% in 2003 to 43% in 2004. The completion rate for apprenticeship frameworks is low. For example, in 2001/02 and 2002/03, only 18 of the 176 work-based learners completed the full framework. Apprentices recruited in 2004 are making better progress.

46. The standard of students' written work is satisfactory. Practical work produced by students is often of a high standard. For example, in painting and decorating students prepare surfaces to a very high standard prior to applying surface treatments.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Basic bricklaying skills	1	No. of starts	82	75	120
		% retention	80	92	96
		% pass rate	79	90	100
Intermediate construction award	1	No. of starts	*	88	122
		% retention	*	36	92
		% pass rate	*	38	54
City and Guilds 2360-07 electrical installation part 2 competencies	2	No. of starts	41	47	60
		% retention	88	91	88
		% pass rate	28	23	85
NVQ carpentry and joinery	2	No. of starts	45	35	53
		% retention	62	51	87
		% pass rate	64	83	43
NVQ mechanical engineering services (plumbing)	2	No. of starts	24	59	107
		% retention	67	69	89
		% pass rate	13	68	64
National certificate in building services engineering	3	No. of starts	28	25	*
		% retention	93	60	*
		% pass rate	65	87	*

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching in practical workshops is good. Teachers effectively share their knowledge and make good use of demonstrations. For example, in a brickwork lesson, the teacher gave a good demonstration of the correct method to build a brick pier ensuring that it is square across its diagonals. The promotion of health and safety is good in most lessons and workshops. The teaching of theory is poorly planned. There is an insufficient range of activities and slow pace of learning in some lessons. In the poorer lessons, students are not wholly involved in some of the activities and not all students achieve the lessons' objectives. Key skills teaching for work-based learners effectively prepares students to meet the academic demands of their course.

48. Resources are satisfactory. Classrooms are well equipped and all have interactive whiteboards and data projectors which are used well by teachers. Access to computing facilities is satisfactory. There is an appropriate range and number of textbooks in the learning resource centre. Nearly half of the full-time teachers in the area have been with the college for one year or less, and are working towards appropriate teaching and assessor qualifications.

49. Students' work is regularly assessed and marked. Assessment of work-based learning overall is satisfactory. However, there is an over-reliance on witness testimony and photographic evidence and insufficient assessment by direct observation. Arrangements to provide internal verification are poor. There are too few qualified internal verifiers in the curriculum to meet the requirements of the awarding body.

50. Students' progress is regularly monitored and recorded. However, progress reviews for work-based learners lack sufficient detail and target setting is poor. Individual learning plans are poor and do not contain precise targets or milestones. Employers of work-based learners receive copies of progress review and reports and are advised of learners' absences. However, not all employers are sufficiently aware of the content or requirements of qualifications. There is no co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training.

51. The range of courses is satisfactory and meets the needs of local industry. A good entry-level programme enables students to access basic craft construction courses alongside basic skills support. Progression routes for level 3 craft students are limited.

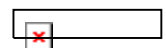
52. All students' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed when they start their course and appropriate support is provided where required. The provision of basic skills support is satisfactory and on the entry-level craft programmes it is effective in helping students to progress on to level 2 courses.

Leadership and management

53. Management is satisfactory. However, managers are not effective in supporting work-based learners. Retention and pass rates have risen on some courses. Many recent initiatives, such as staff mentoring and training have yet to have a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in vocational theory teaching. Equality and diversity are effectively promoted and monitored.

54. The self-assessment report was generally accurate, although it overstated the progress made towards improving the completion rates for apprenticeship frameworks, which still remain unsatisfactory. Teachers are not sufficiently involved in contributing to the content of the self-assessment report and a significant number have not read it.

Engineering



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

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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates in motor vehicle short courses

- good teaching and learning in practical lessons

- good specialist resources in motor vehicle.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates for advanced apprentices in motor vehicle

- low completion of apprenticeship frameworks

- some unsatisfactory theory teaching

- slow introduction of strategies to improve work-based learning.

Scope of provision

55. Courses are offered in motor vehicle, engineering and welding. These include light and heavy vehicle maintenance and repair, vehicle body repair and refinishing, engineering production, performing engineering operations, mechanical manufacturing and engineering maintenance. At the time of inspection, there were 731 students, of whom 322 were motor vehicle, and 117 engineering students following college-based courses. There were 292 work-based learners on apprenticeships. Of the work-based learners, 263 were on motor vehicle programmes and 29 on engineering programmes. The college also offers provision in both motor vehicle and engineering for school pupils aged 14 to 16.

Achievement and standards

56. The pass rates in motor vehicle short courses are high. In 2003 and 2004, the pass rates for the certificate in motor vehicle studies were 84% and 88%. The pass rates for the diploma in motor vehicle studies were 94% and 95% for the same period. Retention rates were also above the national averages for both courses. There are low retention rates for advanced apprentices in motor vehicle. In 2000/01, the retention rate was just 47%. In 2001/02, the retention rate was 51%. Of those learners that started in 2002/03 and 2003/04, a high proportion has already left the programme early.

57. The completion rate of frameworks for foundation apprentices in engineering and advanced apprentices in motor vehicle is low. Completion rates for foundation apprentices in engineering who started in 2001/02 were just 7%. Completion rates for 2002/03, were 22%. In 2000/01, the completion rate for advanced modern apprentices in motor vehicle was just 16%.

58. Engineering students develop a high standard of skills in bench fitting, machining and use

precision engineering measuring instruments with accuracy. Students following foundation and level 1 motor vehicle courses quickly develop competence in using tools and equipment and work with little supervision in carrying out minor vehicle servicing and maintenance. Motor vehicle apprentices develop a broad range of practical skills including maintenance, repair, faultfinding, and diagnosis of complex systems using specialist equipment on modern vehicles.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Introductory welding skills	1	No. of starts	17	39	32
		% retention	71	79	72
		% pass rate	0	94	87
Certificate in motor vehicle studies (short course)	1	No. of starts	*	28	31
		% retention	*	89	84
		% pass rate	*	84	88
Diploma in motor vehicle studies (short course)	1	No. of starts	*	16	21
		% retention	*	100	100
		% pass rate	*	94	95
Computer-aided draughting	2	No. of starts	188	277	44
		% retention	86	81	93
		% pass rate	93	35	90
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	53	42	16
		% retention	49	64	69
		% pass rate	100	93	64
Repair and servicing of road vehicles (2002/03) IMI technical certificate (2004)	3	No. of starts	42	42	153
		% retention	95	98	84
		% pass rate	13	24	94

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

59. Teaching and learning in practical lessons are good. The lessons are well organised and effectively planned to make best use of resources. Key skills are appropriately integrated with practical lessons. Practical tasks and assignments are well designed to develop students' skills progressively. Teachers are enthusiastic and students are particularly well motivated in practical lessons. Students receive good individual instruction and teachers use demonstrations effectively with small groups. Frequent checks are made on students' progress in practical lessons. Additional help is given to students who need it whilst the more advanced students work on other tasks.

60. Teaching in some theory lessons is unsatisfactory. Planning is poor, teaching is dull and uninspiring and does not gain students' interest or stimulate them to learn. Teachers often talk for too long and students are given too little to do. Learning is not checked. Students who arrive late are not challenged or encouraged to take part in activities.

61. There is insufficient assessment for work-based learners. The assessment of evidence in

learners' portfolios is delayed until the second year of training. Learners in engineering receive little written feedback on their portfolio evidence. There is too little assessment by observation in the workplace. For example, one motor vehicle learner in the second year of training has not been assessed or entered any information in his NVQ portfolio. In engineering, there is poor internal verification. Observation of assessment practice is planned, but does not take place. Portfolios are not checked until they are completed.

62. There are good specialist resources in the motor vehicle technology centre. Classrooms are spacious, well lit, and have high-quality furniture. Classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboard, portable computer and overhead projectors. A realistic reception area is used for students to practise their customer service skills. Workshops are well equipped with a wide range of industry-standard equipment. The technical workshop has a rolling road and automotive high-technology diagnostic equipment. Monitoring of health and safety practices in college workshops is poor.

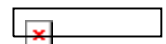
63. The range of engineering provision is appropriate to meet local needs. The block release attendance scheme for apprentices in motor vehicle helps employers to plan their work. A motor vehicle management certificate provides progression into management and supervision. Foundation courses provide good progression opportunities for students into apprenticeships and employment.

Leadership and management

64. The management of college-based provision is satisfactory. The management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory. The college has been slow to implement improvements since the previous inspection. The sharing of responsibility for work-based learners between college departments and other partners is not clearly defined. Managers have a poor understanding of work-based learning data. Retention and pass rate data for work-based learners are not used effectively to set realistic targets. Retention and completion rates for apprentices are still low. Workplace visits take place more frequently, but action plans and target setting are poor.

65. The self-assessment report was overgenerous in grading the provision for engineering and work-based learning. It failed to identify key weaknesses in unsatisfactory teaching and slow introduction of strategies to improve work-based learning from the previous inspection. The promotion and monitoring of equality and diversity are satisfactory.

Business, management and professional studies



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on foundation, intermediate and AVCE business courses

- high retention rates on foundation and intermediate business courses

- good teaching and learning

- good progression by full-time and part-time students.

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- poor pass rates on level 3 accountancy course.

Scope of provision

66. The provision for business is spread across three sites, Langley, Maidenhead and Windsor. Full-time day courses offered at Langley and Windsor include GCE A2, AS-level, AVCE and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) programmes. Professional business courses in marketing, management, accounting and some specialist courses such as logistics are based at Maidenhead with some accounting provision at Langley. Full-time business administration students are based at Maidenhead. At the time of inspection, there were 213 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 68 full-time adults. There were 147 part-time students aged 16 to 18 and 339 part-time adults. The college also offers short bespoke training courses for the local business community.

Achievement and standards

67. Pass rates on GNVQ foundation, intermediate business and AVCE courses are high. On GNVQ foundation programmes, the pass rate is consistently above the national average. On the GNVQ intermediate programme, the pass rate has been above the national average for three years and in 2003 was particularly high at 90%. On the AVCE programme, the pass rates for the years 2003 and 2004 were 89% and 86%, well above the national average of 58%. Pass rates on the NVQ level 3 accounting programme are very poor and have been significantly below the national average for the last three years. The pass rate for the NVQ level 2 accounting programme declined significantly in 2004.

68. Retention rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses have been above the national average for three years.

69. There is good progression from foundation level to HE. Nearly 70% of GNVQ intermediate students have progressed from the foundation programme and almost a half of students on the AVCE programme have progressed from the intermediate programme. Three quarters of AVCE and all GCE A2 students who successfully completed their programme of learning in 2004 have progressed to HE. There are also high progression rates between levels of accounting technician programmes. All successful full-time business administration students have gained employment in the local business community.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ foundation business (part 1)	1	No. of starts	22	16	19
		% retention	77	69	74

		% pass rate	71	73	79
GNVQ intermediate business (part 1)	2	No. of starts	83	51	56
		% retention	60	78	84
		% pass rate	65	90	64
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	43	40	47
		% retention	93	85	94
		% pass rate	83	82	52
GNVQ advanced business (2002) AVCE business double award (2003 and 2004)	3	No. of starts	118	53	68
		% retention	57	72	59
		% pass rate	65	89	86
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	47	48	47
		% retention	87	81	94
		% pass rate	39	59	52
GCE A2 business	3	No. of starts	58	46	51
		% retention	76	80	84
		% pass rate	91	86	93

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

Quality of education and training

70. Teaching and learning are good in many lessons. The majority of lessons are carefully prepared. Lesson aims and objectives are clear and are shared with students. In the better lessons, activities are planned to meet the individual learning needs of students. Teachers work with students to encourage learning and students are challenged to apply theories and concepts to realistic business situations. For example, students studying economics apply the theory of monopoly power to real organisations. In a lesson on human behaviour, students analysed and applied a range of motivation theories to work situations. In the less effective lessons, teachers fail to involve all students in learning tasks. The pace of learning is often slow and there is insufficient monitoring of progress. Teachers do not gain students' interest and take little account of their needs.

71. Library and computing resources are satisfactory. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively. The provision of core business textbooks on the Langley site is poor in comparison to Maidenhead and Windsor. Teachers hold relevant qualifications and their commercial experience covers a wide range of business areas, including finance, marketing and IT. Since the last inspection, many teachers have attended courses to bring their knowledge and qualifications up to date.

72. Assessment, including initial assessment of basic skills, is satisfactory. An appropriate range of assessment methods is used to assess students' progress. Good use is made of case studies, mock examination papers and presentations. The quality of written and oral feedback to students is good and clearly shows students how they can improve their work. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements.

73. The range of business provision is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, actions have been taken to increase the breadth of management and professional courses. However, these courses are not yet fully established within the curriculum. Introductory certificate courses in supervisory management have been introduced at levels 2 and 3. An introductory certificate in marketing has also been introduced. A short introductory course to business administration was offered in the summer of 2004 and five students progressed to the full-time level 2 business administration.

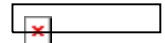
74. Since the last inspection, a programme of work experience has been introduced for GNVQ and AVCE students. This programme is organised through links with the local education business partnership. Where appropriate, guest speakers from the business community are invited to contribute to students' experiences.

75. There is ineffective use of individual learning plans to improve students' progress. Targets agreed with students are often imprecise. Monitoring of progress is unsatisfactory. Outcomes from initial assessment diagnosis are not recorded and many individual learning plans are not signed by teachers.

Leadership and management

76. Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection, two separate curriculum areas have been successfully merged into one school. Both formal and informal communications are effective. There are regular staff meetings and actions agreed are recorded and followed-up. Teachers are kept well informed of developments throughout the college and are positively encouraged to attend awarding body training days. There is an effective mentoring system in place for new staff. Internal lesson observations are supported by an external consultant.

Information and communication technology



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

Strengths

- high retention rates on many full-time courses

- high pass rates on part-time courses

- good teaching and learning

- well-organised and effectively managed provision

- effective staff development.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on AS-level ICT

- some unsatisfactory accommodation

- unsatisfactory co-ordination of support staff.

Scope of provision

77. The college provides a range of full-time and part-time courses, from foundation to advanced level and students can progress from one level to the next using a variety of modes of study. Full-time courses include introductory, first and national diploma and AS-level and GCE A2 ICT. Part-time courses include the European computer driving licence (ECDL), computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), and City and Guilds e-Qualifications. At the time of the inspection, there were 318 full-time and 1,154 part-time students. Of the full-time students, 243 were aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

78. Retention rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate IT, first diploma for IT practitioners and AS-level ICT are high. In 2003/04, retention rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate ICT courses were both 100%. Retention rates for the first diploma for IT practitioners and AS-level ICT were 87% and 85%, respectively. Pass rates on CLAIT and ECDL courses were high at 85% and 82%, respectively, and above the national average. However, pass rates on AS-level ICT courses were below the national average. The pass rate for key skills in IT has risen significantly and is now satisfactory.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
CLAIT (short course)	1	No. of starts	683	209	260
		% retention	89	96	83
		% pass rate	54	48	85
GNVQ intermediate in IT	2	No. of starts	77	50	16
		% retention	86	82	100
		% pass rate	14	66	81
First diploma for IT practitioners	2	No. of starts	*	64	53
		% retention	*	70	87
		% pass rate	*	36	91
AS-level ICT	3	No. of starts	55	42	26
		% retention	76	71	85
		% pass rate	55	57	55
National diploma for IT practitioners	3	No. of starts	*	77	109
		% retention	*	99	53
		% pass rate	*	97	95
Key skills - IT	3	No. of starts	127	98	92

		% retention	98	93	100
		% pass rate	0	51	64

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

79. Most teaching is good. Teaching is planned carefully and teachers encourage and support students well. Teachers are good at identifying students' needs and intervene when appropriate to help them to solve problems. They use a mixture of effective classroom control and good humour, to ensure students maintain their attention. Students learn well and are interested, enthusiastic and motivated. They work well together and make useful contributions during lessons. The best lessons use a variety of methods to maintain students' interest and ensure that all students understand new topics. In these lessons, students work with interest and perseverance, and they make good progress. In one lesson, a practical activity using sweets was used to teach students about databases operators. In another lesson, the support teacher effectively gave a spoof presentation of project work. However, the effective deployment of support staff in lessons is rare. In some lessons, support staff receive no clear direction and there is no clear structure to link teaching and support.

80. Teachers of full-time courses have a good range of technical skills, a good knowledge of their subjects and make effective use of the range of teaching aids available. The data projectors and interactive whiteboards are used well in many lessons. In some lessons, students used the interactive whiteboard to set out their findings for the rest of the group. This activity motivated students to succeed and improved their presentation skills. Teachers of part-time courses have adequate skills for the courses they teach, but sometimes lack confidence when faced with challenging questions about more advanced aspects of computing. Good tracking procedures are used to monitor students' work and they acquire a good range of new knowledge and skills. Students quickly build up their understanding and regularly return to take further qualifications.

81. Computing facilities are satisfactory. Computers are industry standard and operate with up-to-date software. Computer rooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and ceiling mounted data projectors. Most rooms are spacious, but the layout of some is unsatisfactory. In these rooms, teachers are unable to observe students' work, students are unable to spread their work folders and the view of the whiteboard is restricted. Ventilation in some computer rooms is inadequate. Some lessons take place in a teaching area in the learning centre which is used as a corridor through to an adjacent classroom.

82. The assessment of students' work is good. Work is marked regularly, and is normally returned within two weeks. Teachers give detailed feedback on the quality of work and provide guidance on improvements. Students and parents are regularly informed of progress. Weekly team meetings regularly review students' progress and identify students at risk of leaving their course. Assessment guidelines are good and students are encouraged to maintain learning logs. Student attend regularly and are punctual to lessons.

83. The range of courses available is satisfactory and provides students aged 16 to 18 with good progression routes from the introductory diploma through to level 3 courses. An appropriate range of part-time computer courses is available including new CLAIT and ECDL. Induction and enrolment procedures are good. One student enquiring about a software course had been enrolled and had begun studying within an hour of the enquiry.

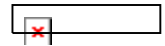
84. Guidance and support for students are good. The tutorial system is effective and individual tutorials are well organised. Students' progress and attendance are carefully monitored and appropriate remedial actions agreed. Group tutorial sessions are good. In one session on drug awareness, students openly discussed issues concerning the illegal taking of drugs.

Leadership and management

85. Management of the curriculum area is very good. The management team provide clear leadership and direction. Weekly curriculum area meetings are managed effectively. A programme of continuous lesson observations is effective. Self-assessment is rigorous and involves all staff. Monitoring of students' progress and the application of rigorous entry criteria are effective. Newly appointed teachers are supported through a mentor scheme. There is a clear focus on raising teachers' effectiveness through a programme of continuous professional development. All members of staff are encouraged to update their professional qualifications. Teachers work well together and benefit from the sharing of good practice through peer observation.

86. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Adaptive software and hardware is available to support the needs of students. However, the design and layout of some classrooms is unsuitable for wheelchair users.

Sports, leisure and travel



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in level 2 sport and AVCE travel and tourism

- good teaching in practical lessons in sport

- very good indoor sports facilities

- wide range of additional learning opportunities

- very good support for new teachers.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on fares and ticketing courses

- inappropriate tasks for students in some lessons

- unsatisfactory key skills training

- inadequate additional learning support for students on franchise programmes.

Scope of provision

87. First and national diplomas and NVQ levels 1 and 2 are offered in sport and recreation and the first diploma and the AVCE (double award) in travel and tourism. Fares and ticketing courses are offered part time and as an additional qualification to full-time students. At the time of inspection, there were 165 sports students and 59 travel and tourism students. Of these, 155 were aged 16 to 18. Some 65 students attended part time.

Achievement and standards

88. Retention and pass rates are satisfactory. Pass rates over three years have been high on NVQ level 2 sport and recreation (exercise and fitness), the first diploma in sport and exercise sciences and the AVCE travel and tourism. Pass rates are low on fares and ticketing at levels 1 and 2, at just 39% in 2004. Pass rates on the certificate in travel, also an additional qualification, are high at level 2, but low at level 3.

89. The standard of students' work in assignments and practical lessons is high and reflects industry standards. However, many students' folders, particularly for the first diploma in sport and exercise sciences, are untidy and unhelpful for revision. Attendance at lessons is good.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ sports recreation (exercise and fitness)	2	No. of starts	28	47	37
		% retention	93	79	76
		% pass rate	96	89	100
First diploma in sport and exercise science	2	No. of starts	*	20	19
		% retention	*	75	89
		% pass rate	*	73	94
Certificate in travel (travel agency)	2	No. of starts	*	30	23
		% retention	*	93	74
		% pass rate	*	71	76
Fares and ticketing (1 year)	2	No. of starts	*	31	36
		% retention	*	90	86
		% pass rate	*	86	39
National diploma in sports studies/ sport and exercise sciences (from 2003)	3	No. of starts	25	30	30
		% retention	36	93	70
		% pass rate	78	89	86
National diploma/	3	No. of starts	33	32	37

AVCE in travel and tourism (from 2003)	% retention	67	59	65
	% pass rate	100	95	92

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

90. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and supported by comprehensive schemes of work. Teaching in practical sports lessons is good. Activities reflect industry standards and clear reference is made to best practice in coaching. Management of diverse groups of students is effective. Tasks in many other lessons are set at too high a level or are too long to be completed successfully by students who work more slowly. Some students do not have enough work to keep them usefully occupied. In one first diploma in sport lesson, an activity to identify which muscles are agonist and which antagonist in a range of fitness exercises was not completed by weaker students. Others in the group completed the activity early.

91. The teaching of key skills is unsatisfactory. Opportunities to provide evidence are identified in schemes of work, but are not shown on lesson plans or referred to in lessons. Planning to identify which assignments will be used for claiming key skills is incomplete. There is insufficient reference to key skills in individual learning plans. Discrete training in key skills IT is not put into a vocational context and students do not enjoy their lessons.

92. Indoor sports facilities are very good. The sports hall, changing rooms and gym have been refurbished to a high standard and the gym has new equipment. The sports and travel teaching block has a pleasant common room for students, a well-used computer suite and a computer in each classroom. Four classrooms have interactive whiteboards, although teachers do not use them effectively. There are too few current textbooks. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced.

93. Constructive and encouraging feedback is given to students both orally during practical assessments and in written feedback on assessed work. Internal verification is satisfactory.

94. A wide range of additional learning opportunities is provided including the certificate in travel, air cabin crew certificate, first aid and the community sports leaders' award. A range of trips and visiting speakers enhance learning. Advice, guidance and induction are good. Courses were appropriately changed in 2003 and 2004 in response to declining levels of students' performance and syllabus changes. A good GCSE travel and tourism programme is offered to young people aged 14 to 16 from two local schools.

95. Support for full-time students is good. A comprehensive tutorial system covers personal, subject and career-based topics. Individual learning plans are well used with appropriate targets for most students to improve performance. Initial assessment is good, but students identified as having additional learning needs often fail to take advantage of the help provided. Study support tutors are available for some level 2 lessons, but are not always appropriately deployed.

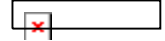
96. Initial assessment for full-time franchise students on the diploma in personal training was significantly delayed. Learning support has not yet been put in place for these students.

Leadership and management

97. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New teachers are well supported by a mentor. Specific training which teachers must undertake is clearly identified. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Systems and procedures covering all aspects of work are well used and understood by teachers. Course reviews are more comprehensive and teachers

understand and use data effectively. Team meetings are regular and useful. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



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

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

Strengths

- high retention rates on full-time beauty therapy programmes

- high pass rates on hairdressing and short beauty therapy programmes

- wide range of additional programmes for full-time beauty therapy students

- effective literacy and numeracy support.

Weaknesses

- poorly managed work-based learning provision

- unsatisfactory hairdressing and beauty therapy salons

- inappropriate recruitment of students to hairdressing programmes.

Scope of provision

98. The college offers NVQ levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Other courses include body massage, aromatherapy, reflexology, make-up and manicure. Courses are provided during the day and in the evening. At the time of inspection, there were 183 students aged 16 to 18 and 30 adults on full-time courses. Some 60 students aged 16 to 18 and 304 adults attended part time. There were 32 apprentices in hairdressing and 12 school pupils aged 14 to 16 studying foundation-level hairdressing.

Achievement and standards

99. Pass rates on hairdressing NVQ level 1 and 2 courses and on short courses in aromatherapy and body massage are high. In 2004, pass rates on NVQ level 2 and 3 beauty therapy programmes were above the national averages for general FE colleges. However, pass rates for anatomy and physiology and body massage courses have declined since 2003 and are below the national average. The retention rates on beauty therapy courses and NVQ level 2 hairdressing rose significantly in 2004. Students are punctual to lessons and attendance is high.

100. The quality of students' assignments is satisfactory overall and some hairdressing assignments are good. One level 2 assignment showed original ideas and imaginative use of pictures within the text to illustrate hairstyles suitable for different face shapes. However, many assignments are handwritten and few students make effective use of IT. Few students develop effective independent research skills. Students gain a good range of additional introductory qualifications in areas such as nail art, theatrical make-up and aromatherapy.

101. Achievements by work-based learners are low. Only 13% of foundation apprentices achieved the full framework in 2003. Retention rates for foundation apprentices were low in 2002, but rose during the two subsequent years.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ hairdressing 1 year	1	No. of starts	17	38	35
		% retention	88	79	74
		% pass rate	73	100	100
Introduction to aromatherapy (short course)	1	No. of starts	27	57	63
		% retention	85	86	90
		% pass rate	96	92	100
NVQ hairdressing 2 years	2	No. of starts	56	33	33
		% retention	27	9	67
		% pass rate	87	100	100
NVQ beauty therapy 1 year	2	No. of starts	45	59	71
		% retention	84	81	80
		% pass rate	71	73	95
NVQ beauty therapy 1 year	3	No. of starts	*	20	20
		% retention	*	95	90
		% pass rate	*	68	89
Anatomy and physiology and body massage 1 year	3	No. of starts	84	68	84
		% retention	69	85	81
		% pass rate	78	74	68

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

102. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned. Teachers make good use of their up-to-date knowledge and make appropriate reference to health and safety and commercial working practices during lessons. A range of enrichment activities, such as visits to exhibitions and talks by external speakers, help broaden students' experiences. Students are enthusiastic to learn and in the more effective lessons teachers are successful in maintaining their interest. Teachers have detailed information about students' individual learning needs and learning styles, but this is not always used effectively to plan the teaching of specialist subjects. In the less effective lessons, students are not sufficiently stimulated and teachers use a limited range of teaching and learning methods. Some work-based learners do not receive regular training sessions in their workplace.

103. Salons are dated and the layout, furnishings and décor fail to reflect industrial standards. The beauty salons are crowded, with insufficient space in cubicles. Ventilation in the beauty salons is inadequate. Teachers have appropriate qualifications and often attend training courses to update their skills. Some teachers also maintain their industrial skills through working in commercial salons. Students at the Langley campus do not have sufficient access to computer facilities, but students at the Maidenhead site have good access to computers.

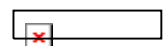
104. Written assignments are marked and returned promptly, with good feedback and advice to help students improve their work. Teachers provide good oral feedback during practical assessments, informing students of what went well and where there is room for improvement. Some assignments, however, are not occupationally relevant and opportunities are not taken to assess students' key skills in the workplace. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory. Work-based learners on hairdressing programmes make slow progress and their assessment is unsatisfactory. Some learners, who have been in learning for up to a year, have not completed any NVQ units. Some work-based learners do not collect or record evidence of the training that they receive whilst working and there is poor co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. Employers are not always involved in the review and action planning process.

105. Students' numeracy and literacy needs are assessed when they start their course and good support is put in place for those who need it. Hairdressing students are not placed on courses at the correct level. All students aged 16 to 18 are enrolled on level 1 hairdressing courses without regard to the outcomes of their initial assessment and their GCSE results. Tutorial arrangements, progress monitoring reviews and action plans are ineffective. Targets and action plans are too general and do not set clear timescales for completion of tasks. Full-time students do not receive copies of their progress reviews.

Leadership and management

106. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, retention and pass rates have risen on many courses. Teachers contribute to self-assessment and are fully involved in setting targets for bringing about improvement. Satisfactory attention is paid to equality of opportunity. There are good links with local employers who employ work-based learners but the management of work-based learning is unsatisfactory. Work-based learning and assessment are poorly planned and learners make slow progress. Managers have not been effective in identifying weaknesses and taking appropriate actions to bring about improvement.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- high or outstanding pass rates on all care and childcare courses
- much good teaching and learning
- very good work placements
- good support for study and learning
- good course management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates for key skills
- poor feedback to students.

Scope of provision

107. The college provides a good range of full-time, part-time and work-based courses in health and social care and childcare. Courses include those leading to the Council for Awards in Childcare and Education (CACHE) qualifications at foundation, certificate and diploma levels. NVQs at levels 1 and 2 are offered in both childcare and social care. Part-time courses in basic counselling and pre-school practice are also available, some of which are taught at community-based centres.

Achievement and standards

108. Pass rates on all care courses are outstanding. With one exception, the pass rate on all care and childcare courses was 100% in 2003. In previous years, pass rates have risen steadily or been maintained at 100%. All students who complete their course of study achieve additional qualifications in first aid, sign language and manual handling. The pass rates for key skill qualifications are low and the pass rate for application of number was particularly low, at 25%, in 2004. Pass rates for work-based NVQs are satisfactory. Retention rates on all courses are either at or above national averages.

109. Many students make good progress in their lessons. In a few lessons, students reach standards that exceed expectations for the level of their course. The standard of the work produced by students is high and in some cases outstanding. Written work is neatly presented, often illustrated with colourful graphs and diagrams and demonstrates a good understanding of both the practice and theory of care.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in basic counselling	1	No. of starts	54	85	54
		% retention	87	95	86
		% pass rate	100	96	95
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	20	15	15
		% retention	60	80	80
		% pass rate	100	100	100
AVCE health and social care	3	No. of starts	19	19	19
		% retention	74	57	59
		% pass rate	69	89	100
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	10	28	22
		% retention	100	39	50
		% pass rate	100	100	100
Diploma in pre-school practice	3	No. of starts	29	34	53
		% retention	86	97	94
		% pass rate	64	100	100

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

Quality of education and training

110. Teaching and learning are good in most lessons. Most teachers use a wide range of teaching techniques to gain students' interest. Students are inspired and motivated, particularly in lessons where interactive technology is used. Schemes of work and related lesson plans are good, and in some cases exceptionally good. In most lessons, students take part in a range of activities including role play, discussions and debates and practical activities, such as making toys suitable for babies and children. Good use is made of video film, photographs and the latest research materials to enliven lessons. Teachers explain the aims and objectives of lessons clearly and are careful to ensure that students understand and make appropriate progress during lessons. Teaching is paced to make demands on students, but sufficient time is always allowed to ensure all students have achieved the learning objectives.

111. The college has developed effective links with employers. All students spend time in a range of work placements, which are appropriate to their course of study. They are well prepared for the work placements. Communication between employers, students and the college is good. Students are visited regularly by teachers during their placements and their progress is carefully reviewed.

112. Students on care courses benefit from dedicated teaching rooms and their work is displayed to provide a stimulating learning environment. Rooms are well equipped with a good supply of up-to-date journals and publications. There is a good range of teaching and learning aids which are well used by both students and teachers.

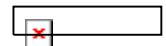
113. Students are well supported. Thorough initial assessment ensures that students are enrolled on courses at the correct level and their additional support needs are identified. Classroom support for students with dyslexia or other barriers to learning is good. The progress of all students is reviewed regularly at team meetings and risk assessments carried out. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are carefully monitored and effective action taken to bring about improvement when problems are detected. Self-esteem, confidence, communication skills and team working are all encouraged.

114. Students' work is carefully assessed, but the written feedback students receive is not always sufficiently detailed. Comments made by teachers on students' written work do not always clearly state what is expected of the student and how they could improve. Individual learning plans do not set clear and achievable targets to help students manage their learning and target dates for the completion of actions are not recorded.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management are good. Managers are effective in identifying areas for improvement and have brought about significant rises in retention and pass rates. They have developed a clear marketing strategy and identified the specific training needs of the local communities the college serves. A local network of employers and training providers work together well to co-ordinate the range of provision for the area. Teachers work together well as a team and share good practice. They have developed creative schemes of work and lesson plans, which take into account students' learning styles, make use of the new investment in interactive technology and focus on the individual learning needs of students. The teaching of key skills has been improved through investment in training for teachers, the purchase of vocationally relevant teaching aids and the use of assignments integrated with the curriculum.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on performing arts, media and art foundation courses

- high attainment on textiles, fashion and media courses

- stimulating teaching in art and design

- innovative range of provision responsive to the local community.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some art, design and media courses

- low attendance and lack of punctuality in several lessons

- insufficient sharing of good teaching practice.

Scope of provision

116. The school of creative studies offers full-time vocational and academic courses in art and design, performing arts and music at the Langley site and media and film subjects at the Windsor site. The Raj Academy which is in partnership with the college offers courses at levels 2 and 3 in Indian music at various centres across the area. At the time of inspection, there were 381 students aged 16 to 18 and 534 adult students. Over 70% of adults were studying in community lessons that include stitched textiles, machine embroidery, jewellery, interior design and fashion.

Achievement and standards

117. Pass rates are high on performing arts, media and art foundation courses. Retention rates are low on some courses. In AS-level media studies, the pass rate has been 100%, 95% and 100% over the past three years, but the retention rate remains below the national average. The pass rate on the diploma in foundation studies has been 100% for the past two years. The retention rate for the GNVQ intermediate art and design has fallen to 55%, significantly below the national average. In academic subjects, such as AS-level and GCE A2 media studies and art and design, students generally make good progress in relation to their entry qualification. Progression to HE is good. There is high attainment in media, fashion and textiles. Students demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of concepts and skills. In several lessons attendance is low and students are late to lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate art and design	2	No. of starts	31	22	20
		% retention	81	68	55
		% pass rate	60	100	73
AS-level media studies	3	No. of starts	35	33	37
		% retention	57	67	76
		% pass rate	100	95	100
GCE A2 art and design	3	No. of starts	48	22	29
		% retention	77	73	93
		% pass rate	92	94	93
AS-level film/video	3	No. of starts	37	16	24
		% retention	78	81	83
		% pass rate	90	100	85

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

Quality of education and training

118. Teaching is good in art and design and in some performing arts lessons and overall it is satisfactory. There is some stimulating teaching in art and design with well-planned lessons and relevant activities. In a textiles lesson, students used dyes and shoe polish with heat expanding paint to create exciting textured panels. In a merchandising lesson, students were set innovative display tasks using a wide variety of specialist products. There is some very good teaching in performing

arts, particularly in audition preparation, but there is a lack of insistence on vocational standards and industry practice. In some practical lessons, students are inappropriately dressed for the learning activities and some students are poorly prepared for voice classes. Good teaching practice is not always shared.

119. Resources are satisfactory. There is good access to ILT, including interactive whiteboards, and the facilities and equipment are used well by both staff and students. There is some cramped accommodation in art and design with little storage space for drying work. The refurbished teaching and performance area is excellent and the dance studio is satisfactory. Music facilities are restricted and in some cases unsuitable for specific learning activities. Media facilities at the Windsor site are basic. Teachers are mainly well qualified with some who have come to teaching from relevant industries. However, some teachers are inexperienced and find managing large groups difficult.

120. Assessment is satisfactory. Initial assessment produces detailed records of students' preferred learning styles and specific needs. Tutors make appropriate use of this information. There is good verbal feedback in lessons, and most groups also receive appropriate written feedback from their tutors. Some assessment criteria are vague, but overall students know what is required to achieve specific grades. Students are aware of the appeals procedures if they disagree with assessment outcomes. Where appropriate, work is marked and returned swiftly with helpful commentary. External verifiers and moderators confirm that national standards of work and assessment are reached.

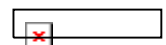
121. The wide range of provision is responsive to the needs of the local community, with most subjects available at levels 2 and 3. Lessons at levels 2 and 3 are sympathetically time-tabled, noting the needs and preferences of students. The partnership with the Raj Academy is innovative and very responsive to the local community. The late start times of lessons (from 17:00 onwards) recognises the demands of students who work and have families. Students are able to extend their period of study for national diplomas over three years rather than the usual two years. The composition of lessons is wholly inclusive with an exciting mix of students from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

122. Students are well supported. Learning needs are identified at initial assessment and support is often provided in the classroom in a sensitive way and with good liaison between tutors and support staff. For example, a support tutor can amend curriculum tutors' instructions into appropriate terms for students who may have shorter attention spans. Class profiles list each student with a photograph, their preferred learning style and brief academic history. Students have good relationships with their tutors and recognise the support available to them though not all take advantage of the suggested assistance. Tutors know their students well and are sensitive to their different needs.

Leadership and management

123. Curriculum management is satisfactory. There are new managers in post and a clear focus on improvement. Staff morale is good. There is effective communication and teachers feel well supported. Most professional development is done in-house and teachers are encouraged to attend courses run by awarding bodies. However, there is insufficient sharing of the good practice demonstrated in some outstanding lessons. The self-assessment report is accurate, but the suggested grade is overgenerous.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for the majority of subjects in 2004

- good teaching and learning

- effective use of ILT resources

- good partnerships with local schools

- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- poor target setting in one-to-one subject tutorials

- lack of subject-related displays in classrooms and corridors.

Scope of provision

124. The college offers AS-level and GCE A2 geography, government and politics, law, philosophy, psychology, history, and sociology. AS-level and GCE A2 law, psychology and sociology are available in the daytime and evening. There are partnerships with local schools and a number of school pupils attend humanities lessons at the college. Humanities and social science subjects are also offered as part of the access to HE course which is run at the Maidenhead site. This course is available either part time or full time.

Achievement and standards

125. Retention and pass rates are high and rising for many courses and are mostly above the national averages. In AS-level sociology, the retention rate is 15% above the national average and the pass rate is 12% above the national average. However, pass rates in AS-level psychology are rising only slowly and are significantly below the national average.

126. The standard of students' work is high. Students engage in good discussions confidently using subject terminology after only a few weeks of study. In one AS-level philosophy lesson, a group of students were recapping the ideas discussed by Voltaire in his 1st and 2nd meditations. Students were clearly enthused by philosophical ideas and beginning to use argument effectively. Other lessons show good achievement of key skills in communication with many students confidently using computer-based and other forms of presentation.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
AS-level law	3	No. of starts	48	65	63
		% retention	71	88	90
		% pass rate	59	51	77
GCE A2 law	3	No. of starts	44	26	36
		% retention	80	77	86
		% pass rate	80	95	87
AS-level psychology	3	No. of starts	86	59	68
		% retention	77	81	84
		% pass rate	48	54	56
GCE A2 psychology	3	No. of starts	15	42	19
		% retention	100	60	89
		% pass rate	73	80	94
AS-level sociology	3	No. of starts	29	62	47
		% retention	76	84	94
		% pass rate	100	94	91
GCE A2 sociology	3	No. of starts	15	32	47
		% retention	87	84	89
		% pass rate	92	93	100

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

Quality of education and training

127. Considerable progress has been made in improving teaching and learning in humanities since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned and there are well prepared resources such as presentations, handouts and worksheets which take account of students differing abilities. ILT is used effectively with both staff and students using the electronic whiteboards for presentation, research and dissemination. However, the intranet for this curriculum area remains undeveloped. In the week of inspection, students were revising for and taking examinations. Lessons were particularly well planned to support this. In an AS-level sociology revision lesson, students confidently presented different research methods to the rest of the group. In an AS-level psychology lesson, students were engaged in a task to inform their peers about different perceptions of abnormality. They worked quickly and effectively to extract information from books and represent this in an illustrated leaflet. In all lessons, students are enthusiastic about their chosen subjects and fully involved in relevant activities. Teachers provide additional support or extension tasks to ensure that all students' needs are met. Regular, individual tutorials give students the opportunity to review predicted grades and set new targets and actions. However, targets are not specific enough to motivate students fully and to help them to improve their performance. Some grades proposed by students are unrealistic.

128. Assessment of students' work is satisfactory and grades awarded are accurate. Most feedback to students is detailed and gives clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. In a few cases, comments are too brief and insufficiently detailed to help students to improve.

129. Teachers are generally well qualified and have good subject knowledge. All classrooms are equipped with electronic whiteboards and other ILT equipment. Teachers have been trained to use

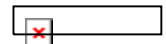
this equipment and are beginning to make effective use of it. Some new books have been added to the humanities stock in the learning centre, but many of the books are out of date and little used. There is, however, a good range of subject-related journals. There are good opportunities for enrichment activities. Law students visit the Old Bailey and politics students take part in a local version of 'Question Time' attended by a local MP. Students also attend subject conferences.

130. The partnership between the college and local schools is effective. In addition to the school pupils who attend lessons at the college, some teachers from the college teach at one of the schools providing valuable sixth form expertise. Students who attend lessons at the college speak enthusiastically of the nature of their advanced level studies and appreciate the two different environments they work in.

Leadership and management

131. Leadership and management of humanities are good. Since the last inspection, retention and pass rates have risen. Teachers regularly attend training sessions which cover appropriate topics such as the use of ILT and approaches to meeting individual learning needs. The standard of teaching and learning has risen. Staff appraisal and the lesson observation scheme are effective. Teachers have a firm grasp of the principles of continuous improvement and keep programme logs, which culminate in a rigorous review of the course for the year. Helpful and effective action plans are produced following the review. There is good attention to equal opportunities by both college staff and students. Students feel safe, fairly treated and well supported. Communication is particularly effective. Teachers feel that their personal needs in relation to their professional responsibilities are understood and met.

English, languages and communication



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in GCSE, AS-level and GCE A2 examinations in 2004

- well-planned courses and lessons

- much good teaching

- broad range of provision

- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- low attendance and lack of punctuality in some lessons
- undeveloped use of ICT to support the curriculum.

Scope of provision

132. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,651 students enrolled on a broad range of English, English as a foreign language and modern foreign language courses. GCSE English and AS levels and GCE A levels in both English language and English literature are offered. Some 228 students are following English courses. Three-quarters of these students are aged 16 to 18 and following full-time college courses, while the others are adults mostly studying part time. English as a foreign language courses leading to qualifications at all levels from basic to proficiency are offered on a part-time basis. There are 671 adult students enrolled on English as a foreign language courses. Certificated courses from beginners to advanced level, including GCSE, AS level and GCE A level, are offered in French, Spanish and Italian. The college also offers courses leading to qualifications in German, Portuguese, Japanese and Arabic. There are 752 students enrolled on modern foreign language courses. Apart from 20 full-time students aged 16 to 18 studying AS-level or GCE A-level French, or ABC Spanish as part of a travel and tourism programme, all these students are adults and studying part time.

Achievement and standards

133. Retention rates on nearly all courses are at or above the national averages. Pass rates are high on GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level courses. In 2004, the pass rate was 100% in AS-level English literature, AS-level and GCE A-level English language, GCE A-level French, GCE A-level Spanish, AS-level and GCE A-level Italian, GCSE Italian, and GCSE Spanish. Students on all the AS-level and GCE A-level English courses on average achieve higher grades than would have been expected on the basis of their GCSE grades. The pass rate for GCSE English rose significantly in 2004, with 63% of students achieving grades A* to C compared with the national average of 47%. The pass rates on the English as a foreign language courses are above the national averages. The pass rates in the ABC certificate in practical languages show some variations, with some above and some below the national averages.

134. In most lessons, students work well on their own, in pairs or in small groups. In English, students often make perceptive and thoughtful contributions to class discussion. Students on English as a foreign language and foreign language courses make good progress with their language skills. Written work is well presented and the standard is generally high. Attendance is low and students arrive late to some lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
ABC certificate in practical languages	1	No. of starts	347	481	238
		% retention	68	72	78
		% pass rate	78	72	66
ABC certificate in practical languages	2	No. of starts	163	195	60
		% retention	73	74	77

		% pass rate	84	66	63
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	139	118	146
		% retention	73	74	68
		% pass rate	49	43	63
Certificate in advanced English	2/3	No. of starts	62	59	57
		% retention	74	78	67
		% pass rate	54	65	61
AS-level English literature	3	No. of starts	48	43	28
		% retention	81	77	82
		% pass rate	90	100	100
GCE A2 English literature	3	No. of starts	37	32	23
		% retention	81	91	96
		% pass rate	90	100	95

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

Quality of education and training

135. Courses and lessons are exceptionally well planned. Schemes of work are appropriate and comprehensive, and lesson plans are detailed and include clear objectives. Most teaching is well managed and interesting. Tasks and activities make sufficient demands upon students and meet their needs. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subjects. There is good use of the target language in most foreign language lessons. Teachers make effective use of relevant handouts and other materials that aid teaching and learning. Some teachers make effective and imaginative use of the interactive whiteboards. In one Spanish lesson, the teacher introduced new vocabulary to the students and then helped them to practise the words and their pronunciation by projecting bright and realistic images on the screen. In another Spanish lesson, a projected clock with instantaneous time changes enabled the students to learn and practise telling the time in Spanish in an efficient and effective way. In an English lesson, one student typed in the output from group work, which the whole class discussed and amended before the final product was printed so that each student could be given a copy. Written work is marked thoroughly and returned promptly. Comments are encouraging and constructive, and help students to improve.

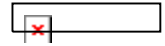
136. Teachers monitor students' progress effectively. Care is taken to ensure that the differing needs of individuals are met. Students receive very good support from their teachers. All students, both full time and part time, have individual progress reviews at least once a term. Students with dyslexia or restricted mobility receive appropriate help. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. The book stock in the various learning centres is adequate for English, French and Spanish literature, but limited for other languages. There are good collections of graded readers for English as a foreign language, and audio-packs for English as a foreign language and languages. The use of ICT to support the curriculum is undeveloped, although students have good access to computers and the Internet. There are no learning materials on the college's intranet for students, and many teachers are not yet exploiting the full potential of the interactive whiteboards. There is a serviceable language laboratory on each of the college's main sites. Classrooms are well equipped and adequate or better on all sites.

Leadership and management

137. The provision is well managed. Courses are well organised. There is good communication through regular meetings and e-mail. Teachers feel valued and supported. There is good support for staff development and teachers regularly attend training events. Classroom observations of teaching take place regularly, and the outcomes feed into the staff appraisal process. College policies and

procedures have been implemented effectively. Targets have been set for recruitment, retention and pass rates, and teachers are aware of these. Courses are reviewed annually, and action plans are produced. Course reviews form the basis of the annual self-assessment, in which all members of staff are involved. Action plans are effectively monitored, and have resulted in significant improvements in the quality of the provision.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses

- very effective innovative curriculum to promote learning

- much good teaching and learning

- excellent course for students with Asperger's syndrome.

Weaknesses

- insufficient suitable resources for some students

- insufficient recognition of progress made

- unsatisfactory management of quality assurance.

Scope of provision

138. At the time of inspection, there were 177 full-time students with a broad range of learning difficulties, including moderate and severe difficulties. Some courses have changed over the past three years to ensure that the college reflects the national curriculum requirements and to meet students' needs. General foundation entry level courses are offered at the Langley site. Discrete courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are offered in Windsor, Maidenhead and Langley. A specialist course is offered at Windsor for students with autistic spectrum disorders

such as Asperger's syndrome. Students can attend either full time or part time at any of the three main college sites and in 22 day centres in Slough, Windsor, Maidenhead, Uxbridge and in the London borough of Brent. At the time of inspection, there were 432 part-time students attending day centres. Attendance is maintained throughout the year through the provision of a summer school.

Achievement and standards

139. Retention and pass rates are high for most courses. Of the 1,785 students who took part in the towards independence course in the past three years, over 90% achieved a qualification. The retention rate for the life skills initial training for employment course was 100% in 2004 and 89% achieved a qualification, significantly above the national average. The retention rate for the National Open College Network qualification at entry level is 88%, but the number students achieving a qualification is below the national average.

140. The majority of students' work is of a high standard. Most students are highly motivated and contribute frequently to designing courses by suggesting new projects to work on. Students make mature responses in lessons and behave appropriately.

Quality of education and training

141. Teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons. Comprehensive planning is used to manage a wide range of differentiated learning outcomes. Teachers have a high, but realistic expectation of success when teaching and assessing oral communication. Teachers focus on improving students' levels of concentration and raising students' levels of effort. There are frequent and appropriate changes in activity. Good teaching strategies are used to advocate and develop peer appraisal and self-appraisal. The interactions with students with autistic spectrum disorder are good; teachers closely match their teaching to students' individual needs. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not adequately plan to meet the needs of individual learners. Learning materials do not always reflect the different ability levels of students. Teachers do not make effective use of questioning to evaluate learning and there is less emphasis on developing personal, social and behavioural skills. The promotion of self-advocacy is not evident and teachers often give answers to questions before students have time to consider their own responses.

142. There is too little storage in some classrooms for students' personal belongings. Insufficient specialist equipment is available to meet some students' needs. In teaching kitchens, there are too few specialised aids to help students with sight impairment or blindness. In some venues, the cookers and tables are too high and unsuitable for students using wheelchairs. Not all classrooms have a loop system for students with hearing aids and personal tape recorders do not replace written text for poor/non readers or visually impaired students. Work sheets are often produced with little consideration for individual students. There are too few computers in some classrooms.

143. Students are assessed at the start of their course to determine their levels of numeracy, literacy and communication and how much they need to develop their personal, social, and academic skills. The results are used to set appropriate long-term and short-term goals. Target setting to meet these goals is poor. Reviews of progress take place infrequently. Systems for monitoring and tracking individual learning targets and incremental goals are unsatisfactory and students' progress is poorly recorded. Students with autistic spectrum disorder make good progress in developing their communication skills.

144. There is a very innovative curriculum. The majority of students take part in stimulating lessons to extend their learning. The activities are socially inclusive and often reflect and respond to worldwide and national issues. They are carefully designed to build on and develop previously learned skills in a new and demanding way. Lessons often focus on developing good work ethics and raising awareness of multicultural societies. As a result they effectively broaden the range and standards of students' work. Much work is focused on the theme of 'learning to give'. Students make very professional calendars using complex IT skills, digital photography and professional publishing software. Students learn about current international affairs and relate these to the lives of local people and their economy.

145. The course for students with Asperger's syndrome is excellent and is nationally recognised by the National Autistic Society. It is well managed and well taught by experienced teachers. Students progress well into work, FE or HE. One student progressed to reading mathematics at university. External agencies help to support students in day-to-day life. A students' rock band and choir have members from other courses in the college.

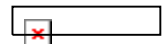
146. Support for students is satisfactory. All full-time students receive both group and individual tutorials. Students receive effective support on personal issues and when undertaking new experiences in the community and on residential visits. Teaching support staff work effectively with teachers.

Leadership and management

147. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers receive good training and development, in particular on equal opportunities and diversity. Teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection. Courses are well managed. The management style is supportive and teachers have time allocated to identify appropriate curriculum and accreditation for their students.

148. Quality assurance procedures are unsatisfactory. The time tabling of internal verification activities is poor. Course reviews are inadequate and specialist teachers and other members of staff take little part in self-assessment.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- very high retention and pass rates

- outstanding teaching and learning

- highly effective initial and diagnostic assessment of students' learning needs

- excellent quality assurance of programmes

- very good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- some poor accommodation at one venue.

Scope of provision

149. Over 1,460 students have enrolled on ESOL courses since September 2004. Students join courses throughout the year and usually attend between one and three lessons a week. Opportunities for students to sample courses are offered during the summer. Vocational courses for ESOL students are offered in construction, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. The health and social care curriculum area provides a short taster course. The college has recently started to offer citizenship. All students agree learning goals at the start of their programme and work towards nationally recognised qualifications from entry level to level 2.

Achievement and standards

150. Retention and pass rates are very high. The retention rate has risen to 93% on entry level courses and 90% on level 1 courses. Both are well above the national averages. Pass rates for Pitman qualifications are significantly above the national averages.

151. Students are exceptionally well motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. They make very good progress and are very confident in carrying out tasks involving literacy. For example, they are able to help their children with homework, read manuals at work and understand weights and measures. Students significantly improve their pronunciation, grammar accuracy and command of vocabulary. Most students are able to communicate in English in situations critical to their economic and social well being. Attendance is very high.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Pre-entry (college certification)	pre-entry	No. of starts	*	607	618
		% retention	*	83	81
		% pass rate	*	96	84
Pitmans basic ESOL	entry	No. of starts	*	1,619	916
		% retention	*	93	91
		% pass rate	*	98	88
Pitmans ESOL	1	No. of starts	*	61	140
		% retention	*	77	90
		% pass rate	*	89	91
Pitmans	1	No. of starts	145	535	338
		% retention	47	76	81
		% pass rate	28	93	91

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

* course not running

Quality of education and training

152. Teaching and learning are very good with some outstanding lessons. Planning takes account of

each student's needs and learning style. Teaching is lively and stimulating and makes demands upon students. Teachers competently develop students' skills in the context of topics that are relevant to their everyday lives. They provide clear explanations or adapt their teaching methods to ensure all students fully understand. In a food hygiene lesson with entry-level students, the teacher successfully introduced complex technical language to learners. Students successfully used this language to demonstrate the correct storage of food in a refrigerator.

153. Resources are good and include interactive whiteboards, computers, journals, magazines and audio and visual resources. Students make good use of the Internet for independent learning. High-quality learning materials are available at all sites and are well used. Teachers are suitably qualified and have appropriate experience. The staff induction process is very good and includes mentoring and joint teaching with an experienced teacher. Opportunities for staff development are good and most teachers have taken part in ESOL curriculum training. Teaching accommodation is generally satisfactory, but at one community venue classrooms are too small for the size of the groups and there is no canteen facility. All venues have space for teachers to carry out confidential interviews with their students.

154. Initial and diagnostic assessment of students' learning needs are excellent. Outcomes are particularly well used for planning lessons and setting targets on individual learning plans. The targets set are clear, specific and effectively support the continuing development of skills. Individual learning plans are constantly used and updated. Students are well aware of their individual targets and what is needed to improve their skills. They receive detailed and accurate feedback on their progress towards their learning goals. An assignment project completed at the end of each module encourages independent learning and consolidates work covered in lessons. Teachers mark homework thoroughly. Internal verification procedures are comprehensive.

155. Opportunities for progression into mainstream and vocational courses are very good. Students have progressed to the national certificate in health studies, plumbing at foundation level and electrical installation, bilingual classroom teaching assistant and computing courses. Managers work in collaboration with external organisations, community groups and employers to identify significant groups of potential students when setting up new courses. Many programmes are located in areas of high deprivation and course venues and timetables are planned to meet local needs. Advice and guidance are very good for students joining ESOL programmes.

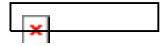
156. Support for students is very good. Students have access to a wide range of academic, personal and learning support. During tutorials, students assess their progress against their learning goals. Teachers have very good local knowledge and use this to provide students with effective personal support. Monitoring of students' attendance is a high priority for teachers and students considering leaving the college have been supported to continue their courses.

Leadership and management

157. Leadership and management are excellent. A clear strategy for developing and improving ESOL has been set and managers and members of staff have worked very well as a team to achieve this. Communication is particularly good with regular, well-documented team meetings. The management and use of data are effective and regular discussions on targets and data take place in team meetings. Quality assurance is exceptionally good. Outcomes from classroom observations have led to improvements in teaching and learning. Good practice is effectively shared through meetings and workshops. Self-assessment is thorough and involves all members of staff and there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

158. Promotion of equality of opportunity is very good. Lessons promote cultural awareness and planning of courses takes account of students' cultural and religious backgrounds. All full-time teachers and some part-time tutors have received suitable training in equality of opportunities and dealing with students with disabilities.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates

- good teaching and learning

- high level of individual support for students

- effective development of the curriculum to widen participation.

Weaknesses

- some poor resources

- ineffective use of study support staff in a few lessons.

Scope of provision

159. The college offers literacy and numeracy courses in a wide variety of locations. Part-time courses are available in community venues and in a number of workplaces. Courses are also offered to students at hostels and in conjunction with the probation service. Several courses enable students to improve their literacy skills using IT or in their vocational context. Courses are offered to students with specific learning difficulties. Learning support is provided for students in vocational lessons and many students attend individual learning support sessions. There are 1,435 students on discrete courses and approximately 1,500 students receiving support on other courses.

Achievement and standards

160. Students make good progress. Retention and pass rates are high on accredited literacy and numeracy courses. In 2004, retention and pass rates on discrete literacy courses were 79% and 99%, respectively, while on numeracy courses they were 79% and 89%.

161. Systems for monitoring attendance are rigorous. Students' coursework is of a high standard and well presented.

162. Progression by many students is good. In 2004, of the 532 students who completed their course and achieved their qualification, 33% progressed to a higher course within life skills, 6% progressed to employment and 22% went on to a vocational or GCSE programme. Of the 50 students who completed their pre-construction course, 33 progressed to level 2 construction courses.

Quality of education and training

163. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and take account of students' individual needs. Learning materials and activities are designed to cater for different ability levels, learning styles and learning difficulties. Clear aims and objectives are explained to students at the start of all lessons. Teachers create a supportive atmosphere and students take a full part in lessons. Good use is made of ILT. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively. The Internet is used to support learning. Learning materials are good. In one numeracy lesson, students used a series of 'follow-me' cards which required them to pose questions and select responses from a selection printed on cards. Students were enthusiastic and all took part. In a literacy lesson, which used common ailments as a theme, the teacher used the packaging from a range of everyday medicines to make the lesson realistic.

164. There is a wide range of resources. All main sites have learning support centres for individual learning and good resources available for teachers and students. Most classrooms are equipped with suitable teaching aids, resources and furniture. A few classrooms are poorly decorated and few examples of students' work are displayed. At one site, the classroom is too cramped for students to undertake activities. Teaching accommodation at a local hostel is too small and there are insufficient learning resources. Literacy and numeracy teachers are suitably qualified and experienced in working with a wide range of students with learning needs, in a variety of settings. All teachers have completed core curriculum training and five are working towards level 4 qualifications in literacy and/or numeracy.

165. Students' individual literacy and/or numeracy needs identified by initial assessment form the basis of individual learning plans that set long-term and short-term targets. Students' progress is reviewed frequently, often at the end of each lesson. Teachers regularly assess students' progress against their qualification aim and negotiate modifications to learning plans.

166. Individual support for students on discrete courses is good. Many students have a range of complex, learning difficulties which may act as barriers to learning. Teachers often modify or design learning materials to cater for students' specific individual needs. Good use is made of classroom assistants and volunteers in some lessons.

167. Additional learning support is offered to a large number of students on college courses. Many key skills lessons have a learning support tutor to help students whose additional literacy and/or numeracy needs have been identified. Diagnosis of individual learning needs and recording of their progress is often good. However, in some lessons, there is insufficient communication between the learning support tutor and the teacher so that the support is inadequately linked to the topics being covered.

168. The curriculum has been suitably developed to encourage widening participation and as a result there has been a 40% growth in provision since the last inspection. The development of courses and choice of venues are responsive to local needs. An effective marketing and development plan currently focuses on reaching young mothers with school age children, those in employment wishing to upgrade their literacy and numeracy skills and people returning to study. New publicity materials have been produced and information has appeared in local newspapers and on local radio.

Leadership and management

169. Leadership and management are good. Quality assurance is effective with two senior lecturers responsible for the quality assurance of additional learning support and literacy and numeracy.

Commitment to staff development is strong. Both senior lecturers have completed the skills for life leadership and management initiative and the head of school is a skills for life facilitator. Another member of the school has been appointed to a local basic skills unit to work on the development and teaching of level 3 and 4 qualifications. An extensive coaching and monitoring programme supports the largely new teaching team. Team meetings are regular and there is valuable sharing of good practice. Commitment to equality of opportunity is strong.

Part D: College data

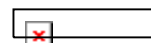
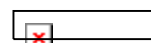


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2004/05



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	27	59
2	28	15
3	35	12
4/5	0	1
Other	10	13
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2004/05



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	424	516	6
Land-based provision	1	138	1
Construction	293	642	6
Engineering, technology and manufacture	281	303	4
Business administration, management and professional	324	728	7
Information and communication technology	422	1,384	11
Retailing, customer service and transportation	64	174	1
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	402	1,849	14

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	152	405	3
Health, social care and public services	124	427	3
Visual and performing arts and media	381	534	6
Humanities	278	112	2
English, languages and communication	227	894	7
Foundation programmes	875	3,758	29
Total	4,248	11,864	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
		1	Starters excluding transfers	485	322	863	3,606
	Retention rate %	70	76	81	78	73	81
	National average %	75	76	76	70	71	71
	Pass rate %	45	61	64	50	72	82
	National average %	67	69	73	68	70	77
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,010	1,239	1,213	1,566	2,361	2,358
	Retention rate %	71	75	77	74	63	73
	National average %	70	71	71	68	68	67
	Pass rate %	56	71	66	54	74	73
	National average %	68	70	73	67	71	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	1,872	1,571	1,452	1,497	1,288	1,294
	Retention rate %	70	74	75	72	73	74
	National average %	70	77	77	68	70	69
	Pass rate %	71	75	77	50	70	71
	National average %	75	77	80	68	71	74
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	172	166	98
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	68	87	84

	National average %	**	**	**	67	68	69
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	65	60	78
	National average %	**	**	**	54	54	58

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

2. College rates for 2000 to 2003: College ISR.

3. Revised college ILR data, summer 2004

* numbers too low to provide a valid calculation

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)	71	26	3	37
Level 2 (intermediate)	50	45	5	56
Level 1 (foundation)	68	27	5	98
Other sessions	74	20	6	39
Totals	66	30	4	230

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