



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



West Nottinghamshire College

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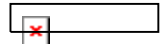
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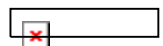
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Basic information about the college

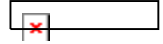


Name of college:	West Nottinghamshire College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Di McEvoy-Robinson
Address of college:	Derby Road Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG18 5BH
Telephone number:	01623 627 191
Fax number:	01623 623 063
Chair of governors:	Jean Hardy
Unique reference number:	130777
Name of reporting inspector:	Vivien Shipley HMI
Dates of inspection:	17-21 January 2005

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

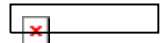


West Nottinghamshire College is a large general further education (FE) college formed in the 1970s from a technical college and a college of arts. It has two main campuses in Mansfield and over 70 centres in the local community. It serves the districts of Mansfield and Ashfield and the M1 corridor linking Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, with a population of around 300,000. The decline of the traditional economic base in North Nottinghamshire, coupled with the decline of the manufacturing sector generally, has created a range of economic, social and environmental issues. Over 60% of students at the college are from disadvantaged backgrounds and some of the most deprived wards in the United Kingdom.

The college has grown substantially over the last three years. In 2003/04, there were approximately 21,500 students, of whom 2,200 were full time. Some 35% of students study at pre-entry and level 1, 30% at level 2 and 33% at level 3. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups, at 4%, is greater than in the local population. Over 600 students aged 14 to 16 and approximately 200 aged 16 to 18 from local schools attend the college. Courses in 12 of the 14 Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) areas of learning are offered from pre-entry level to level 4. The college has Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for engineering and is a partner in a construction CoVE and a care CoVE.

The college's vision is 'together we can invent the future for learning' and its mission is to have 'learners at the heart of excellence'.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged teaching and learning and students' achievements to be outstanding in one curriculum area, good in four and satisfactory in three. Work-based learning was judged to be satisfactory in two curriculum areas and unsatisfactory in two. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- outstanding provision in health, social care and public services

- outstanding approach to inclusion

- very effective collaboration with a wide range of agencies and employers to widen participation

- high pass rates

- very good staff development

- very good specialist accommodation and learning resources

- good support for students

- strong leadership, setting a clear strategic direction

- very good governance

- strong financial management.

What should be improved

- work-based learning in engineering and business administration

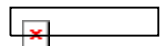
- achievement of key skills qualifications

- the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning

- retention rates on level 3 courses.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Retention rates are high on level 1 courses. Progress towards achieving apprenticeship frameworks is slow and pass rates on electrical installation courses are low. Most lessons are well planned, but learning is not always checked adequately. Links with employers are effective and a wide range of provision meets local needs.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Good. The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . Rates of retention and achievement of apprenticeship frameworks are low. Pass rates were high on many courses in 2004, but retention rates on vehicle engineering and fabrication and welding courses are low. Teaching and learning are good and physical resources in the CoVE are excellent. A wide range of provision meets the needs of students and employers.
Business administration, management and professional	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . Pass rates were high on many courses in 2004, but rates of retention and achievement of apprenticeship frameworks are low. Students develop good personal and practical business skills, but key skills are underdeveloped. Accommodation and computing facilities are very good. Much teaching is unimaginative and does not adequately meet the needs of students.
Information and communications technology	Good. Pass rates in 2004 were high. Teaching is particularly good on information technology (IT) user courses. Students receive good support and resources are very good. The development of students' skills in the workplace is poor and key skills provision is inadequate. There is insufficient sharing of good practice.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good. The contributory grade for work-based learning is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are good and pass rates are high on most courses. Retention rates on some courses are low. Links with the community are effective in extending the range of opportunities available to students. The organisation of work-based learning has improved, but progress towards achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is poor.
Health, social care and public services	Outstanding. Retention and pass rates are very high on most courses. The retention rate is low on the first diploma in public services course. Teaching is very good. Students are very well supported and liaison with employers is effective in ensuring the area is responsive to the needs of the community. Leadership and management are strong.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high, but retention rates are low on many level 3 courses. The development of technical skills in practical lessons is good. Key skills are poorly developed in art and design and some teaching is insufficiently challenging. Innovative projects are developed through effective partnerships. Management of some areas of the curriculum is poor.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Pass rates on national tests in literacy and numeracy and on general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) English are high.

	Enrolments and pass rates on key skills courses have declined over the past three years. Teaching is well planned and a good range of courses at community venues and in the workplace are attracting new students. The use of individual learning plans to set targets and monitor students' progress is poor.
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How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are good. Governance and strategic management are very good. Most retention and pass rates have risen to above the national averages for similar colleges. The college serves its community very well and works hard to raise the aspirations of students. Employer engagement is excellent. Staff development is very good, well managed and clearly linked to the college's strategic priorities. Quality assurance arrangements are good. Students and stakeholders speak highly of the services the college provides. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively. Curriculum management is clearly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and raising retention and pass rates. The management of work-based learning is satisfactory, but there is low achievement of apprenticeship frameworks. Key skills pass rates are low. Financial management is strong and the college provides very good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

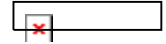
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. The college actively promotes equality and diversity. There has been substantial growth in the number of students over the past three years and increasing numbers are retained and achieve their qualifications. A large proportion of students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Courses are offered at a large number of outreach centres for adults who would otherwise not participate in education. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and appropriate action is taken to fulfil the statutory duties of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. The college has very successful links with key partners and employers, and makes a significant contribution to initiatives designed to raise aspirations and improve economic well being in the local area and across the region.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Guidance and support for students are good. A comprehensive range of well-designed books and leaflets contains detailed information about the college, the services provided for students and the courses offered. Initial advice and guidance are good and students' individual needs are identified. Effective liaison with schools and a well-organised induction programme help students to settle quickly into college. A team of specialist personal advisors provides very good tutorial support. Specialist support is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for students with basic skills needs. The numbers of students receiving support for literacy and numeracy are low, and declining numbers of students pass key skills qualifications. Monitoring and analysis of attendance are underdeveloped. Students receive good advice about preparation for, and

of the recent legislation on child protection.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- approachable and helpful staff

- being treated like an adult

- good support and guidance

- varied teaching methods

- well-maintained, friendly and relaxed environment

- good access to information and communications technology (ICT) facilities

- knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers.

What they feel could be improved

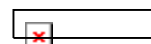
- high prices of food and queues in the students' diner

- the number of drinking water dispensers

- availability of car parking spaces

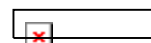
- o transport to college and between sites.

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

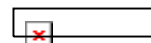


Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	62	32	6
19+ WBL*	80	19	1
Learning 16-18	58	38	4
19+ WBL*	79	20	1

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. Students work at, or above, the level required for their course of study. In a very few lessons

lessons which are part of work-based learning programmes work at, or above, the level expected. For example, adult students on business courses can apply business theory to practice, are knowledgeable about topical issues and can work to tight deadlines. Students on work-based programmes in sport develop good theoretical understanding of the impact of diet on performance which they apply in the workplace. In a small proportion of lessons, students show lower levels of attainment. Students in these lessons take too long to complete relatively simple tasks.

2. Students use computers with confidence to present information and ideas. Music students use computing software for composition and fashion students use information and learning technology (ILT) to present high-quality designs. First diploma in motor sports students use advanced features of software to present projects. The standard of students' key skills on courses in business, ICT and visual arts is not at an appropriate level for their main programme of study.

3. Attendance in lessons is above the average for similar colleges at 82% compared with 77% nationally. In two curriculum areas, ICT and health, social care and public services, attendance is high at 83% and, in literacy and numeracy, attendance is low at 74%.

4. In the following paragraphs on college achievements, the college rates are compared with general FE colleges in England in a disadvantaged area.

16 to 18 year olds

5. Retention rates on long courses are above the national averages at levels 1 and 2. The level 1 retention rate has risen significantly, from below national averages in 2001 to 4% above in 2003. Retention rates on level 2 courses have also risen from just below the national average in 2001 to 5% above in 2003 and this trend has continued at both levels in 2004. The retention rate at level 3 was around 5% below the national average for the three years to 2003, but rose by 6% in 2004 to just above the national average.

6. Pass rates are high for long courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. At level 1, the college has been in the top 10% of colleges in each of the three years to 2003. At levels 2 and 3, the college has been in the top 15% of colleges with pass rates which have been well above the national averages in each of the last three years.

7. Success rates, the proportion of enrolled students who achieve their qualification, have been high at levels 1 and 2 for the last three years. At both levels, the college has been in the top 15% of colleges for each year from 2001 to 2003. The success rate for courses at level 3 was close to the national average in each of the four years to 2003. In 2004, success rates at levels 1 and 3 rose, but at level 2 they were static.

8. The college achieves good results on short courses. Retention rates have risen and pass rates are consistently high.

9. Retention rates on advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) qualifications have been below the national averages for each of the last three years. Pass rates declined to below the national averages for similar general FE colleges in 2003.

Adult learners

10. Retention rates are satisfactory on long courses. At levels 1 and 2, retention rates have risen over three years to above the national averages. At level 3, the retention rate rose, but was still 3% below the national average in 2001 and 2003. Retention rates on higher level courses were significantly below the national averages in 2003.

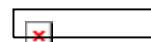
11. Pass rates are high and rising for all long courses at all levels. In 2003, pass rates at levels 1, 2 and 3 were in the top 10% of colleges. At levels 1 and 2, pass rates are significantly above the national averages. For higher level courses, pass rates rose over the three year period to 2003 and

were 10% above the national averages in 2003. In 2004, pass rates continued to rise at level 3, but fell slightly at levels 1 and 2.

12. Success rates are high at levels 1, 2 and 3. In 2003, the success rate at level 1 was in the top 10% and the level 2 rate was in the top 15% of similar colleges. The success rate at level 3 was 4% above the national average in 2003 and rose further in 2004. In 2003, the success rate for higher level courses declined to 4% below the national average.

13. Results are good on short courses. Retention rates are close to the national average. Pass rates were high in each of the three years to 2003, placing the college in the top 10% of similar colleges.

Quality of education and training



14. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 185 lessons. Teaching and learning were good or better in 69% of these, satisfactory in 27% and less than satisfactory in 4%. This profile matches very closely to the teaching and learning profile produced by the college's teaching observation scheme. The college has set up a team of learning consultants to promote excellence in teaching and learning. There has been an emphasis on increasing the use of IT to support learning. This is beginning to be effective in a number of curriculum areas. Overall, teaching is generally good with little unsatisfactory teaching, but also little outstanding teaching.

15. The best teaching is in health and social care and in hospitality, sports, leisure and travel with over 80% of lessons judged to be good or better and no lessons judged to be less than satisfactory. The percentage of good or better teaching, learning and attainment was much higher for adult students than for students aged 16 to 18. The only outstanding teaching observed was with students aged 16 to 18 and nearly all the teaching judged to be less than satisfactory was with students aged 16 to 18. The largest proportion of good or better teaching was at levels 2 and 3 with over 70% judged to be good or better. This is a substantial part of the college's provision. Over 70% of entry level teaching seen was also judged to be good or better. The weakest teaching observed was on level 1 courses with less than 60% judged to be good or better and over 8% less than satisfactory.

16. Most lessons are well planned. Lesson plans identify clear objectives, teaching methods and students' activities. A wide range of activities is used to maintain students' interest and to reinforce learning. In the better lessons, students' skills and knowledge are developed progressively and practical lessons build constructively on theoretical principles introduced earlier. Teachers make good use of students' work experience in, for example, health and social care and business lessons. Data projectors and electronic whiteboards are beginning to be used to good effect. Materials to support learning are often of a high quality. For example, students in construction workshops use high-quality handbooks with associated task sheets. In hospitality, sports and leisure, students make good use of computers to access a wide range of resources on the college intranet.

17. In some lessons teachers talk for too long, students are not challenged to use their skills to full potential nor involved in stimulating activities and their understanding is not checked regularly. Some teachers do not provide work matched suitably to the range of students' abilities. For example, in one business lesson, some students completed their task quickly and had to wait for slower students to finish their work. In a number of areas, such as ICT and visual and performing arts and media, the teaching of key skills is not successful. Links with the vocational curriculum are not sufficiently clear and students do not understand the relevance of some key skills activities. By contrast, in health and social care, the development of key skills is a core theme in most lessons.

18. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Approximately 84% of full-time staff and 79% of part-time staff hold relevant teaching qualifications. Many have recent vocational experience. Individual training needs are analysed as part of the annual appraisal process. New teachers are supported well through the college's mentoring programme. Many staff take regular opportunities to

update their specialist knowledge and skills through their links with industry.

19. Most accommodation is of a high standard, is very well maintained and has good access for students with mobility problems. Social and recreational areas are bright, welcoming and popular. Classrooms are accessible and well furnished. Good use is made of welcoming community venues for part-time adult outreach provision. Many vocational areas are well designed and equipped to reflect industry standards. Throughout the college, there are good displays of students' work. Significant investment has improved accommodation and resources for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Facilities in the new Foundation Studies Centre are very good. However, some old accommodation is still in use and a few lessons are taught in cramped and noisy rooms.

20. High-quality specialist equipment and physical resources are used effectively to support learning in many areas. CoVE engineering students use state-of-the-art injection moulding equipment and, in media, students develop good technical skills in digital recording technology. The CoVE for construction provides specialist workshop facilities for many craft areas and is also used by local employers to update their staff in gas installation and plumbing. The use of electronic teaching materials and interactive whiteboards is increasing. The strategy to develop discrete 'learning zones' in different parts of the college is proving successful in encouraging independent study and the use of the virtual learning environment, 'Learnwise'. Occasionally, there are difficulties with intranet connections and the use of ILT in off-site and community venues.

21. The library on the main site has a good range of books and up-to-date journals which are well used by students. Good links between learning resource centre staff and curriculum managers ensure that central resources are sufficient and relevant for all programmes.

22. Assessment is mostly good, although there is poor practice in some areas of work-based learning. Assignments are generally well designed. However, in business and construction, work-based assessment is poorly planned, a limited range of assessment methods is used and there is insufficient assessment in the workplace. Marking of the majority of assessed work is thorough and includes constructive feedback and points for improvement. In a minority of cases, spelling, grammar and punctuation errors are not corrected.

23. Internal verification and moderation are well managed and meet the requirements of awarding bodies. Reports from external verifiers are reviewed centrally by a quality manager who makes recommendations for improvements within programme areas. Good support for new teachers and assessors on assessment practice is provided during staff induction and through staff development. In health and social care, curriculum team leaders act as mentors to new staff.

24. Most students have a good understanding of how their work is assessed. Full-time students are provided with a course handbook which explains the assessment criteria. Work-based learners receive a learner file which includes their individual learning plan and records of how they are progressing. Full-time students and work-based learners receive formal reports on their progress which are copied to parents, employers and sponsors where appropriate. Most areas hold parents' evenings. Parents are also encouraged to make contact with their son's or daughter's personal tutor for feedback on progress.

25. A broad range of courses meets the diverse needs of students, employers and the community. There are good progression pathways for both full-time and part-time students, from pre-entry to level 4 courses and HE. Easy access routes into education and training and imaginative approaches to marketing have been developed and are successful in attracting many students with little or no experience of FE. Distance-learning programmes, modular units of study and e-learning opportunities meet the needs of students with family or other responsibilities.

26. The programme of enrichment is effective. It provides students with the opportunity to develop personal and social skills and to gain additional qualifications, such as first aid and health and safety. Cross-college competitions and events are popular, for example, 'Fight for the Mic' hosted by the media and performing arts centre gave students from other areas of the college the opportunity to

take part in a popular music performance.

27. Senior managers and other members of the college's staff are successfully involved in a very wide range of partnerships and collaborative projects with the local education authority (LEA), schools, the community and voluntary sector, public services and employers designed to widen participation. The college makes a significant contribution to local initiatives which aim to raise aspirations and improve achievement. Coherent, imaginative and well-planned provision meets the needs of students aged 14 to 16 from around 30 schools.

28. Across the curriculum and through the Learn@Work initiative, there are very good links with employers. The portfolio of courses specially designed for employers is updated regularly to meet the changing needs of employers in the local area. Many college-based courses have been developed to help students make a successful transition from education to employment. The 'Bay 6' programme provides an excellent opportunity for foundation students to develop enterprise and work-related skills.

29. Potential students receive good information and advice about the courses offered by the college. The college prospectus, course information leaflets and promotional materials are set out clearly and take account of the needs of the local community. The college holds regular open evenings, guidance events and short taster courses. A good range of liaison activities is undertaken with local schools. These include visits to school events, college summer schools and effective systems to ease transition to college. The partnership with Connexions is good; full-time advisors from the service provide a centrally located presence on each main site. Well-organised careers advice is also provided by the college careers education guidance service. Students' induction is planned effectively and provides a good introduction to the college and to course requirements.

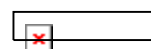
30. A new programme of initial diagnostic assessments was introduced in the summer of 2004. Students complete basic and key skills assessments at the interview stage or during induction. Information from the process is used to ensure that students choose the correct level of course and to identify at an early stage those needing additional support.

31. Additional support for students is good. Specialist staff work with students with a range of disabilities and/or learning difficulties and basic skills needs. They offer support and advice to teachers on class management and use of technology. Each curriculum area has a trained additional learning support co-ordinator who organises and monitors the effectiveness of support provided. The co-ordinators work closely with admissions staff. There are too few specialist teachers to meet the needs of students for literacy, numeracy and dyslexia support.

32. Tutorial support for both full-time and part-time students is well organised. Personal advisors work in well-resourced centres on the college's main sites. Personal advisors attached to curriculum areas form good relationships with students and provide good advice on a range of subjects such as finance and health. Students are referred to the college's counselling service where needed. The college nursery provides full-day care for 70 children and crèche facilities are provided in over 70 outreach centres.

33. Monitoring of students' attendance is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection, attendance was above the national average at 82%. Personal tutors use a variety of methods to contact students at risk of leaving their courses, including text messaging and home visits. Cross-college systems for collecting, monitoring and analysing attendance data are underdeveloped.

Leadership and management



the principal, senior managers and corporation has helped to provide a focus on putting the students first. Since the last inspection, retention and pass rates have risen significantly and are now at, or above, the national averages for similar colleges. The college has been very successful in recruiting new students. There has been a strong focus on the development of the management team and all members of staff. A new management structure was introduced in 2003. The college has introduced a range of effective strategies to raise standards. Members of staff at all levels are committed to the college's improvement strategies. Most of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed successfully although some new processes have yet to have an effect on the college's provision.

35. There is a strong focus on students and their achievements. Innovative strategies have been implemented to improve students' success. The leading learning forum for students, hosted by the principal, provides opportunities for students to add breadth to their learning. Senior managers and heads of centres set annual targets for students' recruitment, and retention and pass rates. The college has successfully and consistently achieved its challenging recruitment targets. Managers review the extent to which targets are achieved. Arrangements for reviewing performance in the college are rigorous and well understood. However, actions and targets set for improvement are not always quantifiable.

36. The new management structure is clear and roles and responsibilities are well defined. All managers have taken part in a well-developed leadership programme. However, the new role of associate director has yet to become established.

37. Communications in the college are excellent. The principal holds regular staff events when key college priorities are discussed. There is a regular newsletter, a staff intranet and regular centre and course team meetings. The principal and senior managers are perceived by staff to be approachable, friendly and committed to students.

38. Governors, the principal and senior managers provide a strong strategic direction for the college which reflects its mission, objectives and values. All are committed to the key strategies of employer engagement, providing for students aged 14 to 19, meeting the needs of adults in the community and developing students' higher level skills. The college serves its community very effectively with a focus on raising aspirations. The college places a strong emphasis on working in partnership with other organisations to achieve its objectives. Relationships with the community are positive and productive. Many employers work closely with the college and regard it as the first choice provider. The Learn@Work initiative has proved to be very successful and has attracted over 5,000 employers. The college has been awarded three CoVEs in engineering, construction and care and has plans to develop a 14 to 19 learning CoVE, in partnership with 18 local schools, the local authority and private trainers.

39. Management at course team level is outstanding in health and social care and good in engineering, IT, hospitality, leisure and tourism and literacy and numeracy. It is satisfactory in construction, business management and administration and visual and performing arts. The management of work-based learning has improved significantly with the exception of two curriculum areas which have been slow to implement changes. However, achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is low.

40. Management information is accurate and reliable. Support for curriculum teams is effective. Heads of centre and team leaders have received training and support in analysing data. They use a good range of information to make judgements on the quality of their courses including detailed analyses of performance data benchmarked against similar colleges. The college has yet to implement fully the electronic register system for monitoring students' attendance.

41. Quality assurance arrangements have been effective in raising overall retention and pass rates. Information from lesson observations is used to plan staff development. Some course reviews lack detail and measurable targets. Self-assessment grades are broadly in line with inspectors' judgements. Student surveys are used effectively to identify areas for improvement. The stakeholders' survey, carried out by an independent company, demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the college's services.

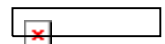
42. Governance is very good. Governors are very committed to the college and play a key role in initiating change. Governors have a clear understanding of the college's business. Monitoring of students' achievements, course performance and the financial position of the college is rigorous. Governors take part in an annual strategic review and receive regular reports and briefings. They prepare a self-assessment report. Governors bring a good range of expertise to the college.

43. Staff development is very good. The people development strategy is excellent and provides a framework for the development of all staff. Strategies to ensure appropriate recruitment, effective induction and succession planning are all in place. An annual learning conference, supported by a detailed training prospectus, is well attended. Part-time teachers receive payment to attend sessions. The college has focused on sharing good practice through forums and the college intranet. Newly appointed teachers are supported through a good induction programme and receive support from mentors. Established teachers are supported by learning consultants. Staff development is clearly linked to the outcomes of appraisal.

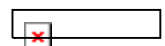
44. The college has a clear commitment to equality and diversity. A range of policies and implementation plans meet the requirements of the SENDA, disability discrimination legislation and Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. The equality and diversity group monitors progress against planned actions. The college analyses students' retention and pass rates by gender, disability and race. The proportion of students at the college from minority ethnic backgrounds is larger than that in the local community. Students from minority ethnic groups achieve at least as well as others. Cultural diversity is celebrated in curriculum areas and the college is planning a multi-faith day. However, the college has been slow to put in place measures for the effective implementation of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000.

45. Financial management is very effective. The college has invested in improvements to its accommodation and resources whilst maintaining a secure financial position. The LSC judges that the college is in a strong financial position. Managers and governors monitor the college's financial position closely. There are well-established budget setting and monitoring processes. Risk management systems are good. On the basis of students' pass rates, class sizes and the range of provision for the local community, the college provides very good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

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

Strengths

- high retention rates on level 1 courses

- well-planned lessons and good learning materials

- very good physical resources

- wide range of provision meeting local needs.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on electrical installation parts 1 and 2

- slow progress towards achievement of apprenticeship frameworks

- inadequate checking of learning.

Scope of provision

46. The college provides courses in plumbing, electrical installation, bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, and painting and decorating from levels 1 to 3, and a national certificate and diploma in construction. Of 1,174 enrolments, 369 are students aged 16 to 18. Provision for 32 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools introduces them to the construction industry. There are 79 students enrolled on work-based learning provision. The college shares a CoVE in building services with three other colleges. Plumbing, electrical and short updating courses in electrical installation and domestic gas safety are provided through the CoVE. Short health and safety courses for the construction industry are carried out through a franchise arrangement with a sub-contractor. Two specialist construction work-based learning providers work in partnership with the college to provide specialist work-based learning programmes.

Achievement and standards

47. Retention rates on level 1 courses are high. In the last three years, most have been above the national averages. Retention rates on the national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 in installing electro-technical systems declined to 19% in 2004. Most pass rates are satisfactory and are at the national averages. Pass rates on the City and Guilds 2360 parts 1 and 2 electrical installation courses are low. Framework achievement on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships is rising, but progress towards achievements is slow. Some 18 apprentices and 9 advanced apprentices who started in 2001/02 have yet to finish their apprenticeship programme.

48. Students are well motivated and work well in both practical and theory lessons. Most practical work meets industry standards. Students' written work and portfolios of evidence are well presented and include a range of evidence including witness testimonies and photographs. Students are punctual and attendance rates are similar to the national average for this curriculum area.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ trowel occupations	1	No. of starts	29	30	26
		% retention	90	100	73
		% pass rate	92	43	74
NVQ wood occupations	1	No. of starts	41	57	26
		% retention	71	91	88
		% pass rate	90	83	83
Foundation construction award	1	No. of starts	*	27	173
		% retention	*	56	80
		% pass rate	*	60	75
City and Guilds 2360 part 1 electrical installation	1	No. of starts	46	29	69
		% retention	80	86	91
		% pass rate	30	8	60
City and Guilds 2360 part 2 electrical installation	2	No. of starts	22	26	29
		% retention	95	92	90
		% pass rate	29	25	35
NVQ installing electrotechnical systems	2	No. of starts	19	20	16
		% retention	63	45	19
		% pass rate	92	67	100

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

Quality of education and training

49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The better theory lessons are well planned with good links between knowledge and practical application. Teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning methods including the use of ILT, good handbooks and task sheets. In an electrical installation lesson on circuits, the teacher used a high-quality task sheet to explain the learning objectives and assessment criteria for the activity. The teacher made good use of ILT by incrementally building a drawing projected on to a whiteboard and a high-quality supporting theory pack explained the electrical principles involved. Students' learning was challenged and engaged throughout the lesson. In the poorer lessons, teachers talk for too long without involving the students, learning is poorly checked and students lose interest and are distracted. Learning on the franchise railway industry provision is good. Teachers use high-quality, industry-specific equipment in a realistic working environment.

50. Classroom and workshop accommodation are good. Most classrooms are equipped with IT projection facilities and integrated whiteboards. Practical workshops are well resourced with consumable materials and industry-standard equipment and hand tools. CoVE funding has been used to enhance specialist resources. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced and there are sufficient assessors and internal verifiers.

51. Assessment practices and procedures are fair, accurate and planned effectively. Some good recording systems are in place and assessment decisions are displayed prominently in workshop areas. However, these systems are not applied on all courses. Work-based assessment is poorly planned. In plumbing, a qualified assessor visits the workplace at regular intervals to observe practical tasks directly and assess for competency. However, what is to be assessed is not planned systematically. In other vocational areas, there is no planned on-site assessment and there is an over reliance on the use of witness testimonies.

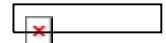
52. There is a very good range of full-time and part-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 which respond to local need. Saturday and summer schools are offered for students aged 14 to 16. A variety of short courses provide continuing professional development for local industry through the CoVE. Effective links with local employers provide the college with advice and guidance on local industry needs and employment opportunities.

53. Induction is satisfactory and includes health and safety issues and initial assessment for levels of basic skills. Tutorial support is satisfactory, but reviews for work-based learners' are poor. Learners and employers are not involved in reviewing progress against targets set previously for learners or in agreeing future targets. Personal support for students is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Partnership working through the CoVEs is effective and has improved resources and curriculum development. Roles and responsibilities are clear and regular departmental and course team meetings take place. Staff appraisals take place annually and are effective in identifying development needs and setting personal targets. The use of learning consultants has improved the quality of teaching particularly in the use of ILT in the classroom. All members of staff are involved in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is detailed and reflective, but fails to identify some weaknesses. The promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace is limited.

Engineering, technology and manufacturing



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses in 2004

- good teaching and learning

- excellent CoVE training resources

- wide range of courses meeting the needs of students and employers

- good individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on apprenticeship programmes
- low retention rates on vehicle engineering and fabrication and welding courses.

Scope of provision

55. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time courses from entry level to level 4 in mechanical engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, fabrication and welding, polymer engineering and vehicle engineering. A double award vocational GCSE is provided in partnership with local schools. There were 1,152 enrolments. Some 67% of students are part time and 533 are on franchised courses. There are 105 apprentices enrolled on work-based learning programmes. The engineering centre was granted full CoVE status in May 2003 for advanced design and manufacture for the polymer industry.

Achievement and standards

56. Pass rates were high on many courses in 2004. Pass rates on the first diploma in engineering, the national certificate in engineering and vehicle mechanical and electronic systems have been well above the national averages for the last three years. On vehicle engineering and fabrication and welding courses, retention rates have been below the national averages for the last three years. Pass rates on level 1 fabrication and welding practice courses have been below the national averages for the last three years.

57. Retention and achievement rates are low on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships. For example, in 2000/01, from 58 starters on the apprenticeship, 14% were retained and 9% were successful.

58. Students are highly motivated. They develop a wide range of practical skills and are confident in the use of IT systems. A student on a first diploma in motor sports produced a computer-based presentation on his favourite sports car using advanced features of the software. Students make satisfactory progress on college-based courses, but there is some slow progress on work-based apprenticeships. Many students who start on level 1 courses progress to level 2 courses. Attendance is satisfactory and students are punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Computer-aided draughting and design	2	No. of starts	47	36	37
		% retention	74	89	78
		% pass rate	94	100	76
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	37	26	16
		% retention	76	81	88
		% pass rate	54	81	71
*National diploma in	3	No. of starts	20	25	16

engineering	% retention	50	48	56
	% pass rate	50	83	89

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

- *qualification in advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) in engineering*

Quality of education and training

59. Teaching and learning are good. The percentage of lessons graded good or better by inspectors was significantly higher than the national average for engineering. Teachers make good use of a range of methods to motivate students. Questions are used effectively to check understanding and to extend learning. In one lesson, employed students were asked to give examples of why a car would not start. One student described how he tracked down a starting fault to an air intake. Many lessons show progressive development of individual and group skills. Full-time students work individually and in pairs using computer-aided drawing software to design and manufacture components for a robot assembly. Practical skills are developed progressively, linking theory to workshop activities. Data projectors and electronic whiteboards are used to good effect. Many practical lessons make good use of the CoVE's advanced equipment. In a few lessons, the pace is slow and students' interest is not maintained. There are few opportunities to gather workplace evidence for key skills.

60. Teachers, the work-based assessor and the internal verifier are appropriately qualified. Staff development opportunities are provided in line with the departmental development plans. Learning materials are of a high standard. The training resources in the CoVE are excellent. Custom-built accommodation houses the latest technology in computer-aided machine tools and co-ordinated measuring machines, rapid prototype and injection moulding machines. There are 14 new motorcycles used to support learning on the motorcycle mechanics programme. Laptop computers use wireless technology to connect to the college network and the Internet. The learning resource centre in the CoVE is small and opening times are restricted.

61. The assessment of college-based students is generally thorough although recording of assessments is not always effective. The assessment of work-based learning is satisfactory. The planning of assessments involves the employer as well as the apprentice. Assessment on demand is now available to apprentices.

62. The wide range of courses meets the needs of students and employers. Students can progress through levels 1, 2 and 3 on to HE and a foundation degree. Links with local employer networks are extensive and include the engineering forum, 82 local engineering companies and 65 companies for apprenticeships. The CoVE is used to update the skills of engineering employees on full-cost courses. There is no specialist provision for auto-electricians or for fault diagnosis.

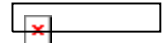
63. Good individual support is provided for students. The induction programme includes a four-week period of short courses with a final week of assessment. Additional support needs are identified and students enrolled to appropriate courses. Work-based apprentices receive good guidance during their induction and workplace mentors and college assessors provide pastoral support. Regular structured progress reviews, involving employers, take place and clear targets are set to monitor apprentices' progress.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership, management and communication within the section are good. Regular team meetings are held and clear actions for improvement are agreed. The CoVE is well managed and the provision offered is well matched to the needs of local employers. It provides a focal point for

marketing activities and is used extensively by local employers as a facility for updating the skills of their staff. The engineering curriculum area has been restructured and actions identified to raise achievements in work-based learning. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory in college and in the workplace. Teachers contribute to self-assessment through course reviews and team meetings. The self-assessment report lacks evaluative statements.

Business administration, management and professional



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates on many courses in 2004

- good development of practical business skills

- good learning resources

- good individual support for students

- productive links with employers and skills.

Weaknesses

- low retention and achievement on work-based learning programmes

- poor development of key skills

- insufficiently challenging teaching.

Scope of provision

65. The college offers full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to advanced and higher levels. Full-time courses are offered in business, administration, specialist legal and medical administration, accounting, and AS-level and GCE A-level business. Specialist part-time courses include marketing, personnel practice, legal executives, accounting, management and team leadership. There are currently 1,350 students enrolled, of whom 199 are full time. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18 and most part-time students are over 19 years. There are 44 learners enrolled on work-based programmes following apprenticeships in accounting, insurance and administration.

Achievement and standards

66. Pass rates were high on many courses in 2004. On the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) in business, the AVCE double award in business, AS-level and GCE A-level business studies, and the certificate in personnel practice they are above national averages. Pass rates are particularly high on specialist legal and medical secretarial courses, and on the call-centre techniques course. Key skills pass rates are low. Retention rates on most courses are rising and are around the national averages. Retention and pass rates on apprenticeship programmes have been low for the last three years. Out of 47 advanced apprentices, only 7 achieved their framework and 10 are still in learning. Out of 93 apprentices starting in the same period, only 7 completed their programme and 37 are still in learning.

67. The standard of adult students' work is high. Most develop good practical business skills, such as time management and presentational skills, and they can apply business theory to practice. Report writing skills of students on professional and management programmes are poor. Some apprentices take too long to complete NVQs. Students do not always have the required level of key skills to be able to complete their work. Progression to higher level courses is good in accounting, business and administration. Most full-time students progress to HE or into employment.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ business intermediate	2	No. of starts	25	28	17
		% retention	80	89	76
		% pass rate	90	88	77
AVCE business double award	3	No. of starts	17	18	*
		% retention	12	39	*
		% pass rate	100	71	*
NVQ accounting	3	No. of starts	41	44	38
		% retention	76	80	79
		% pass rate	58	54	67
Certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	21	19	25
		% retention	81	89	88
		% pass rate	100	88	91
NVQ accounting	4	No. of starts	25	28	*
		% retention	80	50	*
		% pass rate	70	29	*

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

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best lessons are well planned and managed and have detailed schemes of work which the teachers share with students so that they can prepare in advance for lessons. Teachers make very good use of students' and their own up-to-date commercial experience. For example, in an effective lesson on training needs analysis, the teacher effectively managed a lively discussion during which the students shared their individual experiences. Teachers of the medical secretarial course use a combination of theory and practical activities to teach medical terminology in an interesting way.

69. Some teaching is unimaginative and does not provide sufficient challenge to students. In these lessons, the range of teaching and learning styles is narrow, too much use is made of worksheets and there is little use of group work or discussion. Teachers do not always take account of the varying range of ability of the students in the group. In one Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) lesson, some students completed the tasks quickly and had to wait for the others to finish their work. The content of a GCE A-level business lesson did not relate to previous learning, the pace was too quick and some students did not have a clear understanding of the topic. Liaison between vocational and key skills teachers is poor. Key skills lessons are not always planned to develop the skills needed for students to complete assignments on their main programme.

70. Learning resources are good. Classrooms are large, bright, airy and well equipped, with easy access to digital projectors and video players. Many rooms have flexible furniture to accommodate different layouts and pop-up computers enable easy transition between paper-based and IT-based work. Students have good access to drop-in learning resource centres, where they make full use of up-to-date computing facilities, the Internet and the wide stock of books and periodicals. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Most keep up to date through membership of professional associations and attending meetings of awarding bodies. However, some teachers are not sufficiently aware of current commercial practices.

71. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Assignments are marked carefully and feedback helps students know what they need to do to improve their grades. Teachers do not always mark punctuation and spelling errors. The range of assessment methods used on work-based programmes is limited and there is insufficient use of direct observation in the workplace. Progress reviews are carried out regularly, but targets are often imprecise.

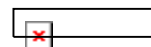
72. A comprehensive range of full-time and part-time courses is provided during the day and evening and by flexible study modes. Productive links with employers and schools are used to enhance the opportunities available. Students benefit from work experience placements with prestigious companies. Courses are reviewed regularly in response to students' and employers' comments. Work-based learning programmes match employers' needs.

73. Advice and guidance to students are good. Induction is comprehensive for all students, including those on work-based learning programmes. The students' handbook contains useful information about the course and the college. Initial assessment for full-time students is thorough and leads to the provision of a range of flexible and effective learning support for those students who need it. Part-time students do not receive an automatic initial assessment for additional learning needs, but are offered learning support when needs are identified. Pastoral support is very good for all students. Personal tutors give timely advice or refer students to the wide range of student support services. Assessors visit work-based learners frequently in the workplace and there is good liaison with employers.

Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular team meetings are used to share information and to discuss pastoral and teaching matters. However, there is insufficient focus on students' progress and the minutes have few action points. New teachers are well supported through shadowing, mentoring and training. Work-based learning programmes are poorly planned and co-ordinated. Course reviews result in clear development plans to improve provision.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- high pass rates in 2004

- particularly good teaching and learning in IT user lessons

- very good resources

- wide range of provision

- very good support for students

- good management of IT user courses.

Weaknesses

- inadequate development of key skills

- limited opportunities to develop skills in the workplace

- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

75. The college offers provision from level 1 to level 4. This includes the first and the national diploma for IT practitioners plus a range of nationally recognised qualifications in the use of ICT. Courses are offered at the college's main sites, at community venues and by distance learning.

There are currently 1,857 students aged 16 to 18 and 1,523 adults enrolled. Most students on the IT practitioner courses are full time and aged 16 to 18. Students on IT user courses are mainly adults studying on a part-time basis. Provision is also provided for 26 students aged 14 to 16 and 16 learners on work-based programmes.

Achievement and standards

76. Pass rates rose in 2004 and are now high. Retention rates rose in 2004. For example, the retention and pass rates on the level 1 bridge to IT and the national diploma in IT practitioners' courses were significantly higher than the pre-cursor qualifications and the national averages for similar courses. Retention and pass rates on the European computer driving licence (ECDL) course declined to below the national average in 2004. Students become confident and competent computer users, developing an appropriate range of skills at entry, elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. Attendance is high.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
*** Bridge to IT	1	No. of starts	22	25	**
		% retention	86	20	**
		% pass rate	37	40	**
New computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT)	1	No. of starts	390	220	203
		% retention	83	81	75
		% pass rate	87	79	77
*** First diploma for IT practitioners	2	No. of starts	58	51	48
		% retention	74	75	77
		% pass rate	81	84	84
Integrated business technology	3	No. of starts	35	39	*
		% retention	77	77	*
		% pass rate	67	93	*
**** National diploma for IT practitioners	3	No. of starts	44	52	38
		% retention	55	56	68
		% pass rate	92	72	92

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

- *did not run*

- *than 15 students enrolled*

- *qualification GNVQ foundation in IT 2001-2003*

- *qualification GNVQ intermediate ICT 2001-2002*

Quality of education and training

77. Teaching and learning are good. The percentage of lessons graded good or better is higher than the national average for the area. Teaching is particularly good in IT user lessons. Teaching in community venues is well matched to the individual needs of the mainly part-time adult students on IT user courses. Teachers on distance learning courses provide satisfactory one-to-one tuition. Teaching on IT practitioner courses satisfactorily develops the computing skills of the students. Teachers identify clear learning outcomes for the lessons and for individual students; they regularly check students' progress towards these outcomes. Students' workbooks are supplemented by high-quality, teacher-devised learning materials which are used effectively. Teachers make good use of computer-based learning technology in lessons. In IT user lessons, teachers place good emphasis on the practical application of skills. The development of students' key skills on IT practitioner courses is poor. The results from initial assessment are not always used to plan lessons. Students do not always see the relevance of key skills lessons to their main course of study or their future career. In an application of number lesson, students were required to make a catapult and then measure the angle of fired objects. The teacher's explanation of how to carry out the task was poor and students were unable to carry out the practical activity successfully. The college is developing software of a marketable standard to make key skills teaching more enjoyable and effective.

78. Accommodation and resources are very good. Students use industry-standard computing hardware and software, and a large number of computers. Computer rooms are generally well laid out with good workspaces and wheelchair access for students with restricted mobility. A good range of adaptive technology is provided, such as tracker balls and large keyboards. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by experienced learning support staff who are also qualified IT practitioners.

79. Assessment and internal verification are carried out in accordance with the college's assessment policy and awarding body requirements. Students' work is marked carefully and returned promptly. Teachers keep accurate records of students' progress and students are encouraged to complete self-assessment records which show the skills they have acquired.

80. A wide range of IT user courses is provided. These include accredited and non-accredited courses in a variety of subjects at levels 1, 2 and 3. Most courses undertaken by adults allow them to begin and end their training at different times during the college year. There is a good range of IT practitioner awards from entry to advanced levels. Progression routes through a wide range of industry-recognised and up-to-date qualifications are very good. For example, students who complete advanced IT practitioner qualifications can take higher level awards, such as a higher national diploma or a first degree. Courses offered in 20 community venues provide opportunities for students to learn close to their homes. Opportunities to practise and develop skills in industrial and commercial settings are limited. Work placements are provided for only 15% of full-time students.

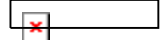
81. Tutorial arrangements for full-time IT practitioner students are very good. Dedicated support tutors provide very effective group and one-to-one pastoral support. Adult students have good access to support facilities on the main site and in many of the community venues. These include support for literacy, numeracy and language, and careers guidance. All students have regular progress reviews and are well informed about the progress they are making.

Leadership and management

82. Leadership and management are good. The two heads of IT centres have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and curriculum teams are well organised. Communication within teams between heads of centre, curriculum team leaders and teachers are good. The IT user courses are very well managed. Strategies to raise retention and pass rates and to widen participation through the use of

community venues have been effective. Staff development opportunities are very good and are linked to an effective appraisal system. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice between teachers of IT user and IT practitioner courses. Some courses share common applications, but information about learning styles and resources is not shared.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel



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

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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- good teaching and learning

- good range of effective community links

- good management of work-based learning to improve standards.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking and GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism courses

- slow progress towards apprenticeship framework achievement.

Scope of provision

83. The college offers courses from entry level to level 3 including the GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism, AVCE travel and tourism, NVQ levels 1 and 2 in catering and hospitality and the first and national diplomas in sport. There are currently 1,576 students enrolled. Of these, 483 are aged 16 to 18 and 1,031 are over 19 years. Some 56 work-based learners are following apprenticeship and NVQ courses in catering and sport. Provision is made for 6 pupils aged 14 to 16 on the GCSE travel and tourism, level 1 hospitality and catering skills, skills for working life and junior sports leader award courses.

Achievement and standards

84. Pass rates are high on most courses. Pass rates on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate leisure and tourism courses and the AVCE travel and tourism course have been 100% for the past three years and, in 2004, pass rates for NVQ levels 1 and 2 in food preparation and cooking and NVQ level 2 in food and drink service were 100%. Retention rates are low on the NVQ level 1 food preparation and cooking course, and on the GNVQ intermediate leisure course. In both hospitality and sport, achievement of apprenticeship frameworks is slow. In hospitality, of the cohorts who started in 2002/03 and 2003/04, only 17% and 28% achieved respectively. Students have high levels of practical and social skills. Hospitality students develop good food service skills and relate well with customers in the restaurant. Students on sports courses work with confidence in a wide range of commercial leisure centres. Travel and tourism students have good knowledge of the travel industry and well-developed customer service skills.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation and cooking	1	No. of starts	26	18	18
		% retention	73	61	61
		% pass rate	95	91	100
* First diploma in sport	2	No. of starts	16	22	41
		% retention	75	77	95
		% pass rate	83	100	77
AVCE double award travel and tourism	3	No. of starts	21	26	17
		% retention	76	85	76
		% pass rate	100	100	100
** National diploma in sport	3	No. of starts	39	35	34
		% retention	77	80	82
		% pass rate	93	82	89

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

- *qualification first diploma in science (sport) 2002*
- *qualification national diploma in applied science (sport) 2001-2003*

Quality of education and training

85. Teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons. The best lessons are well planned with clearly defined learning outcomes and teachers use a wide range of approaches to gain students' interest. Theory and practice are well integrated in many lessons. For example, in a good national diploma sport lesson on nutrition and the effect of various foods on performance, the teacher used a quiz to check and reinforce students' prior knowledge of the energy content of different foods. Students completed a food diary for the previous two weeks and identified the various categories and amounts of food they had consumed and their impact on sporting performance. Teachers check students' learning regularly. Relationships between staff and students are good and there is effective involvement of employers and supervisors in the training of work-based learners.

86. Accommodation and resources to support learning are good. The restaurant area has been refurbished recently and provides a good working environment for students to learn food service skills. However, resources for food preparation courses do not reflect fully those used in industry. The human performance laboratory provides sports students with good opportunities for testing and research. Good community sports venues are used to extend the range of facilities available in a commercial setting. General classrooms are well decorated and have good displays of students' work. Teachers are well qualified and have good industrial experience and knowledge. Support for new teachers is effective and a good range of professional development activities for staff includes periods working in industry.

87. Assessment of students' work and performance is well developed and provides a sound basis for planning progress. All students have a good understanding of the assessment process. Work-based learners take decisions on when they are competent to be assessed. Questioning is varied and effective, and tasks are well prepared and provide opportunities for assessment of knowledge and understanding in a vocational context. Written work is assessed accurately and good feedback is provided. Internal verification is well planned and thorough, with clear action plans designed to improve assessment practice.

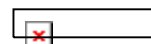
88. A good range of courses from entry level to level 3 is offered. Additional, vocationally relevant part-time courses meet the needs of local employers. Teachers have developed good local partnerships which extend and broaden students' experience. For example, links with local schools ease transition for students on to college programmes. Sports teachers are represented on local sports development and school forums and the college organises sports programmes for school pupils in term time and in the holidays. Many former students are employed on this programme. Work-based learners at level 2 gain valuable coaching experience and learners at level 3 carry out the organisation, marketing and supervision of the activities. The college community sports development programme is extensive and provides excellent work experience opportunities for learners on apprenticeship programmes.

89. Pre-entry guidance during interviews is good. Effective induction days for new students are organised prior to the start of the academic year. Initial assessment is carried out at this stage and speeds up the process of identifying learning support needs. Teachers take account of specific learning support needs when planning lessons and additional support is provided where appropriate. Work-based learners receive frequent visits by assessors. Employers and supervisors are involved in setting effective targets for learners. A well-planned tutorial programme is effective in helping students to achieve their goals.

Leadership and management

90. Leadership and management are good. Standards of work-based learning provision have risen. Qualified assessors have been recruited, trained and supported. Links with employers are good. There is good communication between teachers and managers. Regular meetings, with recorded outcomes, identify actions for improvement. Targets are set for retention and pass rates. The staff appraisal process is well established and is effective in identifying areas for staff development. Learning consultants identify and disseminate good practice amongst staff. Teachers are involved in producing the comprehensive self-assessment report which includes good reference to work-based learning provision.

Health, social care and public services



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

Strengths

- very high retention and pass rates

- very good teaching

- good partnerships with employers

- very good support for students

- strong leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- declining retention rates on the first diploma in public services course.

Scope of provision

91. A wide range of full-time and part-time provision is offered from entry level to level 4 in health and care and early years. There are GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses, first and national diplomas and an AVCE in health and care. In collaboration with Sherwood Forest Hospital Trust the college has recently been awarded CoVE status in care to offer part-time courses designed to meet national skills shortages. Full-time provision in early years includes Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) entry, foundation, and certificate and diploma courses. Part-time provision includes NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in early years care and education and NVQ in working with children and young people. Access courses are offered in pathways to nursing, social work and social science on a full-time and part-time basis and there is part-time provision at levels 2 and 3 in counselling. Full-time first and national diplomas are offered in public services. A range of first aid courses is offered including a franchise with the Saint John Ambulance Association (SJAA). Apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are offered in care and early years.

Achievement and standards

92. Retention and pass rates are very high. On major courses in both health and care and early years, retention and pass rates are substantially above the national averages. Pass rates on the first diploma in public services course have risen over the past three years from 47% to 100%, but retention rates have declined to significantly below the national average. Retention and pass rates on the access to nursing programme are well above the national averages. Retention and pass rates on the NVQ early years care and education programme fell in 2003, but are now above the national average. Achievement of the full apprenticeship frameworks in care and early years is unsatisfactory. Progression rates to higher level courses and related employment are high; 97% of early years students moved on to higher level study or employment. Attendance is high and students are punctual.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
First aid at work certificate - Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	1	No. of starts	1,123	1,419	1,158
		% retention	100	100	99
		% pass rate	98	99	99
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	42	43	58
		% retention	83	86	84
		% pass rate	69	89	92
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	51	74	64
		% retention	84	81	89
		% pass rate	93	92	91
First diploma in public services	2	No. of starts	19	29	24
		% retention	100	72	54
		% pass rate	47	76	100
CACHE diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	41	45	49
		% retention	68	62	78
		% pass rate	100	100	95
National diploma in childhood studies (nursery nursing)	3	No. of starts	21	36	29
		% retention	81	67	78
		% pass rate	100	96	95

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

Quality of education and training

93. Teaching and learning are very good. The percentage of lessons graded good or better by inspectors is significantly higher than the national average. No teaching was unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned, purposeful and have clear aims and objectives. Teachers are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and use a wide range of imaginative teaching methods to make lessons interesting and enjoyable for students. In a very well-managed first diploma in public services lesson on fitness, the teacher used a range of exercises at different levels to motivate and challenge the learning of all students. Students worked individually and in groups on activities involving use of ILT to carry out research. Students demonstrated their knowledge and understanding by asking searching questions and standards of work produced were high. The development of key skills and awareness of equality and diversity issues are core themes in most lessons.

94. Accommodation and resources to support learning on the main college site are very good. Data projectors, interactive whiteboards and computers are available in classrooms. The Imex centre has good resources for the NVQ in care as does the SJAA centre for franchised provision of first aid. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. All have, or are working towards, a teaching qualification. A full-time technician supports childcare courses and a part-time resource assistant supports care provision.

95. The quality of assessment is high. Assessments are well planned, vocationally relevant and set at an appropriate level for the stage and year of course. Written feedback on students' work is supportive and gives clear guidance for improvement. Feedback is brief on the work of some public service students. Internal verification is robust.

96. Links with employers are effective in providing courses designed to meet sector skills shortages and a good range of work experience placements for students. The CoVE manager is a member of

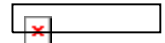
the Training Organisation for the Personal Social Services (TOPSS) workforce forum and the head of centre for care is a member of the Trent National Health Service (NHS) workforce development steering group. The area works with two health care trusts, the social services department and with the private, public and voluntary sectors to provide a range of short and long courses. Provision for students aged 14 to 16 and for adults is made in seven local schools.

97. Support for students is very good. There is a comprehensive system of open days and taster events with good pre-course advice and guidance. Early diagnostic testing identifies students in need of additional support. Help on personal issues is provided by specialist tutors and from the college's central services. Attendance and punctuality are recorded at regular individual tutorials and targets for achievement are negotiated. Teachers are responsive to the needs of individual students. Induction for all full-time and part-time students is comprehensive.

Leadership and management

98. Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers focus on continuous improvement and students' performance. Course review and evaluation are carried out meticulously each term. The views of students and employers are sought and acted upon. Retention and pass rates are standard agenda items at team meetings. Teachers are involved in self-assessment and setting targets, and communication is good. The self-assessment process is rigorous and comprehensive. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- high pass rates

- good development of technical skills

- good range of specialist studios

- effective external links and partnerships.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates

- poor development of key skills in visual arts

- insufficiently challenging teaching

- some poor curriculum management.

Scope of provision

99. The college offers mainly full-time vocational provision at levels 1 to 3. This includes a wide range of specialist introductory, first and national diploma courses, GCSE art and design, and AS-levels and GCE A-levels in media, and art and design. Introductory courses are offered in art and design and performing arts. First diploma courses are available in media and performing arts and there is a foundation GNVQ course in art and design. Intermediate courses in art and design, music technology and performance skills provide progression to a wide range of national diplomas at level 3. The diploma in foundation studies in art and design is offered. There are currently 612 students enrolled on full-time courses. The majority of these are aged 16 to 18 and 61% are following level 3 courses.

Achievement and standards

100. Pass rates are high on many courses. Pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate in media, the first diploma in performing arts and on the national diplomas in fashion and clothing, three-dimensional design and popular music, have been significantly above the national averages for the last three years. Pass rates for key skills are low. In 2004, no passes on key skills qualifications were achieved by students on art and design courses. Retention rates are low on many courses, particularly at level 3. Attendance is satisfactory. The standard of students' practical work is high. Multi-media students produce high-quality, innovative project work. Music students use computing software with confidence for composition and fashion students use ICT to present high-quality finished designs.

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 in art and design	2	No. of starts	16	20	30
		% retention	94	85	87
		% pass rate	67	88	62
GNVQ intermediate media: communication and production	2	No. of starts	19	15	19
		% retention	84	80	79
		% pass rate	94	92	100
First diploma performing arts	2	No. of starts	16	*	29
		% retention	81	*	79
		% pass rate	92	*	100
National diploma in popular music	3	No. of starts	*	20	18
		% retention	*	65	44

		% pass rate	*	92	100
Diploma in foundation studies in art and design	3	No. of starts	34	25	20
		% retention	88	92	95
		% pass rate	93	96	95

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

***fewer than 15 students enrolled**

Quality of education and training

101. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best lessons are well planned with a wide variety of imaginative activities. Teachers explain the objectives of lessons clearly and regularly challenge students to extend their learning. Teaching in multi media is imaginative and exciting, and students are able to work independently to develop their own ideas. In one lesson, students learned how to develop sketch ideas for a project based on computer games. In music and performing arts, students worked enthusiastically and were encouraged by the teacher to explore their ideas further. Students develop high levels of technical skill using a wide range of equipment and materials. In a graphics lesson, students used new technology confidently to translate drawings into a website for a national competition entry.

102. Much teaching fails to challenge and inspire students, particularly in the visual arts. In art and design workshops, teachers use a limited range of teaching styles and students work passively following the teacher's direction on a limited range of tasks. In one lesson, students worked on a dull, repetitive task of drawing buttons. In another, they were cutting and pasting images into sketch books. Too many teachers use only superficial questions; students are not encouraged to think deeply and are not stretched to achieve their full potential. Some lessons in performing arts and music are disrupted by lack of punctuality and low attendance. The development of key skills on visual arts courses is poor. Schemes of work and assignments do not include learning outcomes for literacy and numeracy and students do not see the relevance of key skills to their main course or future career.

103. Accommodation and specialist studios are good. Performing arts, multi media and music studios have up-to-date equipment and resources. Art and design workshops for fashion and textiles, three-dimensional design, jewellery and computer-aided design are well equipped and maintained with good technical support. Low ceilings in performing arts studios restrict the use of lighting for small-scale performances. Carpeted areas and physical obstructions in movement studios limit the range of activities possible. Teachers are well qualified and most have teaching qualifications. Some have recent industrial experience.

104. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Internal verification and monitoring processes are carried out in line with college and awarding body guidelines. Teachers' comments on marked work help students to understand what they need to do to achieve higher grades. In performing arts and media lessons, peer assessment is used effectively to develop students' evaluative skills. In some cases, feedback focuses on what has been produced rather than what has been learned. Most students understand the course assessment process which is explained carefully in students' handbooks.

105. Teachers develop productive external links and partnerships to extend and enrich the curriculum. For example, media and multi-media students work on live projects with local businesses and national diploma graphic students have joint projects with Sheffield Hallam University. Opportunities for adults studying part time are limited. Daytime access to HE, evening art classes and a short course in multi media are offered on the Chesterfield Road site.

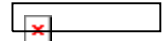
106. Tutors provide good support on academic and personal issues. Initial assessment of full-time students' literacy and numeracy is carried out as part of the interview process. Additional support is

provided in lessons and cross-college workshops for students. Induction is well organised and introduces students to the college and to the style and pace of the work on their course.

Leadership and management

107. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory, but management at curriculum level is more effective in performing arts, multi media and fashion. Quality assurance procedures and cross-college improvement strategies are not implemented with sufficient rigour on all courses. Strategies to raise levels of retention on level 3 courses have not been effective. The development of the key skills of students on visual arts courses is poor. Feedback to teachers from internal lesson observations does not always provide sufficient guidance on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring and tracking of students' attendance are informal on some courses. Communication is good.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on part-time literacy, numeracy and GCSE English courses

- well-planned and effective teaching

- very good staff training

- good range of courses to widen participation

- good initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills

- good leadership and management.

Weaknesses

- declining enrolments and pass rates on key skills courses

- poor target setting and evaluation of learning in individual learning plans.

Scope of provision

108. The college offers a range of literacy and numeracy courses to adults and young people. The specialist 'Get On' team deliver part-time courses to 372 students in the college, the workplace and in community venues. Most students study towards national qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Specialist teachers also provide additional support for literacy, numeracy or dyslexia to 153 students studying on courses across the college. There are 135 students enrolled on GCSE mathematics and 130 on GCSE English courses. Full-time students on vocational or academic programmes study for key skills or literacy and numeracy qualifications alongside their main courses. There are 541 students enrolled on specialist courses for students with learning difficulties who study literacy and numeracy as part of their programme.

Achievement and standards

109. The achievement of most students is high. Increasing numbers of students follow courses leading to national qualifications in literacy and numeracy. The pass rate of 88% on the certificate in adult literacy is high. The pass rate for GCSE English grades A* to C is excellent at 81% against a national average of 49%. There is good progression of students between levels of literacy and numeracy courses and on to other courses in the college. The numbers of students aged 16 to 18 who enrol on key or basic skills courses as part of their entitlement to full-time study have declined each year for the past three years. Pass rates have also fallen. For example, less than 10% of full-time students aged 16 to 18 achieved a qualification in application of number or numeracy at any level in 2003/04. Attendance across the curriculum area is close to the national average at 75%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Key skills application of number (1 year)	1	No. of starts	185	165	97
		% retention	69	78	84
		% pass rate	98	91	67
Certificate in adult literacy (short)	2	No. of starts	**	19	154
		% retention	**	100	98
		% pass rate	**	68	83
Certificate in adult numeracy (short)	2	No. of starts	*	24	77
		% retention	*	100	99
		% pass rate	*	79	72
Key skills application of number (1 year)	2	No. of starts	134	73	62
		% retention	77	62	69
		% pass rate	97	87	12
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	109	125	114
		% retention	71	85	81
		% pass rate	62	52	40
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	118	97	122
		% retention	69	74	73

		% pass rate	77	74	81
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Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

***course did not run**

****fewer than 15 students enrolled**

Quality of education and training

110. Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, teachers use stimulating learning materials, gain students' interest and develop their skills. Teachers give clear explanations building on previous work. In one literacy lesson, the tutor planned a variety of demanding and interesting tasks including group and one-to-one work. The lesson began with a game based on chocolate that helped students to produce adjectives for touch, taste and smell. This was followed by an exercise to develop critical reading skills using materials carefully selected so that each student was able to make steady progress. In an English GCSE lesson, the teacher used question and answer techniques to develop students' ability to understand the imagery and language of war poems. In weaker lessons, there is a lack of planning for individual needs and in a few lessons too much time is spent completing worksheets.

111. Teachers are well qualified and have good access to further training. There are 12 teachers from the 'Get On' team who have completed level 4 teaching literacy or teaching numeracy courses and 14 are currently studying towards qualifications. Dictionaries, books, worksheets and practical resources are well used in most lessons. Classrooms are of a high standard. However, in one key skills lesson, the noise levels and disruption caused by several groups sharing an open learning workshop led to students becoming distracted. Laptop computers have been purchased recently to ensure that students at workplace and community venues can take online literacy and numeracy tests. Teachers have adapted a dungeons and dragons computer game to cover the key skills portfolio requirements and some of the underpinning skills for application of number, communications, working with others and problem solving at level 1. However, overall there is insufficient use of ICT to enhance learning.

112. Initial and diagnostic assessments of literacy and numeracy skills are good. Students complete basic and key skills assessments before or at induction. Results are recorded carefully and used to ensure students are placed on the most appropriate level of course and key and basic skills course. Target setting and assessment of progress in individual learning plans are poor for most students. Most records show students' activities or topics covered by teachers, but they do not plan or record learning. Targets for the development of skills are not always specific and there is insufficient evaluation of learning to plan new targets.

113. A good range of community, work-based and part-time college courses meets students' needs. Community courses are run at 23 local venues. Family learning courses are run in nine centres, including courses such as the successful 'Family Fanzine' course at Mansfield Football Club. The college places a high priority on the development of workplace essential skills and courses have been run at 20 employers' premises over the past year. Employers and students studying on workplace courses speak very highly of the provision.

114. Support for students is good. Course information is clear and easily available. Students speak highly about the academic and other support they receive from their teachers. There are some weaknesses in the provision of literacy, numeracy and dyslexia additional learning support that the college is now starting to address. The quality of support provided has improved, but there are too few specialist teachers and the number of students being supported is low.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management are good. Managers and staff have a clear vision, high

aspirations and a commitment to move forward. A well-developed cross-college essential skills strategy and action plan is in place to address the low enrolments and pass rates on key skills courses. Graded and peer group classroom observations are effective in improving teaching and learning. Self-assessment has identified most of the weaknesses in provision and effective course team, curriculum area and cross-college meetings help to share and support good practice.

Part D: College data

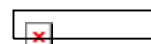
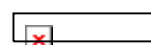


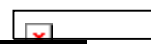
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	27	36
2	41	33
3	32	28
4/5	0	3
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

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



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	545	285	3
Land-based provision	11	137	1
Construction	278	1,483	7
Engineering, technology and manufacture	156	526	3
Business administration, management and professional	270	1,676	7
Information and communication technology	449	2,610	11
Retailing, customer service and transportation	140	374	2
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	1,007	3,019	15
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	231	507	3

Health, social care and public services	957	5,762	25
Visual and performing arts and media	301	1,253	6
Humanities	348	404	3
English, languages and communication	312	700	4
Foundation programmes	1,060	1,541	10
Total	6,065	20,277	100

Source: provided by the college in spring 2005

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	567	740	852	949	1,086	1,349
	Retention rate %	72	76	79	69	75	76
	National average %	75	74	75	73	74	71
	Pass rate %	83	80	85	87	85	89
	National average %	64	65	73	68	68	76
2	Starters excluding transfers	1209	1,135	1,155	2733	2,068	1,407
	Retention rate %	68	71	75	70	67	69
	National average %	70	70	70	70	69	68
	Pass rate %	85	77	82	61	82	86
	National average %	67	68	73	65	69	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	1226	1,035	1,031	1345	1,170	1,147
	Retention rate %	62	69	70	64	68	64
	National average %	67	75	75	67	69	67
	Pass rate %	77	80	80	77	76	82
	National average %	70	73	76	65	69	73
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	15	*	*	152	101	83
	Retention rate %	60	*	*	57	71	53
	National average %	**	**	**	65	67	70

	Pass rate %	89	*	*	63	64	66
	National average %	**	**	**	50	48	56

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

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003

2. College rates for 2001/02 to 2002/03: College ISR.

3. Rates for 2003/04: Supplied by the college in spring

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

** data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	72	24	4	70
Level 2 (intermediate)	74	25	1	65
Level 1 (foundation)	58	33	8	24
Other sessions	62	35	3	26
Total	69	27	4	185

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